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ELLEN TERRY
AND HER SISTERS.

Photographed by Window & Grove.

ELLEN TERRY AS PORTIA.

She first appeared in this part, one of the greatest of her Shakespearean creations, at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre in 1875, and resumed it at the Lyceum in 1879.

Frontispiece.

ELLEN TERRY
AND HER SISTERS

BY

T. EDGAR PEMBERTON

AUTHOR OF
"THE KENDALS;" "A MEMOIR OF E. A. SOTHERN;" "THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF T. W. ROBERTSON;" "CHARLES DICKENS AND THE STAGE;" "JOHN HARE, COMEDIAN;" "BRET HARTE: A TREATISE AND A TRIBUTE;"
ETC. ETC.

WITH TWENTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
C. ARTHUR PEARSON, LIMITED
HENRIETTA STREET
1902

April 11, 1901.

My dear Friend,—

You tell me that if I give you leave you can weave a story about me that will interest your readers. If that be so, you have my full permission to tell it, and it will please me to do anything in my power to assist you in your work. Whilst writing about me you will, I am sure, speak of those with whom I have been closely associated in my acting life, and make mention of the affectionate regard in which I hold them.

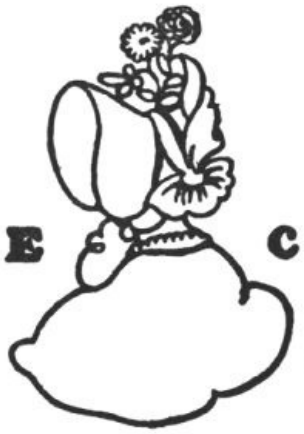
Your intimate knowledge of all that concerns the stage will at least keep you right as to the facts of your pages.

I suppose I must leave the fancy of them in your hands.

Yours cordially,

ELLEN TERRY.

To
T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.



Label designed for his sister by Gordon Craig

Ellen Terry's book-label designed by Gordon Craig

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[1]

ELLEN TERRY
AND HER SISTERS

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

I know that to the majority of people who merely regard the theatre as a place for occasional recreation, it is a subject for amazement that others can exist who, not belonging to the theatrical profession, take an absorbing and lasting interest in the stage, and in those actors and actresses who have made its past history glorious, as well as in the artists who adorn and make it a delight in the present. I wonder how many of us truly realise the weight of Charles Dickens's words: "If any man were to tell me that he denied his acknowledgments to the stage, I would simply put to him one question—whether he remembered his first play?"

Not only freely, but with gratitude, I acknowledge my indebtedness to the theatre, and it is certain that from that magic night when for the first time I saw the glitter of the footlights and watched the rise of the curtain, I entered upon a new and most fascinating life. Of course I was [2] called "stage struck," and those who controlled me shook their heads, thought it a great pity, and did their best to thwart my inclinations. Concerning the stage and its attractions the parents of the "fifties" were less liberal-minded than those of to-day, and they had an unhappy knack of talking over the tendencies of their children with uncles and aunts who, without meaning to do the least kindly thing for them, seemed to regard their nephews and nieces as so many ready-made reprobates open to their interfering condemnation. Oh! those terrible uncles and aunts! In his pages the grand old novelist, Richardson, reflecting the manners of his time, made (apparently well meaning) ogres of them; the good and ever interesting Jane Austen only contrived to soften them down; and I hope my "fifties" saw the fag-end of them, for to-day they prove themselves to be reasonable and generous beings.

But, as I say, I was set down as "stage struck," and I had to grow accustomed to the shoulder-shrug greeting of relatives, and the admonition that my first duty was to consider my father and mother. Never was anything so unfair. I was not in the ordinary sense of the word "stage struck." I was not fool enough to think that I could shine either as tragedian or comedian. I knew that a more prosaic life had been planned out for me, and I was prepared to enter into it; but, for a lurking fear that I should "take to the stage" (neither I nor my parents, nor my uncles and aunts, [3] knew how this was to be done), I found myself compelled to read my beloved play-books and chronicles of great actors in private. When it was accidentally discovered that I had attempted to write a play there was real family trouble, and I am afraid that some of those who pretended to take interest in me wrote me down as "no good."

No! It never could be understood that I really wanted to make a study of an art that appealed to me more strongly than its sisters, music and painting. Yet the three are so closely allied that in devotedly following my first love I learnt to appreciate her kith and kin. I pen these lines because I am certain that many others must have felt as I did, and do; and, while doing justice to other claims upon their life energies, have taken their keenest delight in the story of the stage.

Yes; I am sure that to many of us the theatre has formed a little world of its own—a little world that we can enjoy and grasp—while the great world outside it is so apt to torture us with its perplexities, and half kill us with its seeming cruelties.

And I think that the little world in which I and my brother enthusiasts delight is all the more appreciated when we understand that it, too, is beset with its anxieties and grievous disappointments, and is far from the dazzling, soul-soothing elysium we pictured in the halcyon [4] days of our boyhood. Our hearts go out all the more freely to the actors and actresses who warm them when we realise that they, too, have their trials as well as their triumphs. Our admiration is redoubled when it is leavened with sympathy. It is all the more important, then, that our entertainers should know that this feeling exists among those for whom they devote the work of their lives.

The artistic temperament is always more or less self-tormenting, and it is to be feared that my "little world," which shines so brightly over our great one, where sorrow has daily to be met and borne, is in itself a sorely troubled one.

In that strange French play which has our great English tragedian, Edmund Kean, for its central figure, Alexandre Dumas, who knew everything that could be known about the theatre, caused his actor-hero to respond bitterly to the woman who loved him, and who opined that all his troubles must vanish when he reflects that he is recognised as the King of the Stage. "King! Yes, three times a week! King with a tinselled sceptre, paste diamonds, and a pinchbeck crown. I rule a kingdom of thirty-five feet, and subjects who are jealous of my power." Then, when she asks, "Why do you not give it up?" he replies with indignation, "Give up the stage? Ah! you don't realise that he who has once donned the robe of Nessus cannot take it off without lacerating his flesh. *I* [5] give up the stage?—renounce its excitement?—its glitter?—its triumphs? *I* give up my throne to another? Never! while I've health and strength to walk the boards, and brains to interpret the poetry I love. Remember, an actor cannot leave his work behind him. He lives only in his own lifetime—his memory fades with the generation to which he belongs, he must finish as he has begun, die as he has lived—die, if fortune favours him, with the delicious sound of applause in his ears. But those who have not set foot upon a dangerous path do well to avoid it."

The actor's complaint that his fame, however great, cannot be recollected many years beyond the time in which he lived is a very old one, and it must have been with this mournful view in his mind that David Garrick wrote:—

"The painter dead, yet still he charms the eye;
While England lives his fame can never die.
But he who struts his hour upon the stage
Can scarce extend his fame for half an age;
Nor pen nor pencil can the actor save,
The art and artist share one common grave."

The volumes of theatrical history and biography that have been written and become popular since Garrick's day, prove that this is not wholly true, that we are not ungrateful to those who have instructed and amused us on the stage, and that we shall not willingly let their honoured memories die. The fact that the depressing feeling that they and their work will "soon be [6] forgotten" still exists among members of the theatrical profession is, I venture to believe, some excuse for records such as this being issued during the lifetime of the artist, while memory is green, and appreciation can be written at first hand. Even if such works give little or no pleasure to their living subjects, it may be borne in mind that they will probably be of service to those future stage historians who will permanently inscribe their names on the tablets of fame.

The passionate declaration of Dumas's Kean that, despite his troubles and torments, he would never while life was in him leave the stage, is an old tale. Actors, as a rule, love to die in harness, and it was in the full knowledge of this that T. W. Robertson caused his stage David Garrick to reply to Alderman Ingot, when he offered to double or treble his income if he would abandon his profession, "Leave the stage? Impossible!" Poor Sothern, who created the part, was staying with me when his physician wrote saying that if he wished to prolong his life he must give up all work. After a moment's depression the actor with a sudden impulse snatched a portrait of himself as Garrick from my wall, tore it from its frame, and in a large, firm hand, wrote beneath it: "Leave the stage? Impossible!"

I have no doubt that Charles Wyndham, who, after Sothern's death, took up the part, and made it [7] one of the greatest successes of the modern stage, feels the full import of the words every time he speaks them.

And if the actors suffer so do the dramatists, or at all events the would-be dramatists. In an admirable little book called "Play Writing," the author gives sound advice to the ever-growing, ever-complaining army of the unacted.

"Dramatic authorship," he says, "is to the profession of literature as reversing is to waltzing—an agony within a misery. A man who means to be a dramatist must be prepared for a life of never-ending strife and fret—a brain and heart-exhausting struggle from the hour when, full of hope, he starts off with his first farce in his pocket to the days when, involuntarily taking the advice of one of the early masters of his own craft—to wit, old rare Ben Jonson—he leaves 'the loathed stage and the more loathsome age.'"

And again, this anonymous but evidently experienced writer (I quote from him freely) declares that any dramatist could tales unfold of disappointments and delays, of hopes deferred, of chances dashed from the grasp at the very moment they seemed clutched, of weary waitings rewarded by failure, of enterprise and effort leading only to defeat, of hard work winning only loss. It has been suggested, too, in this connection, that any one sufficiently interested in such matters should make a list of the plays that in "preliminary paragraphs" are spoken of as "about [8] to be produced," and which are never heard of again,—and that it should then be remembered that each of these unborn plays represents a very heavy heart being carried about for many a long day under somebody or other's waistcoat,—and means that somebody or other feels very sick and hopeless as he moves about his little world, trying to appear careless and to laugh it off,—that somebody or other grows very tired and weary of the struggle, and almost wishes now and then that it was over.

But to the young playgoer who sits in front these troubles are unknown, and to him the theatre may well appear as the realisation of Fairyland, and a veritable Palace of Fancy.

I believe there is another reason why men, if they would own it, have come to be grateful to the stage. Has it not to many been the scene in which they have first learned what it is to love? They may never have spoken to the divinities who inspired their boyish ardour, but they have been better and purer for it, and cherish the sweet recollection of it to their old age.

Cannot we all enter into the feelings of young virgin-hearted Arthur Pendennis when he first saw the lovely Miss Fotheringay on the boards? Cannot we all understand how he followed the woman about and about, and when she was off the stage the house became a blank? and how, when the play was over, the curtain fell upon him like a pall? Poor Pendennis! He hardly knew what he felt [9] that night. "It was something overwhelming, maddening, delicious; a fever of wild joy and undefined longing."

And then how he woke the next morning, when, at an early hour, the rooks began to caw from the little wood beyond his bedroom windows; and at that very instant, and as his eyes started open, the beloved image was in his mind. "My dear boy," he heard her say, "you were in a sound sleep, and I would not disturb you: but I have been close by your pillow all this while; and I don't intend that you shall leave me. I am Love! I bring with me fever and passion; wild longing, maddening desire; restless craving and seeking. Many a long day ere this I heard you calling out for me; and behold now I am come."

Yes, I am convinced that most of us have felt, rejoiced, and suffered as Arthur Pendennis did, and

that we first caught the fever from the footlights. The attack may have been acute, and, in its apparent hopelessness, painful. But recovery brought with it the sweet knowledge that we had been permitted to understand the meaning of Heaven's greatest gift to mankind—Love.

I know that there are many who only go to the theatre to carp and cavil, and impotently point out that if the management of the playhouse and the acting of all the parts had been placed in their hands a much better performance would have been provided; but I believe that even these would [10] love to recall the dreamy illusions of their youth. Perhaps, in the hours of their solitude (and silence!), they do so. Why, in their soured maturity, these unhappy, self-imposed, and absolutely unconvincing critics go to the theatre to be (on their own declaration) bored and disgusted is to me a mystery. It is all the more a mystery when I know that they can thoroughly enjoy a variety hall.

Of course, everything depends on the spirit in which we go to the theatre.

Do you remember the difference of opinion expressed between Steerforth and David Copperfield on the night when they renewed the acquaintance of their boyhood at the Golden Cross Hotel? David had been to Covent Garden Theatre, and had there seen "Julius Cæsar." "To have," he says, "all those noble Romans alive before me, and walking in and out for my entertainment, instead of being the stern task-masters they had been at school, was a most novel and delightful effect. But the mingled reality and mystery of the whole show, the influence upon me of the poetry, the lights, the music, the company; the smooth, stupendous changes of glittering and brilliant scenery were so dazzling, and opened up such illimitable regions of delight, that when I came out into the rainy street I felt as if I had come from the clouds, where I had been leading a romantic [11] life for ages, to a bawling, splashing, link-lighted, umbrella-struggling, hackney-coach jostling, patten-clicking, muddy, miserable world."

And when he told the superior Steerforth of his innocent enjoyment, he had to listen to the laughing reply:—

"My dear young Davy—you are a very daisy. The daisy of the field, at sunrise, is not fresher than you are! I have been at Covent Garden, too, and there never was a more miserable business."

In my own mind I am convinced that if we will we can always, to our great advantage and delight, keep up the enthusiasm of David Copperfield;—that to some of us the theatre, even when we know all about the fret and turmoil of the actor's life together with the tricks of the stage, may from boyhood to old age remain a Palace of Fancy.

And have we not in the heroine of these pages—Ellen Terry—the very embodiment of Fancy,—the true Princess of our Palace, one of the Queens of our little stage world? Other great artists have delighted us with the perfection of their impersonations, but there is in the method or inspiration of Ellen Terry something so ethereal that in many of her characters she stands alone.

If the drama is indeed the Cinderella of the arts, then Ellen Terry must have been touched by the magic wand of a Fairy Godmother so that she might dazzle the Prince's ballroom with her beauty, radiance, and ever fragrant sweetness, and win the admiration of his guests. [12]

But those who thoughtlessly and even contemptuously call the drama "Cinderella" probably do not know the origin of the familiar fairy-tale—how the little kitchen maid is Ushas, the Dawn Maiden of the Aryans, and the Aurora of the Greeks; and how the Prince is the Sun, ever seeking to make the Dawn his bride; and how the envious stepmother and sisters are the Clouds and the Night, which vainly strive to keep the Sun and the Dawn apart. It is pleasant to think of Cinderella as the Dawn Maiden. Poor little lady! She has suffered considerably in her transplantation to English soil.

To me the magic word "Fancy" has ever been associated with the pure art of Ellen Terry, and whenever I see her on the stage the lines of John Keats comes rippling through my mind:—

"Oh! sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Everything is spoilt by use;
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to her mind;
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter [13]
Ere the god of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid. Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison string,
And such joys as these she'll bring—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home."

But it must be recorded that Fancy, as let loose and impersonated by Ellen Terry, is taken from the theatre in thousands of hearts, and that it enters into many a home circle where the memory of it gives unbounded and enduring pleasure. Into the simple homes of those who elbow each other in the gallery, as well as into the luxurious mansions of the wealthy folk who sit at their ease in the stalls. In many a workman's dwelling I have come across a carefully framed photograph of Ellen Terry, and a treasured play-bill kept in commemoration of a never-to-be-forgotten evening enjoyed in her realms of Fancy.

But she did not drop from cloudland to delight us. Her great achievements have been won—as all great achievements are won—by early training, deep and constant study, hard work, and possibly, above all, by family tradition.

In theatrical lore the name of Terry is, indeed, an old and honoured one. In Lockhart's beautiful [14] biography of Sir Walter Scott, and again in the happily published Diary of the Magician of the North, we read much of the energetic Daniel Terry who was for many years connected with the Edinburgh stage, and who subsequently joined Yates in a memorable management of the Adelphi Theatre. Daniel Terry, with the appreciative eye of the true actor, set his heart upon making stage versions of the Waverley Novels, and though at first Scott (in common with all great novelists) objected to this process, it was subsequently allowed, and adapter and author became friends. It was in the spring of 1816 that Terry produced a dramatic piece entitled "Guy Mannering," which met with great success, and is still from time to time seen. "What share," says Lockhart, "the novelist had in this first specimen of what he used to call the art of 'Terryfying,' I cannot exactly say; but his correspondence shows that the pretty song of the Lullaby was not his only contribution to it; and I infer that he had taken the trouble to modify the plot, and rearrange, for stage purposes, a considerable part of the original dialogue."

Of the intimacy that commenced and grew between the poet and the playwright, Lockhart records:—

"It was at a rehearsal of 'The Family Legend of Joanna Baillie' that Scott was first introduced to another theatrical performer, who ere long acquired a large share of his regard and confidence—Mr. Daniel Terry. He had received a good education, and been regularly trained as an architect; [15] but abandoned that profession at an early period of life, and was now beginning to attract attention as a valuable actor in Henry Siddons's company. Already he and the Ballantynes were constant companions, and through his familiarity with them Scott had abundant opportunities of appreciating his many excellent and agreeable qualities. He had the manners and feelings of a gentleman. Like John Kemble, he was deeply skilled in the old literature of the drama, and he rivalled Scott's own enthusiasm for the antiquities of *vertu*. Their epistolary correspondence in after days was frequent, and none so well illustrates many of the poet's minor tastes and habits. As their letters lie before me they appear as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Terry's idolatry of his new friend induced him to imitate his writing so zealously that Scott used to say, if he were called upon to swear to any document, the utmost he could venture to attest would be, that it was either in his own hand or Terry's. The actor, perhaps unconsciously, mimicked him in other matters with hardly inferior pertinacity. His small lively features had acquired, before I knew him, a truly ludicrous cast of Scott's graver expression; he had taught his tiny eyebrow the very trick of the poet's meditative frown; and, to crown all, he so habitually affected his tone and accent that, though a native of Bath, a stranger could hardly have doubted [16]

he must be a Scotchman. These things afforded all their acquaintance much diversion; but perhaps no Stoic could have helped being secretly gratified by seeing a clever and sensible man convert himself into a living type and symbol of admiration."

In the pages of his fascinating Diary (or "Journal") Scott records—

> "*October 20, 1826* (London).—At breakfast, Crofton Croker, author of the 'Irish Fairy Tales.' Something like Tom Moore. There were also Terry, Allan Cunningham, Newton, and others."
>
> "*October 21, 1826.*—We returned to a hasty dinner in Pall Mall, and then hurried away to see honest Dan Terry's house, called the Adelphi Theatre, where we saw 'The Pilot,' from the American novel of that name. It is extremely popular, the dramatist having seized on the whole story, and turned the odious and ridiculous parts, assigned by the original author to the British, against the Yankees themselves. There is a quiet effrontery in this that is of a rare and peculiar character. The Americans were so much displeased, that they attempted a row—which rendered the piece doubly attractive to the seamen at Wapping, who came up and crowded the house night after night to support the honour of the British flag.... I was, however, glad to see honest Dan's theatre as full seemingly as it could hold. The heat was dreadful, and Anne was so very unwell that she was obliged to be carried into Terry's house—a curious dwelling, no [17]
> larger than a squirrel's cage, which he has contrived to squeeze out of the vacant spaces of the theatre, and which is accessible by a most complicated combination of staircases and small passages. Here we had rare good porter and oysters after the play, and found Anne much better. She had attempted too much; indeed, I myself was much fatigued."

Later comes a sadder note:—

> "*February 3, 1827.*—Terry has been pressed by Gibson for my debt to him. That I may get managed."

And again—

> "*April 15, 1828.*—Got the lamentable news that Terry is totally bankrupt. This is a most unexpected blow, though his carelessness about money matters was very great. God help the poor fellow! He has been ill-advised to go abroad, but now returns to stand the storm—old debts, it seems, with principal and interest accumulated, and all the items which load a falling man. And wife, such a good and kind creature, and children. Alack! alack! I sought out his solicitor. There are £7000 or more to pay, and the only fund his share in the Adelphi Theatre, worth £5000 and upwards, and then so fine a chance of independence lost. That comes of not being explicit with his affairs. The theatre was a [18]
> most flourishing concern. I looked at the books, and since have seen Yates. The ruin is inevitable, but I think they will not keep him in prison, but let him earn his bread by his very considerable talents. I shall lose the whole or part of £5000, which I lent him, but that is the last of my concern."

And then follow these interesting and touching entries:—

> "*May 8, 1828.*—I have been of material assistance to poor Terry in his affairs."
>
> "*June 18, 1829.*—Poor Terry is totally prostrated by a paralytic affection. Continuance of existence not to be wished for."
>
> "*July 9, 1829.*—Many recollections die with poor Terry."

Of his semi-partnership with his actor-friend, Sir Walter Scott, in a humorous mood, wrote:—"I have been made a dramatist whether I would or no. I believe my muse would be *Terry*fied into treading the stage even if I should write a sermon."

Benjamin Terry, the father of the clever family who form the subject of these pages, became in his time very popular in Edinburgh, and it was there that he attracted the attention of Charles Kean, and obtained his offer for the actor's Mecca—London. But his experience had no doubt been earned in some of the old "circuits" that were the theatrical schools of his early days, and [19]
turned out many a true artist. The actors and actresses who thus served their apprenticeship to the stage assuredly had rough times of it, but they had for the most part joined the profession for the love of it—they adored Shakespeare and the authors of the "legitimate drama,"—and, in spite of tedious journeys from town to town, poor business, and bad theatrical accommodation at the end of them, looked forward to and enjoyed the evening's performance. Enthusiasm and hard work led to their reward, and many a poor strolling-player became a shining light on the London stage.

When Ben Terry went on circuit, travelling actors were in better plight than they were in the days of poor Roger Kemble and his devoted wife, who travelled from town to town, and village to village, after the manner and under the difficulties and disadvantages of the time,—at some places being received with gracious favour, and at others treated like lepers and threatened with the stocks and whipping at the cart's tail, according as the great people were liberal minded or puritanical. But this struggling, persecuted Roger Kemble lived to see his daughter, Mrs. Siddons, and his son, John Philip, the stage idols of their day; and if sometimes his perturbed

spirit could revisit Hereford (one of the cities of his early sorrows) he would realise the happy fact that the portraits of his never-to-be-forgotten family hold the places of honour on the Deanery walls.

Since to the often ridiculed circuits of a bygone day we can trace such actors as the Kembles, the Robertsons, and the Terrys, surely we should hold them in honoured memory? [20]

Dickens turned them to comic account when he conceived the impossible but immortal Crummles family; but he put the true ring into the warm-hearted old manager's heart and voice when on bidding farewell to Nicholas, he said, "We were a very happy little company. You and I never had a word. I shall be very glad to-morrow morning to think that I saw you again, but now I almost wish you hadn't come."

It is pleasant to think that in their own way the circuit players all formed happy little companies. To enjoy the work of our choice is, in spite of any drawbacks, one of the greatest sources of happiness.

My esteemed friend, John Coleman, whose memory carries him back to the days of long ago, has told me that he met Mr. and Mrs. Ben Terry on the Worcester Circuit. He remembers the former as a handsome, fine-looking brown-haired man, and the wife as a tall, graceful creature, with an abundance of fair hair, and with big blue eyes set in a charming face. Years and years passed before he met his old-time friend again; but at the memorable banquet given to Henry Irving on the eve of his departure for his first tour in America, a grey-haired, dignified old gentleman, who sat next to him, told him that he was the "Ben Terry" of the dead and gone Worcester Circuit, and [21] introduced him to his grandson, Gordon Craig.

On that evening the old actor had good reason to be proud, for he could boast of being the father of one of the most gifted and cultured of histrionic families. "Think of it," writes Mr. Clement Scott, "Kate, with her lovely figure and comely features; Ellen, with her quite indescribable charm; Marion, with a something in her deeper, more tender, and more feminine than either of them; Florence, who became lovelier as a woman than as a girl; and the brothers Fred and Charles, both splendid specimens of the athletic Englishman."

It was while the parent Terrys were fulfilling an engagement at Coventry—the interesting City of the Three Tall Spires—that their daughter Ellen was born. This was in the February of 1848, and quite a little feud has taken place between some of the good people of Coventry as to the precise house in which the important event took place. That it was on the 27th day of the second month of the year, and that the street was Market Street, one and all seem agreed, but several inhabitants of that thoroughfare have laid claim to be the occupiers, if not the owners of the shrine. No. 5 and No. 26 are the chief claimants of the honour (and in all seriousness it is no small honour), but as an "old nurse," who should know something about such things, has declared for No. 5, it stands first favourite; and a fact in its favour is that in the days of 1848 it was a [22] popular lodging-house for actors. One can sympathise with No. 26, but the general vote must be given to No. 5. After all, it does not much matter, for who knows what changes have taken place in the old street during the last fifty years? Perhaps (but for pious pilgrims this is a dreadful thought!) *even the door numbers may have been changed*! With a few exceptions the birthplaces of celebrities are apt to be disappointing. My enthusiasm for famous artists once took me to Brecon so that I might visit the "Shoulder of Mutton" Inn, in which Sarah Kemble was born, but, though it was properly inscribed, it was not the interesting old tavern of my imagination, and manifest modern "improvements" made me content with a brief gaze at its exterior. It was at the beautiful Trinity Church at Coventry, on the 26th November 1773, that Sarah Kemble was married to Henry Siddons, the handsome young actor from Birmingham; and this brings me back to "leafy Warwickshire" (Warwickshire-men never forget that it is Shakespeare's county), and the Coventry of Ellen Terry's birthday in 1848.

Now let me show how easily, by those who care about such things, theatrical history may be traced.

Ellen Terry, as will soon be seen, was destined to make her earliest (though childish) successes with Charles Kean. Charles Kean had acted with his renowned father, Edmund Kean. Edmund Kean had in his childhood figured as one of the imps who danced around the cauldron in John [23] Philip Kemble's revival of "Macbeth." Roger Kemble, the father of John Philip and Sarah Siddons, was the son of a Kemble who had been engaged by and was associated with Betterton. After "the King had got his own again" Betterton was acknowledged to be the legitimate successor to Burbage. Burbage was the first of our great tragic actors, and was the original performer of the greater number of Shakespeare's heroes—of Coriolanus, Brutus, Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Shylock, Macbeth, Prince Hal, Henry V., and Richard III. In "Hamlet" Shakespeare enacted the touching character of the Ghost to the Prince created by Burbage; and so, in a rough and somewhat "House that Jack Built" fashion, the connection of such famous histrionic families as the Terrys can be traced back to the Elizabethan days, to Shakespeare, and the actors of his period.

We may now follow the Ben Terrys and their pretty children to the London Princess's Theatre, where the experienced actor not only played many parts but became assistant stage-manager to Charles Kean. Considering the magnitude of the productions aimed at, this must have been a post of no small importance and responsibility. When the famous series of Shakespearean revivals demanded the appearance of clever children, what was more natural than a conference between Kean and his trusted lieutenant, and the recommendation by the fond father of the engagement [24] of his gifted little daughters, Kate and Ellen? Their services were secured, and at a very early period of their lives they began to make stage history. Their achievements in the once famous

Oxford Street playhouse will be recorded in the next chapter. In the meantime it is pleasant to touch upon some of Ellen Terry's impressions of her earliest childhood.

In a charming series of papers entitled "Stray Memories," contributed by her to the *New Review* about ten years ago, she thus delightfully as well as dutifully recalls memories of her father and mother. "It must be remembered," she says, "that my sister and I had the advantage of exceedingly clever and conscientious parents who spared no pains to bring out and perfect any talents that we possessed. My father was a very charming elocutionist, and my mother read Shakespeare beautifully, and then both were very fond of us and saw our faults with eyes of love, though they were unsparing in their corrections. And, indeed, they had need of all their patience, for, for my own part, I know I was a most troublesome, wayward pupil. However, 'the labour we delight in physics pain,' and I hope, too, that my more staid sister 'made it up to them.'"

Can anything be prettier than this daintily recorded, and no doubt uncalled for admission?

ELLEN TERRY WHEN EIGHT YEARS OF AGE.

The autograph shows her signature of to-day. **[*To face page 24.***

With one more glimpse of her home-life in childhood I will bring this chapter of "Beginnings" to a close. Some time ago it occurred to those who are responsible for that always sprightly journal, *The Referee*, to ask some stage celebrities to contribute to their Yule-tide number their impressions of Christmas in their early days—of Christmas, the great and never-to-be-forgotten holiday of little folk. [25]

And this is what Ellen Terry conjured up:—

"Really," she said, "I have no Christmas experience worth recounting. Ever since I can remember, Christmas Day has been for me at first a day on which I received a good many keepsakes, and afterwards a day on which I gave a good many little gifts.

"But well I remember one particular Christmas Day. I don't know that the remembrance is worth the telling, but I'll tell it all the same, because I was about seven years old, and went to 'a party.'

"I was much admired, and I in turn admired greatly a dark, thin boy of about ten, who had recited 'The Burial of Sir John Moore' (so jolly on a Christmas Day!). This thin boy was always going down to eat something, and after the recitation he asked me to come down and have an ice.

"You will, of course, understand that this was a *real* party—a staying-up-late, low-necked dress, and fan sort of party. When we had eaten the ices he suggested some lobster salad—which I thought would be very nice. He went to fetch the salad and left me dreaming of him and of his beautiful dark hair.

"Suddenly my dream was interrupted. [26]

"A fat boy with stubbly light hair and freckles on his nose stood grinning at me and asking me to have some lemonade. I didn't want any lemonade, and told him so. Thereupon he produced a whole bough of mistletoe from somewhere or another, and without more ado seized me by my head and kissed me, and kissed me, and kissed me,—grinning all the while.

"I was in a rage, and flew at him like a little cat. He fled out of the room, up the stairs, I after him. I caught him on the landing, clawed him by the hair, and banged him, and dared him to kiss

me again.

"He cried, the coward, though he was eight or nine years old. Adding insult to injury, he said, 'He didn't want to,' and I was 'horrid.'

"I thought he was horrid, for my pretty white frock was torn, and the thin dark boy, the boy I had fallen in love with, said I should not have spoken with such a cur, and that it 'served me right.'

"My heart was broken for the first time, and that is why I remember, and always shall, that miserable Christmas Day."

No doubt the impressionable and impulsive little lady has since delighted in as many joyous Christmas Days as, in year succeeding year, she has given happiness to the thousands and thousands who have revelled in, and been made the better for, the display of her genius. It is to be feared that the greatest of our stage artists never realise the amount of good that they do in [27] the world. If they did they would not only have their reward in applauding audiences, but their re-reward in the knowledge that they have brought light, understanding, and lasting pleasure into countless homes. Through simple and cheerful paths the good Ben Terrys conducted their youthful daughters into the profession that Mrs. Kendal has humorously summed up as follows:—

So many, she declares, have wrong impressions of the stage. Some think they can jump into fame, and that there is no hard work; others think it is all hard work, and there is no reward. But, of course, there are many drawbacks, and people who only sit in the front of the theatre cannot possibly comprehend what it is until they have been behind the scenes and worked at it from childhood, as she has done. Every day, people write to her and ask the qualifications of an actress. Well, she should have the face of a goddess, the strength of a lion, the figure of a Venus, the voice of a dove, the temper of an angel, the grace of a swan, the agility of an antelope, and the skin of a rhinoceros; great imagination, concentration, an exquisite enunciation, a generous spirit, a loyal disposition, plenty of courage, a keen sense of humour, a high ideal of morality, a sensitive mind, and an original treatment of everything. She must be capable of being a kind sister, a good daughter, and an excellent wife; a judicious mother, an encouraging friend, and an [28] enterprising grandmother! These, according to an undeniable authority, are the only qualities that are required for the stage!

Mrs. Kendal's dictum reminds me of what her brother, T. W. Robertson—one of the best and most popular dramatists of his age—who had gone through a perfect torture of disappointment before the production of "Society" by the Bancrofts made his name famous and his path easy, caused one of his characters in a later play from his pen to say—

"Yes, I want to write a comedy."

And when the answer came—"Well, write one; I should think it is easy enough—you've only got to be amusing, spirited, bright, and life-like. That's all!"

"Oh, *that's* all, is it?" ruefully responded the would-be comedy writer.

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[29]

CHAPTER II

FIRST APPEARANCES

The first appearances on the stage of Kate and Ellen Terry were in every respect triumphant, and in theatrical history will always be held worthy of record. A time-worn adage tells us not to judge by first appearances, but those experts who discerned the extraordinary promise of these children in the opportunities afforded them under the memorable Charles Kean *régime*, at the Princess's Theatre, proved themselves to be true dramatic critics.

As to the very first public appearance of the heroine of these pages there has been much discussion. When any one deserts an avocation to "take to the stage," as the phrase goes, a first performance is a milestone on the road of life and is never forgotten. With children who, coming from a theatrical family, are, as it were, born to the stage, it is almost a matter of indifference, and is apt to become nebulous. Mrs. Kendal, for example, once frankly stated that she remembered little or nothing of her initial professional efforts until she was reminded of them by some of the mature actors who had appeared in the same pieces on those destined to be [30] interesting occasions.

There was a general feeling that Ellen Terry's first appearance was as Mamillius, the little son of King Leontes of Sicilia, in Kean's elaborate revival of "The Winter's Tale," until in the June of 1880 the eminent dramatic critic and stage historian, Mr. Dutton Cook, contributed an article to the unhappily defunct *Theatre Magazine*, in which he said:—

"Some four-and-twenty years ago, when the Princess's Theatre was under the direction of the late Charles Kean, there were included in his company two little girls, who lent valuable support to the management, and whose young efforts the playgoers of the time watched with kindly and sympathetic interest. Shakespearean revivals, prodigiously embellished, were much in vogue; and Shakespeare, it may be noted by the way, has testified his regard for children by providing quite a repertory of parts well suited to the means of juvenile performers. Lady Macduff's son has appeared too seldom on the scene, perhaps, to be counted; but Fleance, Mamillius, Prince Arthur, Falstaff's boy, Moth (Don Armado's page), King Edward V., and his brother, the Duke of York, Puck, and the other fairies of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' and even Ariel—these are

characters specially designed for infantile players; and these, or the majority of these, were sustained at the Princess's Theatre, now by Miss Kate, and now by Miss Ellen Terry, who were [31] wont to appear, moreover, in such other plays, serious or comic, poetic or pantomimic, as needed the presence and assistance of the pretty, sprightly, clever children. Out of Shakespeare, opportunities for Miss Kate Terry were found in the melodramas of 'The Courier of Lyons' (Sir Henry Irving's 'The Lyons Mail' of to-day), 'Faust and Marguerite,' and the comedy of 'Every One has his Fault.' The sisters figured together as the Princes murdered in the Tower, by Mr. Charles Kean as Richard III. What miniature Hamlets they looked in their bugled black velvet trunks, silken hose, and ostrich feathers! They were in mourning, of course, for their departed father, King Edward IV. My recollection of Miss Ellen Terry dates from her impersonation of the little Duke of York. She was a child of six, or thereabout, slim and dainty of form, with profuse flaxen curls, and delicately-featured face, curiously bright and arch of expression; and she won, as I remember, her first applause when, in clear resonant tones, she delivered the lines:—

'Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
Because that I am little, like an ape,
He thinks that you should bear me on his shoulders.'

Richard's representative meanwhile scowling wickedly and tugging at his gloves desperately, pursuant to paternal example and stage tradition. A year or two later and the baby actress was representing now Mamillius, and now Puck."

Now, when he arrived at this point, Mr. Dutton Cook raised a hornet's nest about his ears. In the [32] mind of playgoers it had been long decided that this all-important first appearance had been in the character of Mamillius. Where, then, did Mr. Dutton Cook's picturesquely described Duke of York come in? Mr. George Tawse, who modestly described himself as a "play-bill-worm," took great interest in the matter, and having carefully consulted the happily preserved documents in the British Museum, wrote many letters on the subject to Mr. Clement Scott, who was then the erudite editor of *The Theatre*. These communications attracting some notice (Mr. Tawse, be it noted, being all in favour of Mamillius), Mr. Scott appealed to headquarters, and Ellen Terry characteristically wrote to him:—"The very first time I ever appeared on any stage was on the first night of 'The Winter's Tale,' at the Princess's Theatre, with dear Charles Kean. As for the young Princes, them unfortunate little men, I never played—not neither of them—there! What a cry about a little wool! *P.S.*—I was born in Coventry, 1848, and was, I think, about seven when I played in 'The Winter's Tale.'"

Following up his careful researches, Mr. Tawse ultimately came to the conclusion that on April 28, 1856, Ellen Terry appeared at the Princess's as Mamillius in "The Winter's Tale"; on October 15, 1856, as Puck in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; on December 26, 1857, as the Fairy "Golden [33] Star" in "The White Cat" pantomime; on April 5, 1858, as Karl in "Faust and Marguerite"; on October 18, as Prince Arthur in "King John"; on November 17, as Fleance in "Macbeth"; and on December 28, of the same busy year, as "The Genius of the Jewels," in the pantomime of "The King of the Castle."

As the lady has so strongly declared for Mamillius, and as Mr. Tawse thus champions her, I suppose the verdict must be accepted; and yet it seems very unlikely that such an accurate writer as Mr. Dutton Cook could have been mistaken concerning that impersonation of the little Duke of York. Can Ellen Terry have forgotten it? Knowing that she does not set sufficient value on her work, or the impression it makes on others, I think it very probable. Indeed, in all due deference to her and Mr. Tawse (for even play-bills will sometimes unwittingly lie), I like to give credit to Mr. Dutton Cook's miniature sister Hamlets in their bugled black velvet trunks, their silken hose, and ostrich feathers!

As poor little Mamillius, cursed with a jealous yet respected father, and wondering what the troubles could be that existed between him and his unhappy, deeply-wronged mother, she must have been very sweet, and one can fancy what Charles Kean felt when he cried to his "boy"—

"Come, Sir Page,
Look on me with your welkin eye."

We have only to realise that in using the word "welkin" Shakespeare meant "heavenly," to get the [34] expression of the anxious but inspired little Terry girl.

And if this was indeed her first appearance, her dismissal by Leontes with the words, "Go play, Mamillius," was almost prophetic.

But if Mr. Dutton Cook chanced to err on the much discussed first appearance question, he was certainly correct in his critical estimate of the two remarkable child actresses.

"The public applauded these Terry sisters," he wrote, "not simply because of their cleverness and prettiness, their graces of aspect, the careful training they evidenced, and the pains they took to discharge the histrionic duties entrusted to them, but because of the leaven of genius discernible in all their performances—they were born actresses.

"Children educated to appear becomingly upon the scene have always been obtainable, and upon easy terms; but here were little players who could not merely repeat accurately the words they had learnt by rote, but could impart sentiment to their speeches, could identify themselves with the characters they played, could personate and portray, could weep themselves that they might

surely make others weep, could sway the emotions of crowded audiences. They possessed in full that power of abandonment to scenic excitement which is rare even among the most consummate [35] of mature performers. They were carried away by the force of their own acting; there were tears not only in their voices but in their eyes; their mobile faces were quick to reflect the significance of the drama's events; they could listen, their looks the while annotating, as it were, the discourse they heard; singular animation and alertness distinguished all their movements, attitudes, and gestures. There was special pathos in the involuntary trembling of their baby fingers, and the unconscious wringing of their tiny hands; their voices were particularly endowed with musically thrilling qualities. I have never seen audiences so agitated and distressed, even to the point of anguish, as were the patrons of the Princess's Theatre on those bygone nights when little Prince Arthur, personated by either of the Terry sisters, clung to Hubert's knees as the heated iron cooled in his hands, pleading passionately for sight, touchingly eloquent of voice and action; a childish simplicity attendant ever upon all the frenzy, the terror, the vehemence, and the despair of the speeches and the situation.

"Assuredly Nature had been very kind to the young actresses, and without certain natural graces, gifts, and qualifications, there can scarcely be satisfactory acting. All Romeo's passion may pervade you, but unless you can look like Romeo—or something like him—if your voice be weak or cracked, your mouth awry or your legs askew—it is vain to feel like him; you will not convince [36] your audience of your sincerity, or induce them to sympathise in the least with your actions or sufferings; still less will you stir them to transports. Of course Genius makes laws unto itself, and there have been actors who have triumphed over very serious obstacles; but, as Mr. G. H. Lewes has observed, 'a harsh, inflexible voice, a rigid or heavy face, would prevent even a Shakespeare from being impressive and affecting on the stage.' The player is greatly dependent upon his personality. At the same time, mental qualities must accompany physical advantages. The constitutionally cold and torpid cannot hope to represent successfully excitement or passion. The actor must be *en rapport* with the character he sustains, must sympathise with the emotions he depicts. A peculiar dramatic sensitiveness and susceptibility from the first characterised the sisters Terry; their nervous organisation, their mental impressibility and vivaciousness, not less than their personal charms and attractions, may be said to have ordained and determined their success upon the stage."

Coming from this high source such trustworthy and carefully analysed appreciation is invaluable; but the criticism that I love best to preserve in connection with the early appearances of the little Terrys at the Princess's Theatre is that of John William Cole, the biographer of Charles Kean. Writing for a book (published in 1859), long before the girls had established their names, he said:—

"Before quitting the subject of 'King John' (1852) at the Princess's Theatre, it would be unjust not [37] to name in a special sentence of approval the impressive acting of Miss Kate Terry, then a child of ten years of age, as Prince Arthur, and of Mr. Ryder as Hubert."

In the revival of "King John" in 1858, Ellen Terry was the Prince Arthur, that sound actor, John Ryder (he had been one of the mainstays of Macready), again playing Hubert.

Concerning the production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in 1856, Mr. Cole says: "Another remarkable evidence of the excellent training of the Princess's Theatre presented itself in the precocious talent of Miss Ellen Terry, a child of eight years of age, who played the merry goblin Puck, a part that requires an old head on young shoulders, with restless elfish animation, and an evident enjoyment of her own mischievous pranks."

It is because Mr. Cole wrote and published, as it were, "upon the spot," that I consider his criticism not only discerning, but beyond all price. We all know how easy it is to prophesy after the event!

Ellen Terry's recollections of her appearance as the infant Mamillius in "The Winter's Tale" are very vivid, as, indeed, they may be. In more ways than one it was a notable first night for the little maid. Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and the Princess Royal were present, and the next morning she woke to find herself with her foot on the first step of the steep stairs that lead to fame. No [38] less an authority than the *Times* declared that she had played her part with a vivacious precocity that proved her a worthy relation of her sister. No doubt there were that day rejoicings in the Terry family, and the sensitive child must have been rewarded for her own passing tribulations. "My young heart swelled with pride—I can recall the sensation now," she has declared, "when I was told what I had to do,"—and then comes the sad confession that she wept bitter and prolonged tears when the audience laughed when she fell over the rather ridiculous toy-cart with which Mamillius was ordered to "go play." She calls it her "first dramatic failure," and felt at the moment that her "career as an actress was ruined for ever."

I wonder if that untoward episode of the toy-cart had anything to do with the extreme nervousness that, according to her own confession, the actress always suffers from on "first nights"? Probably not; for I believe all true stage artists are continually nervous—nervous for themselves, nervous for their audiences. She says to this day that she is so "high strung" on a first night that if she realised that there was an audience in front staring at her, she would fly away from the theatre and be far off "in two-twos."

Yes, I fear that all of them, or, at all events, the best of them, undergo the enduring agonies of nervousness. Once Sothern and Toole were dining with me in Birmingham. In the evening the [39] one had to play Lord Dundreary at the Theatre Royal, and the other Caleb Plummer at the Prince of Wales Theatre. They had acted these parts for many, many hundreds of times, and I had imagined that their approaching work would be mere pastime to them. But Sothern, speaking to

his brother comedian, said, "I don't know how you feel, John, but I'm as nervous to-night as I was on my first appearance on the stage."

To my amazement, Toole, who always seemed so at home with his audiences as to become one amongst them, confessed that he had the same feeling; and they agreed in saying that when an aspiring young actor conceitedly set forth as one of his qualifications for the profession the fact that "he did not know what nervousness meant," he was certain to do no good. "If you are not always anxious about your work," said Sothern, "always painfully desirous to be doing your best, you will soon lose whatever hold you may have on the public." And so said every one's friend—the genial John Toole.

Surely this applies to other pursuits besides the art of acting?

Ellen Terry has happier recollections of Puck than of Mamillius, and no wonder, for the part, although trying, is a delightful one. During the two hundred and fifty nights of the performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Princess's (a marvellous run for those days) she "revelled in [40]
the impish unreason of 'the sprite,'" and since then she has ever felt the charm of parts "where imagination can have free play, and there is no occasion to observe too closely the cold, hard rules of conventionality, and the fetters of dry-as-dust realism."

Of her performances in the pantomimes, with which, at Christmas time, Charles Kean found it necessary to supplement his elaborate productions, we can only imagine (and that is easily done) that she was a very fascinating little fairy; and it seems equally certain that when she was called upon to appear in two lengthy entertainments on the same night, she must often have been a very tired little fairy.

Concerning her representation of Prince Arthur in "King John," a pathetic little story is extant. At the point where she left the stage in the full and terrible knowledge that her eyes were to be burnt out, she at first (presumably at rehearsal) made her exit with such composure that she received a strong reprimand from Mrs. Kean, who told her that she must give expression to the anguish of the situation. This little scolding caused the easily affected child to shed such earnest tears that her monitress cried out, "Oh, if you can only do that on the stage, what a Prince Arthur you will be!" The hint was taken to heart and adopted, and the success of the impersonation was assured.

The new Prince Arthur was honoured with a special call, and the critics were loud and unanimous [41]
in their praises, freely acknowledging the dramatic force of the performance, together with its delightful simplicity, tenderness, and truth to nature.

No doubt her position in the theatre compelled Mrs. Kean to be from time to time an apparently harsh task-mistress, but little Ellen learnt to love her, and has always remembered with generously expressed gratitude the benefit she derived from her suggestions and lessons. But in spite of the hard work and childish troubles that she must have undergone, she speaks brightly of every one she met in that very early engagement at the Princess's. In his old age and infirmities she sympathetically recalls Harley, the eminent comedian for whom Charles Dickens was induced to write some of those ephemeral farces that in earlier days had fitfully flourished at the St. James's Theatre; she remembers affectionately her earnest but exacting dancing-master, Mr. Oscar Byrn, and the tiring hours that she spent under his determined rule; she conjures up with pride her first and only meeting with Macready, and how, when she apologised for accidentally jostling him while running to her dressing-room, he smiled, laughed, and then said, "Never mind, you are a very polite little girl, and you act very earnestly and speak very nicely;" and she is warm in the praises of Charles Kean, and lastingly appreciative of the strong impression made upon her by his vivid personality. But I fancy that the sunny nature of Ellen Terry has found good [42]
in everything, and, throughout her stage career, has shed brightness and warmth on the somewhat dingy world behind the scenes.

My friend, Geneviève Ward, who has taken part with her in several of her memorable Lyceum triumphs, tells me that it is delightful to bear witness to her sweet disposition—a cultivated charm that prompts her to be generous, thoughtful, kind, and considerate to every one, and to make her genuinely anxious that the humblest actresses in the company, as well as the principals, should appear to the best advantage. Thus lovingly thinking of others, Ellen Terry makes herself loved, and by her radiant presence lightens many a weary heart.

In her own gossamer-like and gem-bespangled "Stray Memories," she has written: "Why is it, I wonder, that pain is so deeply felt at the time, and that its memory fades so quickly, while joy flits by almost unperceived, and yet leaves such deep traces behind? At least, this is my experience. It may not be so with most people. They may, perhaps, suffer deeply and remember lightly; enjoy strongly and forget quickly. If so, I pity them with all my heart. When I sit down to write it is not the sad recollections that come crowding before me; it is the bright joyous moments which shape themselves most distinctly in my mind. 'Oh, what a light, frivolous nature you must have, then!' I hear some grave and reverend signior remark, if any such person ever deigns to read this flimsy [43]
chatter. Well, I am ready to plead guilty to the charge. I was made like that, and so Nature is to blame, and not I."

Ours would be a gayer and happier world if Nature had cast more of us in the same mould.

Another Princess's experience was her appearance as a diminutive "Tiger" page-boy in a farce by Edmund Yates, entitled "If the Cap Fits," and she confesses to the infinite pride she took in her pair of miniature and rather tight-fitting top-boots. Here again, though in a different way to her Shakespearean representations, genuine success was secured. In his interesting volumes of "Reminiscences" Edmund Yates records the production, saying, that "'If the Cap Fits' was

admirably acted by, amongst others, Mr. Frank Mathews, Mr. Walter Lacy, and Miss Ellen Terry ... who played a juvenile groom, a 'tiger,' with great spirit and vivacity." And, much later on, he says: "In the present days of genuine heroine-worship, with recollections full upon us of Beatrice, Viola, Olivia, and Camma, it seems odd to read, in connection with this slight comedietta, that Miss Ellen Terry is worthy of praise for the spirit and point with which she played the part of a youthful groom."

Evidently she believed in the same doctrine as, in his early days, Colley Cibber did. Weary of being told that the parts he wanted to attempt were "not in his way," he protested: "I think anything, naturally written, ought to be in everybody's way that pretends to be an actor." [44]

Ellen Terry could not agree with those critics who declared that Charles Kean went too far in the mounting of his plays. The theatre-goers of those days had not been taught to expect beautiful and correct scenery, and exact accuracy in costume; and some of them actually resented it, leaning to the view held by Kean's contemporary and friend, Dr. Westland Marston, who considered that in some of the spectacular revivals at the Princess's, unnecessary pageantry was not only introduced but absolutely obtruded. For example, he said that in the beautiful production of Richard II. a display of too minute correctness in armorial bearings, weapons and household vessels made the stage an auxiliary to the museum, and forced it to combine lessons on archæology with the display of character and passion.

Such were the thanks that Charles Kean received for his indefatigable and scholarly research, and lavish expenditure! How he would have loved to hear his little Mamillius and winsome Puck declare in the days of her fame, and when hers had become a voice in the land greater than his own, that with rare perception he had opened his eyes to the absurd anachronisms in costume and accessories which prevailed at that period, and that he established a system which has been perfected by Sir Henry Irving and his contemporaries. To have been a pioneer in good work eventually means fame, but pioneers are apt to be distrusted by those who have not the courage [45] to accompany them on their explorations.

She also draws an apt comparison between the remuneration and work of the actors of the Charles Kean days and now.

"Very young actors," she says (I again venture to quote from her "Stray Memories"), "sometimes complain of low salaries and long hours. I wish they could see Mr. Kean's salary-list—they would soon cease to grumble. Why, a young man to-day gets as much for carrying on a coal-box as an experienced actor then received for playing an important part. Then, how different the hours are! If a company now has to rehearse for four hours in the day it is thought a great hardship. But when I was a child rehearsals often used to last until four or five in the morning. What weary work it was to be sure! My poor little legs used to ache, and sometimes I could hardly keep my eyes open when I was on the stage. Often I used to creep into the green-room, which every one acquainted with the old Princess's will remember well; and there, curled up in the deep recess of the window, forget myself, my troubles, and my art—if you can talk of art in connection with a child of eight—in a delicious sleep."

It is a pathetic little portrait, but the hard work, the early training and the weary hours resulted in well won, nay almost unique success, and an artistic career that has rejoiced the hearts of her [46] fellow creatures, and will for ever live in the history of the stage.

Charles Kean's memorable management of the Princess's Theatre came to an end in 1859, and with it terminated the engagement of the Terry family.

In thinking of Charles Kean I always conjure up three pictures.

The first one represents the dingy lodging in the now demolished Cecil Street, Strand, where his father, Edmund Kean, is staying with his devoted wife and three-year-old boy. The struggling strolling player has got his chance at last. He is to appear to-night as Shylock at Drury Lane. It is the night of January 14, 1814, and in theatrical lore is for ever memorable. "I must dine to-day," the nervous actor said—and for the first time in many days he indulged in the luxury of meat. "My God!" he exclaimed to his wife, "if I succeed I shall go mad!" As the church clocks were striking six he sallied forth from his meagre apartment with the parting words: "I wish I was going to be shot." In his hand he carried a small bundle—containing shoes, stockings, wig, and other trifles of costume, and so he trudged through the cold and foggy streets, and the thick slush of thawing snow that penetrated his worn boots and chilled him to the bone. And then the exultant return home after the curtain had fallen upon the wild enthusiasm of an electrified audience! Nearly mad with delight, and with half-frenzied incoherency he poured forth the story of his triumph. [47] "Mary!" he cried to his wife, "you shall ride in your carriage yet! Charles," lifting the boy from his bed, "shall go to Eton!"

Then followed his career of unexampled success and prosperity continually marred and at last ruined by the dissipated habits to which this giant among tragic actors allowed himself to become the unhappy victim—habits that wrecked his home and well-nigh ruined his reputation. Between 1814 and 1827 his earnings had amounted to £200,000, and yet when he died in 1833 everything he left behind him, all his presents and mementos, had to be sent to the hammer to pay his debts.

The 25th March 1833 (here is my second picture) saw the end of his stage career. For the first and only time Edmund the father and Charles the son (who had been sent to Eton, but who had taken to the stage as most of the sons of true actors will) stood upon the London boards together, the one playing Othello, the other Iago.

The event caused great excitement among playgoers, and the house was crammed to suffocation.

But Edmund Kean went through his part "dying as he went," until he came to the "Farewell,"—and the strangely appropriate words—"Othello's occupation's gone."

Then he gasped for breath, and, falling upon his son's shoulder, moaned, "I am dying, speak to them for me." Within a few months the restless spirit of Edmund Kean was at peace in the quiet churchyard at Richmond. [48]

The third picture has been limned by Dr. Westland Marston, and shows a sad little episode in the declining years of Charles Kean, a man who, devoid of the genius of his erring father, had ever attempted to promote the highest interests of his calling, and to do good in the world.

"In the autumn of 1866," says my vivid word painter, "I chanced to be at Scarborough. The evening before leaving, when passing by one of the hotels—I think the Prince of Wales's—there appeared, framed in one of the windows, a worn, pallid face, with a look of deep melancholy abstraction. 'Charles Kean!' I exclaimed to myself, and prepared to retrace my way and call. But, having heard already that he had been seriously unwell while playing a round of provincial engagements, I thought it better not to disturb him or to bring home to him a grave impression as to his health, even by a card of enquiry. In little more than a year after this his death took place. It occurred in January 1868, when he had reached his fifty-seventh year.... His friends who are still amongst us will cherish the recollection of a high-principled gentleman, warm in his attachments, generous in extending to others the appreciation he coveted for himself, and gifted with a charm of simple candour that made even his weaknesses endearing."

TOWER COTTAGE, WINCHELSEA.

Ellen Terry's country home. **[*To face page 48.***

It is to be feared that in the theatrical career on which he started with so much energy and confidence Charles Kean met with lack of appreciation and much disappointment. [49]

I wonder what would have been the effect if the consoling words of George William Curtis (one of the most beautiful of American writers) had been wafted to him across the Atlantic?

"Success," says Curtis, "is a delusion. It is an attainment—but who attains? It is the horizon, always bounding our path and therefore never gained. The Pope, triple-crowned, and borne with flabella through St. Peter's, is not successful—for he might be canonised into a saint. Pygmalion, before his perfect statue, is not successful,—for it might live. Raphael, finishing the Sistine Madonna, is not successful,—for her beauty has revealed to him a finer and an unattainable beauty."

To the true artist such truths as these strike home, and I fear they often throw their cloud over the apparently ever sunny-minded Ellen Terry. It is a fact that she often feels she has failed where enthusiastic audiences, and even the most captious critics, testify to the fact that she has triumphed. But she knows that any seeming victory in human life is not final achievement, but a spur (often a cruel one) to endless endeavour. The artistic temperament must be more or less self-tormenting, and those who desire mere personal comfort should never attempt to cultivate it. Devoid of it they can smugly criticise, and with intense self-satisfaction condemn, the life work of those who well nigh exhaust their energies in order to provide them with entertainment. [50]

At the conclusion of the Princess's engagement Mr. Ben Terry seems to have been inspired by a happy thought. Probably he knew that in 1859 there were thousands of goody-goody people who did not like to be seen in a real theatre, but who would flock to see theatricals under the guise of "A Drawing-Room Entertainment." Possibly he was aware that the congregations of goody-goodies, who still had an idea that Mawworm was right when he declared that the playhouse was the devil's hot-bed, took an eager interest in reading anything that appeared concerning the stage. The youthful fame of Kate and Ellen Terry was well established. Their stars were in the ascendant, everybody (including the useful army of goody-goodies) wanted to see them;—why not

let them appear in a "Drawing-Room Entertainment"?

Perhaps I am wrong in hinting at such things as these in connection with the business arrangements of Mr. Ben Terry. Anyway, a "Drawing-Room Entertainment" was devised for the attractive sisters, and it became exceedingly popular.

It was first brought out at the Royal Colosseum, Regent's Park, in those days a favourite place for amusements of this description. It proved so attractive that it ran for thirty consecutive nights, during which more than thirty thousand people paid for admission, and expressed their delight in the entertainment. Thus encouraged, it was taken on tour to the leading as well as the smaller provincial towns. [51]

Those who, like myself, remember the Colosseum as it used to be, and were in their juvenile days taken there as to one of the "Sights of London," will remember the weird, imitation stalactite caverns. Ellen Terry has confessed that it was amid the artificial gloom of these shams that she first studied Juliet. At least they served one good purpose! By the courtesy of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald I am able to give the following copy of the Terry programme.

LECTURE HALL, CROYDON

For One Night Only
Tuesday Evening, March 13th, 1860

MISS KATE TERRY
AND
MISS ELLEN TERRY

The original representatives of Ariel, Cordelia, Arthur, Puck, etc. (which characters were acted by them upwards of one hundred consecutive nights, and also before Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen), at the Royal Princess's Theatre, when under the management of Mr. Charles Kean, will present their new and successful

ILLUSTRATIVE AND MUSICAL

DRAWING-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT

In Two Parts, entitled
"DISTANT RELATIONS" AND "HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS"
In which they will sustain several
CHARACTERS IN FULL COSTUME

The second item on the modest little play-bill appears to have been the strong attraction. In this [52] Kate Terry played the part of a charming young lady who is discovered eagerly expecting her younger brother's arrival home for his first holidays. She pictures to herself the innocent, tender-hearted, shy little fellow who only a few months ago was sent away "unwillingly to school," and she longs to kiss him, and once more pour out upon him her sweet sisterly sympathy. But to her astonishment, when Harry—(impersonated by Ellen Terry)—appears, she finds that in a very short period he has degenerated, and acquired the habits of a precocious, over-dressed, cigar-smoking, horsey little cad. After some amusing scenes, in which the shocked sister endeavours to appeal to the better senses of the irrepressible little monkey, she goes out, and returning disguised as a determined old gentlewoman, endeavours to replace gentle persuasion by superior force. In a way she succeeds, and then a cleverly brought about little episode shows her that beneath the shoddy veneer of her brother's silly would-be-manly habits his true heart beats and yearns towards her; and so they kiss and are friends again, and at curtain-fall the audience know that both for sister and brother the holidays will be happy ones.

Kate Terry was admirable both as the dismayed girl and the elderly lady, and Ellen Terry caused abundant amusement as the impish schoolboy. "Distant Relations" was also a clever little sketch, [53] and the entertainment was at once merry and interesting.

Ellen Terry speaks with fond recollection of that little touring party of five, the odd number being made up by Mr. Sydney Naylor, who, in the capacity of pianist (he subsequently made for himself a well-known name), accompanied the father and mother and their two young daughters. For more than two years they gaily travelled from town to town, supremely happy in each other's society, always drawing large and appreciative audiences, and having every reason to be satisfied with the financial results of their experiment. No doubt it was a "good time," and probably all concerned in it were sorry when it came to an end; but even two years make a great difference in young ladies of tender age—all entertainments run their course—and more serious work had to be approached.

London was naturally their goal, and Ellen Terry soon found an engagement at the Royalty Theatre. The little Soho playhouse—the scene of varying fortunes and many strange theatrical experiments—had just passed into the hands of a Madame Albina de Rhona, an attractive Parisian actress and *danseuse*. Having made her name in Paris and St. Petersburg, this ambitious lady had resolved to captivate London, and, as her appearances at the St. James's and Drury Lane Theatres had met with encouragement, she boldly resolved to try her luck as an English [54] manageress. One of her first attractions at the Royalty (by the way, it was originally called the Royal Soho Theatre, and Madame de Rhona is credited with having given it its new and brighter name) was an adaptation of Eugene Sue's romance, "Atar-Gull."

On the stage it was the grimmest and wildest of productions, and of all the strange pranks played on the boards of the Royalty, this must surely have been the strangest. It set forth a ghastly story of a negro who (the scene was laid in Jamaica), in order to avenge the death of his father, made it his life's business to murder every member of his master's family. The piece was replete with horrors and wholly unsuited to the little bandbox of a house, which, in later years, when the Broughs, Burnand, and other humorous writers were at their brightest, and when burlesque was true burlesque—witty, coherent, and cohesive, we associated with all that is exhilarating and mirth-provoking. Those who, with me, can conjure up the days of the "Patty" Oliver *régime* will know what I mean.

But all I have to do with the gruesome "Atar-Gull" is to make brief note of the part in it that Ellen Terry was called upon to play. It was that of a fair young girl named Clementine who (not unnaturally) has an aversion to the snakes that infest her environment. In order to cure her of this reprehensible prejudice, it occurs to some idiot (possibly an interfering aunt) to order a dead [55] snake to be put in her room. This is an opportunity for the revengeful negro, and he contrives to give her a live and deadly reptile for her companion. With the living venomous creature coiled about her neck and body, and ever tightening its scaly, slimy hug, the terrified girl appears screaming on the stage. Into this horrible situation, and the opportunity it afforded her, the still childish Ellen Terry put her whole heart, and outscreamed all actresses, whether young or old. It was not one prolonged scream and then collapse. As her terror and agony seemed to increase, shriek succeeded shriek—a shriek for deliverance—a shriek of bodily anguish—and a shriek of hopeless despair. No doubt the effect was startling, and unquestionably it thrilled her audiences. It was all wonderfully done, and the fear of the wretched girl was depicted with almost painful fidelity. But the ridiculous, misplaced, and sensational play made the situation an absurd one.

If it were repeated to-day we should think of the nonsense rhyme—

"There was a young lady of Russia,
Who screamed so, that no one could hush her."

As it was, it made many people laugh; but on the critics, who could "read between the lines," it left its impression, and gave hope of wondrous things to come. Happily, most of them lived to see them come. It was all a question of training. According to Ellen Terry's own account, Madame [56] Albina de Rhona must have been a very difficult lady to work under, and yet her warm heart prompts her to speak to-day in affectionate terms of her second manageress. In the case of this gifted child the quality of mercy was never strained. Her tasks had to be endured, but she schooled herself to enjoy them, and she tried to love those with whom she worked.

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[57]

CHAPTER III

THE BRISTOL STOCK COMPANY

The engagement at the Royalty was only a stopgap, and at its termination the wise Mr. Ben Terry took his daughter "to school," in one of the famous stock companies that then most happily existed in all the large provincial towns. They were indeed "schools"—schools of a very practical order—and in them most of the leading actors of our generation graduated.

Now that they have vanished, the great question among the would-be actors and actresses of to-day (or I should say among those who are in earnest) is "where can we find a true dramatic school?" Alas! too many of them abjure school, and, with the awkwardness (though very little of the timidity) of half-fledged birds, flutter blindly on to the stage, and blunder under the unwonted glare of footlights, to the bewilderment of the theatrical *habitués* and the despair of critics, but apparently to the great satisfaction of themselves and their foolishly admiring friends.

I am inclined to think that theatre-lovers who never lived in a large town in the good old stock company days missed one of the joys of life. The actors and actresses in those companies (I speak [58] from personal experience) were our pride and our delight. Their names were familiar in our mouths and homes as household words. Eagerly we scanned the ever-changing play-bills to see what this or that favourite would do next; anxiously we turned to the newspaper to see if the privileged critic did full justice to them. They were, both on and off the stage, our local heroes, heroines, soul-inspirers, and mirth-provokers. They were familiar figures in our streets, and we loved to meet them. When, according to the custom of those days, the "stars" from London came down to be supported by the stock company, we were so loyal to the friends who delighted us all the year round that we pretended to think little or nothing of the stars. When, in due course, some of them moved on to London, we watched their careers with the deepest interest. In short, between the players and their patrons there existed a personal affection. If they did not know each other "off the stage," the magnetic touch was there, and it meant everything to those on both sides of the curtain. The result was painstaking and sound (if not always great) acting, and well-judged applause from fond and encouraging audiences. Under such conditions, actors who already had their hearts in their vocation, did not care how hard they worked, and constant experience, coupled with true endeavour, perfected them in their art.

But it *was* hard work! Edward Compton has told me that at the shortest notice he was called [59] upon to study and play within one week important parts in "The Octoroon," "The Old Toll House," "Thirty Years of a Gambler's Life," and "Raby Rattler," and I believe Sir Henry Irving could record even harder experiences.

But the firing of the clay brought out the colours on the porcelain, and the colours lasted. At the time when Ellen Terry was taken to one of these important schools, there was no better stock company in England than that brought together by Mr. J. H. Chute, the enterprising and far-seeing manager of the Theatre Royal, Bristol. Mr. Chute seemed to have a knack of gathering about him most of the promising young artists of the day, and certainly those who learnt their lessons under the roof of his academy did justice to his name.

It is tantalising to think of a West of England stock company (Mr. Chute at that time was

responsible for the Bath as well as the Bristol theatre) that, within a very short period, could boast of such a constellation of names as Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal), Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft), Henrietta Hodson (Mrs. Labouchere), Kate Bishop, Kate and Ellen Terry, George Melville, Arthur Stirling, George and William Rignold, W. H. Vernon, David James, Charles Coghlan, Arthur Wood, John Rouse, and J. F. Cathcart.

No wonder that in such a school, and with such schoolmates, Ellen Terry learnt very useful [60] lessons. There was an abundance of work. One-act farces and genuine burlesques were then in vogue, and these, with tragedy or comedy, formed the day's rehearsal and the evening's bill. Every one took part in them, and both for brains and body it was sharp and onerous work. But they were enthusiasts; they were aware of their local popularity; they were ready to tackle anything that came in their way, and so their names were made.

For example, Ellen Terry was cast for a part in a burlesque. She told the stage manager that she could neither sing nor dance. The reply was laconic and decisive: "*You've got to do it!*" "And I did, in a way," she says; "but it was the best thing that could happen to me, for it took the self-consciousness out of me—and, after a while, I thought it was capital fun, for the Bath and Bristol people were very kind."

But it was not all burlesque. Relief to clever William Brough's "Endymion"—"Perseus and Andromeda; or the Maid and the Monster," and so forth, was found in serious drama, and sometimes in Shakespeare. Kate Terry had preceded her younger sister to Bristol, and speedily established herself as a favourite. Her Portia and Beatrice were already popular performances, and renewed zest was added to them when "Pretty Miss Ellen" was at hand to play Nerissa and Hero.

During this useful engagement Ellen Terry formed an intense admiration for some of her co- [61] mates. She fell in love with the beautiful singing voice of Madge Robertson (it was an open question then whether our Mrs. Kendal of to-day would devote herself to opera or drama), and she is especially warm in her praises of the finished acting of Charles Coghlan. How some of these budding artists crossed each other's paths in later and famous days we shall see in the course of these pages.

From an old friend, who in the days of his youth aspired to be an actor, but, after a short trial, quitted the stage to make his name as journalist and author, I have received the following interesting notes:—

"You ask me, my dear Pemberton," he writes, "to give you my recollections of Ellen Terry in those now, alas! far-off days of my youth, when I was for a brief time connected in a very humble capacity with the Theatre Royal, Bristol. It was in the early sixties (1862, I think) that Ellen and her elder sister, Kate (now Mrs. Arthur Lewis), were engaged by the late James Henry Chute as members of his stock company, Kate playing the juvenile lead and the principal ladies in the classical burlesques, which were then the vogue and quite as attractive as the legitimate drama. The company also included Miss Henrietta Hodson (now Mrs. Labouchere), soubrette and principal boy, the late Charles Coghlan, light comedian, William and George Rignold, John Rouse, Mr. and Mrs. Robertson, and their daughter Madge, the latter only in her early 'teens, and Arthur [62] Wood, 'first low comedian.'

"Ellen Terry was then a girl of about fourteen, of tall figure, with a round, dimpled, laughing, mischievous face, a pair of merry, saucy grey eyes, and an aureole of golden hair, which she wore, in the words of a modern ditty, 'hanging down her back.' Although dwarfed, in a measure, as an actress, by the more experienced skill and the superior *rôles* of her fascinating sister, Ellen soon became a great favourite in Bristol. Her popularity was largely due to her performances in two of the Brough brothers' burlesques—'Endymion' and 'Perseus and Andromeda.' In the former Miss Hodson played Endymion, Kate Terry was Diana, and Ellen, Cupid, and a very arch, piquant sprite, full of movement and laughter, Miss Ellen was.

"She wore a loose short-skirted sort of tunic with a pair of miniature wings, and of course carried the conventional bow and quiver. Some of the more prudish of the Bristol theatre-goers—the same people who had been wont to roar over the vulgar comicalities of Johnny Rouse—were half inclined to be shocked at a scantiness of attire that even Mr. Chute himself was disposed to think (*i.e.* for the modest early sixties: to-day a Cupid *with a* '*skirted* tunic' would be considered sadly over-dressed) a 'little daring.'

"But Ellen Terry's charm, her delightful grace and innate refinement, quite disarmed the prudes, [63] and Cupid triumphed in front of the curtain as well as behind it, and lightly shot his darts in all directions. Miss Hodson was at that time a deservedly great favourite, but the Terry sisters unconsciously became the founders of a new cult among local playgoers, and set up an empire of their own; in fact, I am hardly exaggerating if I say that there were among the gilded youth of Bristol two rival factions—the Hodson faction and the Terry faction, whose friendly antagonism was as keen, if not as fatal, as that of the Montagues and the Capulets.

"If my memory serves me right, Ellen was the Dictys of the other burlesque, Miss Hodson and Miss Kate Terry playing the two *rôles* of the title. In one of these pieces Arthur Wood had to speak a line in which occurs the phrase, "such a mystery here." He made much nightly capital—for these burlesques had long runs considering they were played by a stock company in a provincial theatre—by emphasising the syllables of 'mystery,' so as to make the sentence sound 'such a Miss Terry here.'

"I was only a general utility actor in that company, and I had to play one of the crowd in 'Perseus and Andromeda,' whose duty it was to be suddenly turned to stone, after the fashion of Lot's wife

—only with a more studied artistic pose—at the sight of Medusa's head. In order to give *vraisemblance* to the illusion, we of the populace were costumed in a parti-coloured fashion, one [64] half white, the other half of some strong colour, and our faces were made up on one side only with a sort of whitewash. When, at the given signal, we turned round our white sides with the precision of soldiers at drill to the full stream of the limelight, striking simultaneously more or less statuesque attitudes, the situation was, for those days, effective, and nightly brought down the house and evoked a call for the manager. I recollect that before the production, in order to ascertain the effect of the whitewash, one or two of us, true to our profession of 'general utility,' had to put it on at a midnight rehearsal, after we had resumed our ordinary dress. Many years have elapsed since the incident, yet I can still hear the peals of musical laughter with which Ellen Terry greeted our intensely comical appearance, and I can still see the mischief and good-natured ridicule sparkling in her merry eyes.

"If I had to describe her acting in those days, I should say its chief characteristic was a vivacious sauciness. Her voice already had some of the rich sympathetic quality which has since been one of her most distinctive charms. Although only in the first flush of a joyous girlhood, she was yet familiar enough with the stage to be absolutely at home on it, and in such complete touch with her audiences that she could afford to discard the serious spirit altogether, even when the situation demanded a less frivolous mood. That she made these little subordinate parts in the [65] burlesques not only dominate the stage at the time, but also caused them to live in the memory all these years, is evidence enough of the compelling force and infection of her irrepressible mirthfulness. At rehearsals, even more than when acting, she was brimful of merriment, taking nothing gravely;—a gay, mercurial child, flitting about hither and thither with ever the same exuberant *insouciance*, the same defiant spirit of laughter, as if life and all its possibilities of tangle and tragedy had only a holiday meeting for her. As I look back on those bright and too brief 'salad' days, it seems to me that Ellen Terry might have been regarded as the epitome of that 'golden age' in which people 'fleeted the time carelessly.'

"Mrs. Terry always accompanied her daughters to and from the theatre every night, and watched them from the wings during the whole time they were on the stage. They lodged during the season in Queen Square, then the recognised quarter for theatrical folks. The theatre itself was situated in King Street; I believe it still exists, but its glory, like that of Ichabod, has long since departed. A theatre in Park Row has superseded the famous old house where so many great actors and actresses were trained; and the whole neighbourhood round that building, once throbbing with artistic interest, has become sordid and neglected, and redolent of ship chandlery. [66] But in the old times, outside the little narrow stage-door, crowds of dazzled Lotharios and stage-struck worshippers used to throng to see the 'Terrys' go home after the performance. Mrs. Terry played her part of duenna with uncommon vigilance, and it was little more than a snap-shot vision of three hurrying and well-wrapped up figures that rewarded the admirers for their patience.

"I recollect one poor lad who was an assistant in a large drapery establishment in Wine Street, Bristol. He was infatuated with the beautiful Kate Terry, though he had never spoken to her, and probably he never even saw her off the stage. But he left bouquets and other gifts addressed to her at the stage-door, and as there was nothing to indicate who the donor was, or where he lived, she could not send them back. Sometime after this young fellow was arrested for embezzlement. He had taken his employer's money, partly in order to gratify a passion for the theatre, and partly to enable him to buy presents for the divinity whom he worshipped from afar. It was a painful little drama of real life; and I know that no one was more distressed than Miss Terry herself when she read the account of the magisterial proceedings in the paper.

"I could tell you a lot about the 'Old Duke' tavern, the famous theatrical rendezvous of those days; but the 'Terrys,' of course, did not come on in that convivial scene. I am reminded, however, that [67] one of its regular *habitués* was Charley Adams, the theatre prompter, about whom many diverting stories might be told. Whenever there was a stage wait or anything went wrong, Charley lost his head entirely, and rushed about with 'language' on his lips and tears streaming down his cheeks. On one occasion the stage was kept waiting for George Rignold, the audience began to be impatient, and Charley was distracted. Ellen Terry happened to be standing in the prompt wing, and, rendered desperate by the growing delay, Charley, with forcible if florid eloquence, expressed in the true Bristol vernacular, pushed her on to the stage. 'Go on! go on!' he screamed, making the objective of his imperative mood fairly totter with adjectives. Miss Terry was, however, by no means embarrassed. She quietly took in the situation: her always welcome presence elicited a hearty cheer, and by the time she had crossed the stage and disappeared on the O.P. side, the missing actor had turned up and proceeded to 'smooth out the creases.'

"Poor old Charley was often a butt for Ellen Terry's pleasant banter. He was a rather illiterate man, and made mistakes of speech which were an irresistible theme of ridicule with this mirthful maiden. How she laughed when he spoke of the 'Jorgon's' head, and called the statues 'statties,' and performed other amazing feats of verbal metamorphosis.

"Charley was always at his best in the 'Old Duke' smoking-room with his long clay pipe, after his [68] sixth 'small jug' of eleemosynary beer. Then he was confidential, impressive, sententious, and 'dear boy'd' every one with a friendship which was none the less sincere because its fount was somewhat alcoholic. It is many a year since the earth closed over thee, thou poor, excitable, and sometimes self-indulgent disciple of Thespis, but none who knew thee can ever have any but kindly memories of thy simple undisguised obsequiousness to the 'star,' and thy majestically patronising mien to the super.

"I have used the name Ellen Terry throughout the above notes, but at that time she was always and to every one, 'Nelly.' She was announced as 'Miss Nelly Terry' in the play-bills, and I have an old friendly letter from her, written only a few months after she left Bristol, in which she signs herself 'Nelly.' The handwriting is angular and 'school-missish,' with no indication of the soundness and flexible strength which have since become its characteristics.

"Perhaps I have laid too much stress on the two burlesque parts which have the deepest roots in my memory. 'Miss Nelly' played other parts; she was the 'walking lady' of the company, and I have (rather hazy) recollections of her in a crinolined dress in that fine old melodrama 'The Angel of Midnight; or, The Duel in the Snow'; as a fashionable dame in the glittering but immoral coterie which forms the personal background in 'The Marble Heart'; and as the *ingenue* in a once [69] popular comedietta entitled 'The Little Treasure.'

"To say that she then showed unmistakable promise of the pre-eminent position to which she has since attained in English dramatic art would be to exhibit that 'after-the-event' wisdom which is so common a feature of modern prophecy. I will only say that we, the young fellows of that day, thought she was perfection; we toasted her in our necessarily frugal measures; we would gladly have been her hewers of wood and drawers of water. She had personal charm as well as histrionic skill. Her smiles were very sweet, but, alack for all of us, they were mathematically impartial."

These jottings are not only interesting as regards the early career of Kate and Ellen Terry, but they prove my views as to the affection in which the famous old stock companies were held by their devoted provincial patrons. In these days of ephemeral touring troupes such a condition of things is impossible, and really earnest students of the drama starve for lack of nourishment.

On April 2, 1862, the old Bath Theatre of many glorious memories was destroyed by fire; but James Henry Chute was not the man to be dismayed by disaster. Within a year it was rebuilt, and on March 4, 1863, was again ready for its faithful audiences.

As the opening programme is now historic, it is well to reproduce it here:— [70]

NEW THEATRE ROYAL, BATH.

First Night.

Lessee and Manager, **James Henry Chute.**

Prices—The following scale of prices has been adopted for the opening night—Dress Circle, 5/-; Upper Circle, 3/-; Pit and Amphitheatre (entrance in Beaufort Square), 2/-; Gallery (entrance in St. John's Place), 1/-. No second price.

Prices of Admission after the first night will be as follows—Dress Circle, 4/-; second price, 2/6. Upper Boxes, 2/-; second price, 1/6. Pit, 1/6; second price, 1/-. Amphitheatre (entrance in St. John's Place), 1/-. Gallery, 6d. Private Boxes, 20/-, 25/-, 30/-.

Box Office—The Box Office, under the direction of Mr. Gifford, for a few days will be at Mr H. N. King's Photographic Establishment, 42 Milsom Street, the proprietor having kindly placed his view-room at the service of the manager.

Leader of the Band	Mr T. H. Salmon
Stage Manager	Mr Marshall
Scenic Artist	Mr G. Gordon

Dramatic Prologue—

Written expressly for the occasion by G. F. Powell, Esq.

The Spirit of the Past	by Miss Henrietta Hodson
The Spirit of the Future	by Miss Ellen Terry (her first appearance here)
The Spirit of the Hour (Lord Dundreary)	by Mr W. Rignold
The Spirit of the Times (Sensation)	by Mr A. Wood
The Spirit of Fashion	by Miss Desborough (first appearance here)
Fortune	by Miss Elizabeth Burton
Comedy	by Mr Charles Coghlan (his first appearance)
Tragedy	by Mr George Yates (his first appearance)
Mr Chute (Lessee and Manager)	by Himself.

"God save the Queen."

Verse and Chorus by the Company.

To be followed by Shakespeare's

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

As arranged for representation by Mr Charles Kean, and performed 150 times at the Royal Princess's Theatre. With entirely new Scenery, Costumes, Decorations, Appointments, Mechanical Appliances, and Mendelssohn's music.

The Scenery by Mr W. Gordon, Mr George Gordon, Mr Geo. Philips, Mr Horne & Assistants. The Machinery by Mr Harwell. The Costumes by Miss Jarrett and Assistants. The Appointments by Mr Pritchard. The Action and Dances by Miss Powell.

Music arranged by Mr J. L. Hatton & Mr Salmon.

Theseus (Prince of Athens)	Mr George Rignold
Egeus (father to Hermia)	Mr Robertson
Lysander (in love with Hermia)	Mr William Rignold
Demetrius (" ")	Mr Charles Coghlan
Philostrate (Master of Revels to Theseus)	Mr Brunel
Quince (the Carpenter)	Mr Marshall (first appearance these two years)
Snug (the Joiner)	Mr Douglas Gray
Bottom (the Weaver)	Mr A. Wood
Flute (the bellows-mender)	Mr H. Andrews
Snout (the Tinker)	Mr Marchant
Starveling (the Tailor)	Mr Gibson
Hippolyta (Queen of the Amazons)	Miss Louisa Thorne
(betrothed to Theseus)	(first appearance in Bath)
Hermia (daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander)	Miss Elizabeth Burton
Helena (in love with Demetrius)	Miss Desborough
Oberon (King of the Fairies)	Miss Henrietta Hodson
Titania (Queen of the Fairies)	Miss Ellen Terry
Puck, or Robin Goodfellow (a Fairy)	Master Edmund Marshall
First Singing Fairy	Miss M. Cruse
Second Singing Fairy	Miss Madge Robertson
Third Singing Fairy	Miss F. Douglas
Fairies who join in a shadow dance	Miss Powell & her pupils
Peablossom	Miss Ellen Seymour
Moth	Miss E. Frailly
Cobweb	Master F. Marshall
Mustard-seed	Miss I. Marshall

Fairies— [72]

Demoiselles Margarets, Montague, Owen, Fanny Marshall, Bullock, Vaughan, Clarke, A. Clarke, Gibson, Marchant, Holmes, Wootton, etc.

Other Fairies attending their King and Queen—

Misses Seymour, C. Wootten, Goodyer, Frailly, E. Frailly, C. Marchant, F. Marchant, Watts, etc.

Characters in Interlude performed by the Clowns—

Pyramus, by Bottom; Wall, by Snout; Thisbe, by Flute; Moonshine, by Starveling; Lion, by Snug.

Attendants on Theseus & Hippolyta—Huntsman, Esquire, etc.

The new Act-Drop by Messrs Grieve and Telbin.

To conclude with the new and laughable Farce, by J. Wooler, Esq., called:

MARRIAGE AT ANY PRICE

Brownjohn Brown (Of the Laburnums)	Mr Marshall
Simon Gushington	Mr William Rignold
Tubs	Mr Gibson
Alick	Mr Wilson

Peter Peppercorn Jemima Ann Charley Bitt	} } }	Mr A. Wood
Kate Gushington Bob, Tiger Jemima, a Housemaid	} } }	Miss Henrietta Hodson
Alice, Niece to Brown		Miss Madge Robertson.
Matilda Peppercorn		Miss Louisa Thorne

Speaking by the light of to-day, this was indeed a rich cast, and it is interesting to note how Madge Robertson and Ellen Terry—destined to become the two greatest actresses of their [73] generation—thus played together in their "'prentice days." No doubt the "singing fairy" of the evening inspired Titania with her admiration for Mrs. Kendal's exquisite voice.

Long after their stock company days, the Terry Sisters held their well-merited and remarkable popularity in Bristol. That distinguished actor, W. H. Vernon, who, as we have seen, graduated as one of Mr. Chute's "young people," has told me how enthusiastically they were received when, with London honours thick upon them, they came to "star" in their old "school," in a piece called "A Sister's Penance," which had been a great success at the Adelphi Theatre. Vernon, who was "Miss Nelly's" lover on that occasion, was immensely struck by her merriment and high spirits at the rehearsal in the morning and (in contrast) her wonderful display of true emotion in the performance of the evening.

In connection with Ellen Terry's next appearance in London, it is curious to note that in the famous Bath programme that preceded it, William Rignold should figure as "Lord Dundreary"—the "Spirit of the Hour"; and that she should be so aptly chosen for "The Spirit of the Future."

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[74]

CHAPTER IV

AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE

The compiler of the Bath programme was right when he spoke of Lord Dundreary as the "Spirit of the Hour." The phenomenal success of the late E. A. Sothern in this eccentric and most original character, at the Haymarket Theatre, had taken all London (nay, all England) by storm. At the time of which I am writing the name of Dundreary was upon the lips of every one. Men cultivated Dundreary whiskers, and affected Dundreary coats, waistcoats, and trousers; indeed, Sothern had become such a good friend to the tailors that, if he would have accepted them, he might have been furnished, without any mention of payment, with clothes sufficient for a dozen lifetimes. His dressing-room at the Haymarket was crowded with parcels sent by energetic haberdashers, who knew that if by wearing it upon the stage he would set the fashion for a certain sort of necktie, or a particular pattern of shirt-cuff or collar, their fortunes would be half made; and hatters and boot-makers followed in the haberdashers' wake. Dundreary photographs were seen everywhere. "Dundrearyisms," as they came to be called, were the fashionable *mots* of the day; and little [75] books (generally very badly done) dealing with the imaginary doings of Dundreary under every possible condition, and in every quarter of the globe, were in their thousands sold at the street corners. Concerning Dundreary quite three parts of England went more than half mad, and not to know all about him and his deliciously quaint sayings and doings was to argue yourself unknown.

The actor who not only caused but sustained all this excitement must have achieved something far greater than the mere creation of a new type of "stage swell." Dundreary was a study for the philosopher as well as a laughing-stock for the idler, and he thus became popular with all classes of the community.

But in 1863 Sothern was growing tired of *toujours* Dundreary. He was a restless as well as an ambitious actor, and he longed for a change. An Englishman by birth and training, all his great successes (including Dundreary) had been won in America, and he wished to show the Haymarket audiences what he could do in other characters. For the time being that fine old actor-manager, J. B. Buckstone, could not hear of his "Lordship" being out of the bill, so Sothern had to content himself with occasional afterpieces.

Among the characters that he fancied was that of Captain Walter Maydenblush in that pretty little adaptation from the French, "La Joie de la Maison," entitled "The Little Treasure." It is a [76] very effective light comedy part, but the mainstay of the piece is the "joy of the house," the sweet young girl, Gertrude. When the piece was first produced at the Haymarket this part had been played by Blanche Fane, the idol of her day, and it had also been made familiar to playgoers by the ever-fascinating Marie Wilton, now Lady Bancroft. Sothern knew very well that without an attractive Gertrude his Walter Maydenblush would go for nothing. Where was she to be found? Well, as we have seen, Ellen Terry had played the part in Bristol. Her growing fame had reached London, and she was engaged to re-create it at the Haymarket.

Although the piece was a subordinate one, her ordeal was formidable, for she had to challenge comparison with her popular and gifted predecessors in a character that required an abundance of delicacy and finesse.

Her success was instantaneous. In writing of it that outspoken critic and encyclopædia of dramatic lore, Edward Leman Blanchard, said:—

"She is very young, but shows no trace of immaturity either in her style or figure. Tall for her age, of prepossessing appearance, and with expressive features full of vivacity and intelligence, she secured at once the sympathies of her audience, and retained them by the joyous spirit and deep feeling with which she imbued the personation. In the girlish playfulness exhibited through [77] the first act Miss Ellen Terry was especially happy, and in characters illustrative of a frank and impulsive temperament the young actress will prove a most desirable addition to the feminine strength of the stage."

And so it was with all the leading critics, they, and delighted audiences, telling her that in a moment her permanent popularity in London was a thing assured.

Of course she had in due course to support Lord Dundreary in "Our American Cousin," a play which, not very good to begin with, had, for the sake of Sothern's superbly droll performance, been whittled down to a mere nothing. With the exception of the characters of Asa Trenchard (and he had been converted into an absurd caricature of an American) and Mary Meredith, the one sympathetic woman of the piece, the other parts were indeed thankless ones, and it seems impossible to think that Ellen Terry, our greatest living Shakespearean actress, was once wasted on the insipid *role* of Georgina, the affected girl on whom Dundreary was "spoony." Georgina was simply a foil for the ridiculous fop's unconscious and wonderfully uttered witticisms, and she had little more to do than to keep her countenance while the audiences roared with laughter at Sothern's wild but always coherent absurdities of speech and manner. Under this trying ordeal I have seen many Georginas break down and laugh heartily with their "kind friends in front," and I [78] have reason to know that the mischief-loving Sothern, at the risk of missing his own points, often tried to make them do so.

Of the sweet "Spirit of the Future," as this stage lay figure playing with the restless "Spirit of the Hour," Clement Scott has said:—

"When Ellen Terry played Georgina she was a young girl of enchanting loveliness. She was the ideal of every pre-Raphaelite painter, and had hair, as De Musset says, '*comme le blé*.' I always sympathised with Dundreary when he, within whispering distance of Ellen Terry's harvest-coloured hair, said: 'It makes a fellow feel awkward when he's talking to the back of a person's head.'"

In the same inexhaustible play she was called upon, a little later on, to enact the prettily limned Mary Meredith. She says she did it "vilely"; but neither critics nor audiences agreed with her.

Sothern, both on and off the stage, and both with men and women, was one of the most popular beings of his day, and it is therefore all the more surprising to hear Ellen Terry say that she could never like him. She admired him, but she could not understand his mania for practical joking. By some this has been thought odd, for it is known that she herself dearly loves a joke. I think I can explain her prejudice. Having begun one of his "sells," as he called them, Sothern did not know when to leave off, and he never seemed to reflect that it was unkind to practise his pleasantries [79] on nervous young actors.

That he did not mean to be unkind, and that if he felt he had made a mistake or had gone too far he was deeply penitent and anxious to make any atonement in his power, I, who knew him so intimately, can asseverate. But if he saw the chance of a "sell" he could hardly resist temptation, and many of those associated with him on the stage, and who did not understand his bewildering sense of humour, suffered in silence, and were secretly tortured by his odd and incessant pranks. I have no doubt this was poor Ellen Terry's position when she complains that he teased her—made her forget her part, and "look like an idiot." The following anecdote concerning the way in which he treated me (his personal friend!) and a little company of actors and actresses, working their hardest to gain a word of approbation from the great star of the period, will illustrate my meaning.

In the days of many years ago he accepted a comedietta from my pen wildly called (Sothern gave it its title) "My Wife's Father's Sister," and the little piece was produced at the Theatre Royal, Brighton. He was anxious that I should be present at its first night, but I was unable to join him until its second representation. I was to be his guest, but when I entered his room at the Grand Hotel he seemed amazed and discomforted to see me.

"What on earth brings *you* here?" he exclaimed. "Why, to see you and my piece," I replied. "Then [80] you didn't get my telegram last night?" he inquired. I told him that I had received no telegram and should be glad to know its purport. "Well," he said, in a vexed tone of voice, "I wired to beg you as a personal favour to me not to come to Brighton, but as you *are* here, we'll say no more about it."

Of course this did not satisfy me, and on being very hard pressed, he reluctantly told me that my poor little play had been a dead failure, and that he had telegraphed to me to stay away because he wanted to spare me humiliation.

"But," I said, in an agony of disappointment, "the newspapers speak well of it!"

"Yes," replied Sothern, "the critics here are good friends of mine, and I persuaded them that it was a sorry task to break a butterfly on a wheel. It was impossible for me at a moment's notice to get another after-piece ready to put in its place, but to-night 'My Wife's Father's Sister' will be played for the second and last time. Don't shirk seeing it, it will be a useful, if painful, lesson to you, and at supper to-night we'll try and find out where the fatal kink in it lies, for, as you know, I

felt certain that it was going to be a hit."

In spite of my friend's kindness, sympathy, and unbounded hospitality, I, crushed with mortification, spent a wretched afternoon, and in the early evening (Sothern, who was to play Dundreary, had preceded me) I wended my sad way to the theatre. On my walk I met a mutual friend.

SMALLHYTHE FARM.

Ellen Terry's country retreat at Tenterden, Kent. **[*To face page 80.***

"Well, how did the piece go last night?" he asked. "I was sorry I couldn't be there to see." [81]

Miserably I told him my bitter news, and how the play had failed.

"Then I believe it was Sothern's fault," he said. "He was half mad on practical jokes last night, and one of the actors has told me how he declared that *you* were in front, that you are a most exacting and irritable author, and that you were intensely annoyed at the grossly vulgar way in which, according to your reported views, your work was interpreted. One by one the actors and actresses had from his lips their dose of what they supposed, and *still* suppose, to be *your* harsh criticism. 'Abominable!' 'Atrocious!' and 'Actionable' were among the mildest expressions you were said to have used, and the poor people became so nervous that they hardly knew what they were doing. At the end of the performance Sothern told them collectively that you had left the theatre 'a shattered and prematurely old man.'"

When I crept into an obscure corner of a private box that night, expecting to witness the complete failure of a number of nerveless artists to galvanise a dead play into life, I was very angry with Sothern. I felt that I had been "butchered" to make a "Roman Holiday," and I did not like the sensation. But, to my bewilderment, the comedietta went capitally, and applause of the [82] right sort followed the fall of the curtain. At supper, Sothern, with that marvellous diamond-like sparkle in his speaking blue-grey eye which his friends so well remember, "gave away" the greater part of the story. That delighted and delightful familiar twinkle was sufficient to tell me the truth. "Oh!" I cried, "you have 'sold' me! I believe the piece went as well *last* night as it did *to-night*!"

"Much better," he replied calmly. "I sent you no telegram, but I could not resist the sell. Now light a cigar and be happy."

And I was happy until, in the early hours of the morning, Sothern said, "By the way, I wonder how your supper party is getting on?"

"My supper party?" I asked. "What do you mean?"

"Oh," he replied, as he lighted another cigar, "now I think of it, I forgot to tell you that I mentioned to the performers in 'My Wife's Father's Sister' that you were so delighted with their marked improvement on the second night of the production that you wished to welcome them at a little supper you had ordered at the 'Old Ship.'"

And I heard the next day that the poor "sold" people went and waited and came supperless away. And then I sneaked out of Brighton, leaving "My Wife's Father's Sister" behind me.

I have never seen her since. This is only an example of Sothern's constant and, it must be owned, [83] often exasperating practices. It was wonderful that some of his escapades were so easily forgiven, but those who narrowly watched his marvellous dexterity in keeping up the deceptions of his rapid invention, causing one practical joke to overtake another like sea waves; those who could understand his infectious vitality and quick sense of humour, were, even when they chanced to be the wrathful objects of his extravagancies, lost in admiration for his peculiar

genius.

In some way his temperament must have resembled that of the great David Garrick, whom he so often impersonated on the stage.

Of the English Roscius it has been said that he was always acting, whether upon the stage, in his own house, in the houses of his friends, and even in the streets.

He would suddenly stop in the middle of a public thoroughfare, and look up at the sky as if he saw something remarkable, until a crowd gathered about him, and then he would turn away with the wild stare of insanity. He could not sit down to have his hair dressed without terrifying the barber by making his face assume every shade of expression, from the deepest tragic gloom to the vacancy of idiotcy.

His enemies ascribed these feats to a restless egotism that must always be conspicuous, but might they not rather have arisen from the over-exuberant animal spirits of "the cheerfulest man [84] of his age"?

Such, in a great measure, was Sothern's nature, and it is not to be wondered at if it sometimes jarred upon those who had to act with him, and who were desirous to do justice to themselves. I cannot suppose that his "My Wife's Father's Sister's" victims loved him any more than they did the innocent writer of these lines, or than Ellen Terry seems to have done.

Such things are to be understood, but I cannot mention Edward Askew Sothern without recording the fact that to his intimate friends he was ever the most consistent, affectionate, and generous of men. At the hospitable table of Henry Irving I once met the famous American tragedian, the late John M'Cullough. Turning to me in the course of the evening, he said: "I am told you are a close friend of Ned Sothern's;" and when I answered "Yes," he said, as if it were a matter of course, "Then you love him."

And that of all men who really knew him well was true.

But if in Sothern Ellen Terry chanced to find an uncongenial fellow-actor, in another member of the Haymarket Company she made a friend, destined to play with her in some of her greatest subsequent triumphs. This was that grand old actor, Henry Howe, "dear old Mr. Howe," as she calls him, who was a staunch member of the once celebrated band of Haymarket comedians for forty years.

Howe played the part of father to "the little treasure"; his kindly, winsome ways at once won her [85] sympathy, and in the now forgotten play no scene was more successful than that in which the supposed parent and child, moved by the pathos of each other's acting, united in genuine tears.

Macready aptly described Charles Kemble as a first-rate actor of second-rate parts, and the same somewhat lukewarm praise may be attributed to Henry Howe; but he was an actor who lent distinction to his profession, and his honoured memory should surely be kept green.

It is odd to think of an actor being a Quaker, and yet throughout his long life Howe was a loyal member of the Society of Friends. It was the impression made upon him, when he was a mere boy, by the soul-inspiring acting of Edmund Kean as King Lear, that gave him a passion for the stage. With a cousin of his own age he contrived to take stolen pleasure in the gallery of Drury Lane Theatre, and on his way home, half-choked with enthusiasm and emotion, he said to his comrade, "I am going to be an actor." His family and friends did their utmost to dissuade him from this rash step, but fate willed that it should be taken, and the stage-struck lad became one of the most accomplished and self-respecting of the actors of his day.

Although he never paraded it, I think he was always influenced by his simple religious faith. I [86] well remember how, in the kindest of ways, he would warn the young fellows of those Sothern-Haymarket days against keeping late (and possibly loose) hours in London after curtain-fall. I can hear him now telling us of his long midnight walks to his beloved country home at Isleworth (beyond Brentford!), and of his active morning work in his garden on those days on which rehearsals did not call him to town. "And at such times," he would say, with a good-humoured shake of his head, "some of you are lying in bed trying to cure carefully manufactured head-aches."

Years afterwards he became a notable member of the Lyceum Company, and served until his death under the banner of Henry Irving. During this period, and when with his chief and comrades he was fulfilling a fortnight's engagement in Birmingham, my good old friend, when on a visit to my house, made me his confidant in a little personal trouble. It was this. During the two weeks of his stay in the city he had only been called upon to act twice, and then only in small parts.

I naturally thought that he felt hurt at apparent neglect, and I tried to say a few consolatory words to him. "Oh, it isn't *that*!" said the fine old gentleman, "I've no feeling on *that* score; but the fact is, I am being paid a very handsome salary, and doing next to nothing for it. As things are, I know I am not earning it. I must speak to Irving about it, and tell him either my stipend [87] must be reduced, or I must go." Shortly afterwards I saw him again. His fine face was radiant with smiles and his spirits were buoyant. He had had his interview with Irving, and the upshot of it was that no alteration could be made in his emolument, that he would be called upon to act whenever the repertory contained a part that could be suitably allotted to him, and that his "chief" would regard it as a great personal sorrow if his distinguished name did not figure as a member of his company.

Thus did the most tactful and generous of managers make a time-honoured servant of the public

easy in his pocket, and supremely happy in the retention of his *amour propre*.

Frequenters of the Lyceum will remember how, even in the smallest of parts, Henry Howe was always sure of a hearty reception.

This is only one amongst a thousand of the acts of tender consideration and unstinted liberality shown by Henry Irving towards those who have acted for and with him.

But besides "little treasures," Georginas, and Mary Merediths, there were other opportunities for Ellen Terry at the Haymarket. She had the sympathy and encouragement of such sterling actors as Henry Compton and William Farren, the Chippendales, and the always kindly and attentive Walter Gordon, a gentleman who, on his retirement from the stage, resumed his own name, and [88] was well known as William Aylmer Gowing.

She played Julia in "The Rivals" to the Faulkland of Howe, the Sir Anthony Absolute of Chippendale, the Captain Absolute of William Farren, the Bob Acres of Buckstone, and the Mrs. Malaprop of Mrs. Chippendale. In "Much Ado about Nothing" she appeared as Hero to the Beatrice of Louisa Angell, and when that lady appeared as Letitia Hardy in "The Belle's Stratagem," Ellen Terry was the Lady Touchwood. Let it not be forgotten that her own bewitching Letitia was destined to be one of the most attractive of her comedy impersonations at the Lyceum.

Thanks to Sothern, I was in those days quite at home at the Haymarket Theatre, and in "Walter Gordon" I found a true friend and adviser when, later on, I tried to write on things theatrical. He did much admirable work with his own pen, and was full of good stories of famous actors and actresses with whom he had played. I remember how he told me of an ephemeral entertainment by Sterling Coyne, entitled "Buckstone at Home," in which Ellen Terry, being then in a frolicsome mood, made an unexpected effect and sensation. In this wild production she had to appear as Britannia, and she was surrounded by the Knights of the Round Table. These stalwarts were supposed to be unable to remove a certain "property" stone, concerning which there was much [89] superstition to the effect that it was so heavy that mortal could not stir it. The situation was meant to be taken seriously, but the light-hearted Britannia—possibly annoyed with the absurdity of the production and the poverty of her part in it, came forward, took the mock boulder in her hands, "played ball" with the flimsy thing, at the same time gleefully crying out—"Why, a child could toss it!"

BUST OF ELLEN TERRY, BY W. BRODIE, R.S.A.

Presented to The Shakespeare Memorial, Stratford-on-Avon, by Sir Henry Irving.

[*To face page 88.*

I wonder what she would have said if the recreant Sothern had thus committed himself! But in spite of occasional fits of joyousness this Haymarket engagement seems to have been a disappointment to her. She regarded it as one of her "lost opportunities,"—and in later days she would have given much to "find it again." By her own wish, however, it came to an early end. No doubt the ordeal was a severe one. She was exceedingly young, and she was called upon to vie with the picked comedians of her day. She acquitted herself not only bravely but with distinction, but no doubt her ever supersensitive nature (the inevitable if undesirable nature of the true artist) often whispered to her that she had blundered where she had really made a marked impression. Mrs. Siddons was wont to say that the player's nerves must be "made of cart ropes." Ellen Terry's highly-strung organisation seems to move on the slenderest of silken threads, and no doubt in those early days the strain of her public appearances were often a torment to her. In

the June of 1863 Edward Leman Blanchard records her appearance at the Princess's Theatre, and her performance of Desdemona to the Othello of Walter Montgomery. This was an interesting event, for it witnessed the return of the little Mamillius and Prince Arthur of former days to the scene of her early successes, and this in a Shakespearean part in which she subsequently won great renown at the Lyceum. [90]

Not long after this, and to the intense regret of those who were carefully watching the rapid progress of her artistic career, she temporarily left the stage. Probably she found its duties too irksome to one of her restless, self-doubting nature. Men and women endowed with unusual talents are generally prone to have their own way, and it is perhaps well for the full fruition of those great gifts, that are to be a present boon and future memory to mankind, that they should follow it. Who would wantonly put Pegasus in the Pound?

Even in those (to her) unpromising "Georgina" days Ellen Terry had shown real genius. Genius, as William Winter has beautifully put it, is the petrel, and like the petrel it loves the freedom of the winds and the waves.

Just as the petrel of the ocean appears during its flight sometimes to touch the surface of the waves with its feet, so she had daintily fluttered across the boards which were for a time to lose her.

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[91]

CHAPTER V

KATE TERRY

Now that Ellen Terry has for a time said good-bye to the stage that so sorely missed her, I may pause to glance at the brilliant career of her elder sister Kate, who had been, as we have seen, the constant comrade of her 'prentice days. Apart from her conspicuous successes in the youthful Shakespearean characters at the Princess's, she had, before her engagement at that house came to an end, made a profound impression by the purity and pathos of her acting as Cordelia (she was a very young Cordelia) to the King Lear of Charles Kean. This was in the April of 1858. Even at that early age she had, as the saying goes, "arrived," and would no doubt have been promptly secured by any of the then existing London managers. But, wise in his generation, and conscious of his daughter's conspicuous talents, her father decided that she must have more practice before taking that place on the boards to which she should become entitled.

It is interesting to show here one of the Charles Kean play-bills in which Kate Terry figured. To-day it reads curiously as the programme of a fashionable West End theatre.

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[92]

PRINCESS'S THEATRE,
OXFORD STREET.

Under the Management of
Mr Charles Kean,
No. 3 Torrington Square.

This Evening, Saturday, January 3rd, 1852,
Will be presented Colman's play of the

IRON CHEST

Sir Edward Mortimer	Mr Charles Kean
Captain Fitzharding	Mr Addison
Wilford	Mr J. F. Cathcart
Adam Winterton	Mr Meadows
Rawbold	Mr Ryder
Samson	Mr Harley
Orson	Mr C. Fisher
Gregory	Mr Rolleston
Helen	Miss Frankland
Blanch	Miss Murray
Barbara	Miss Mary Keeley

After which (8th Time), a Grand Operatico, Tragico, Serio-Pastoralic, Nautico, Demoniaco, Cabalistico,

ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME, entitled,

HARLEQUIN
BILLY TAYLOR

OR

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

AND THE

KING OF RARITONGO

"Billy Taylor was a gay young fellow
Full of mirth and full of glee,
And his mind he did diskiver
To a maiden fair and free."

Scenery by Messrs Gordon, F. Lloyds, Dayes, etc.
Decorations & Properties by Mr Moon.
Dances arranged by Mr Flexmore.
Machinery by Mr G. Hodson.
Costumes by Mr Sefton and Miss Hoggins.
Overture & Music composed & arranged by Mr R. Hughes.

The Pantomime by the brothers Sala and Mr George Ellis, by whom it has been produced.

Billy Taylor	(the "gay young fellow"—first Schneider of his day & Knight of the Shears—frequently hot pressing, then pressed himself)	Mr F. Cooke afterwards Harlequin, Mr Cormack.
Admiral Sir Lee Scupper Blue Blazes	(Field Marshal of the Horse-Marines & Testamentary Guardian of the Buoy at the Nore, hoisting his flag on board the *Thundererbomb*, 999 Guns)	afterwards Pantaloon, Mr Paulo.
Calimanco the xxxiiird	(King of Raritongo, the largest of the Cannibal Islands—a slightly cracked sovereign, who, wishing for change, is transformed into	Mr Rolleston. Mr Flexmore. Clown.
Vanderdecken	(The Flying Dutchman, a decided Voltigeur in pursuit of his prey)	Mr Collis.
Quashyhubaboo	(Prime Minister of Raritongo—Original "Bones" but rather fleshy in appearance)	Mr Edmonds.
Master Reefer Rattlin	(Midshipman and Powder Monkey in Ordinary on board the *Thundererbomb*)	Mr Lloyd.
Baccychaw Pipes	(Boatswain of the "gallant *Thundererbomb*," ever ready with a quid for a quo)	Mr J. Collins.
Horrosambo	(Aide-de-Camp & Black Stick in waiting to King of Raritongo)	Mr Stoakes.
Signor Sivorienstsainton Botteserini	(First Violin Extraordinary at the Nobility's Concerts)	Mr F. Hartland. [94]
The Princess Saccasuttakonka	(King of Raritongo's daughter, black, sweet and beautiful)	Mr Stacey.
Paulina Di Panto	(popularly known as Pretty Poll of Portsmouth Point, sojourning pro tem. in Tooley St.,—young, lovely, & attached to Billy Taylor—afterwards Columbine)	Mr Daley. afterwards Miss Carlotta Leclercq.
Britannia	(Tutelary Genius of "Old Albion" continually ruling the waves)	Miss Kate Terry.
The Fairy Coralia	(very well re(a)d in all branches, particularly in corollaries)	Miss Vivash.
The Fairy Nautila	(kept very close but determined to shell out & be a naughty-lass	Miss Desborough.

no more)

DATE—ONCE UPON A TIME

SCENE—NO WHERE PARTICULAR.

Coral Grottoes of the Genii of the Ocean.

Affectionate meeting of Coralia and Nautila—Various propositions for a "Fast" Fairy Spree, interrupted by the unexpected appearance of—

Britannia enthroned on one of her "wooden walls."

And attended by her trusty guard of Blue Jackets—Anger of Ocean Queen—Billy Taylor's destiny determined on, and hasty summons of dreaded Vanderdecken—Britannia issues her mandate, and Vanderdecken proceeds to seize the luckless Taylor of Tooley Street.

ROCKY PANORAMA OF INTERMINABLE GLOOM.

[95]

MONARCH MART OF FASHION

Otherwise *Billy Taylor's shop in Tooley Street*.

"Four and twenty tailors all of a row" (vide Old Song).

Entrance of the fascinating Paulina di Panto Portsmoutho.

"The course of true love never did run smooth." Preparations for the Nuptials, interrupted by press-ure from without.

"Four and twenty stout young fellows,
Clad they were in blue array,
Came and pressed poor Billy Taylor,
And straightway took him off to sea."

TERRIFIC AND SANGUINARY COMBAT

Between Billy Taylor and the Bold British Boatswain. Billy hors-de-combat.

"Soon his true love followed arter,
Under the name of Richard Carr;
And her lily-white hands were daubed all over,
With the nasty pitch and tar."

QUARTER-DECK OF THE "GALLANT THUNDERERBOMB."

Quarter-deck festivities, of which Paulina (disguised as Richard Carr) partakes.

GRAND NAUTICAL DOUBLE SHUFFLE GROG & BACCY HORNPIPE BY ALL THE CHARACTERS.

"The *Flying Dutchman* on the weather-bow"—Decks cleared for action—Bombarding, Boarding and General Blow-up!—and "Off we go to Turkey."

OEIL DE BOEUF IN KING CALIMANCO'S PALACE

A Black King in a bad way—Glorious news—The White Man's come—Lombardy and Raritongo united.

[96]

JAMSETTJEEJEESETYERJIBBAHOY. THE MARINE RESIDENCE of his MAJESTY OF RARITONGO.

Sea Coast in the Distance.

Billy cast ashore on the Island—Proposition for the hand of Princess—A crown of independence or a hard crust—and Portsmouth hard; the Crown wins—A Revolving Denouement:

"When the Captain come for to hear on it,
He werry much applauded what she'd done;
And he quickly made her first lieutenant
Of the gallant *Thundererbomb*."

REGAL AND FLORAL OVATION TO BRITANNIA.

MAGICAL METAMORPHOSIS.

Harlequin, Mr Cormack. Pantaloon, Mr Paulo.
Clown, Mr Flexmore. Columbine, Miss C. Leclerq.

EXTERIOR OF THE PUNCH OFFICE AND PICTURE FRAME MAKER'S SHOP.

How to take a portrait—Drawing taught in one Lesson.

Light weights *v.* heavy weights—What d'ye take?—Port or sherry?—"A Blot in the Scutcheon"—A "Punch" for Two—Polkamania Extraordinary, and off we go to

A MODEL FARM YARD.

How should you like some apples?—The real unmistakable Cat's-head Codlin—Here's the Farmer—"An old man found a rude boy in one of his trees stealing apples" (vide Dr Dilworth) etc. etc. A headless tale—Eggs, and Young ones—Mr Cantelo outdone—Fowl robberies and foul blows—When is a horse not a horse?—When it's a Mare—That Mare's a hunter—No, that hunter's a Mayor—The Clown's introduction to the City Dignitaries—Stocks is down. [97]

BRAHAM'S LOCK MANUFACTORY AND GENERAL OUTFITTER'S WAREHOUSE MYRIOTERPSICHOREORAMA.

The meaning of which Mr Flexmore will take steps to explain.

Tables and stools in any given quantity—Prize dahlias & new blooms.

EXTERIOR OF THE COMFORTABLE CATCH'EM & KEEP'EM HOTEL

Here's the Policeman—"Hullo! what are you doing here?"

Love in the Kitchen *versus* Cupboard Love.

PAS DE PARAPLUIE, by Mr Flexmore.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF *LONDON BY MOONLIGHT*

We haven't "got home" till morning; Don't, please don't—I'm so sleepy—Why, the sheets are damp—Never mind, the warming-pan's hot—"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." Yes, but not after two in the morning when you want to go to sleep, and have the tic-toorallo—"The Light of other days is Faded"—A Squall from Don Pasquale—Come gentil, anything but genteel—Mol-row! Mol-row! Puss! Puss! Puss!—Bang! Fire!—Affairs take a rapid turn—Hush! Let's go to bed! What a smell of fire! Smoke! fire! blazes! firemen! policemen! old men! young men! boys! kids! row! rattles! riot! rumpus & revolution.

INTERIOR OF A CONFECTIONER'S SHOP.

Love & Pastry—Send for a policeman—When 'em waters I sees, an' I screems—Below zero—Up to fever heat.

A Christmas Polka Cake and a Trifle for Children, Old & Young.

THE FLORAL REALMS OF LIGHT

THE NEW PANTOMIME Every Evening.

Monday .	. The Merry Wives of Windsor.
Tuesday .	. The Iron Chest and Betsy Baker.
Wednesday .	. Hamlet.
Thursday .	. The Merry Wives of Windsor.

Acting Manager, Mr Emden. Stage Manager, Mr G. Ellis.
Musical Director, Mr R. Hughes. Ballet Master, Mr Flexmore.

Dress Circle 5/. Boxes 4/. Pit 2/. Gallery 1/.
Second price: Dress Circle 2/6. Boxes 2/. Pit 1/. Gallery 6d.
Orchestra stalls 6/, which may be retained entire evening.
Private Boxes £2. 12s. 6d.; £2. 2s. 0d.; & £1. 11s. 6d.
Box Office open from 11 to 5 o'clock. Doors open at 6.30.

Performance to commence at 7.0. Half price will commence as near 9.0 as is consistent with the non-interruption of the performance. Gallery door in Castle Street. Children in arms cannot possibly be admitted. Private boxes & stalls may be obtained at the libraries; & of Mr Massingham at Box Office of the Theatre, Oxford St., where places for Dress Circle and Boxes may be secured.

Applications respecting the bills to be addressed to Mr Treadaway,
Stage Door.

VIVANT REGINA ET PRINCEPS.

The result of her father's wise policy was that Kate Terry was fully equipped when, in 1860, she commenced her engagement at the St. James's Theatre, under the management of Mr. Alfred Wigan, whose company included Miss Herbert (who soon became the manageress of the house), Mrs. Alfred Wigan, Miss Nelly Moore, Mr. Terry, Mr. Dewar, and Mr. Emery. Young, beautiful, [99] gifted, well practised in the art that she evidently loved, Kate Terry was well calculated to secure the praise of the critics and the heart of the public. At first the characters entrusted to her were comparatively small, but she industriously tended the firmly planted sapling that was destined to grow, flourish, and yield glorious as well as abundant fruit.

Even the greatest of histrionic geniuses have to wait for their chances, and Kate Terry's first real opportunity did not come until 1862.

A version, by Mr. Horace Wigan, of Victorien Sardou's fine comedy, "Nos Intimes," entitled "Friends or Foes," was in course of presentation, and Miss Herbert's company then included the honoured names of George Vining, Frank and Mrs. Frank Mathews, W. H. Stephens, and F. Charles. This play has been made familiar to later and present-day playgoers as "Peril," the clever adaptation by Clement Scott and B. C. Stephenson, which seems likely to hold the stage for many a long year to come. It proved one of the trump cards of the Bancrofts at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre, and its subsequent revivals have always been attended by success. The Lady Ormonde of "Friends or Foes" was, of course, played by Miss Herbert, and Kate Terry had to content herself with quite a minor part; but she was the conscientious understudy of her [100] manageress, and, when that delightful artiste suddenly fell ill, the burden of the piece—at a moment's notice—had to be borne upon the shoulders of the younger actress.

Her triumph was instantaneous and complete. Bravely, and with consummate skill, she went through her trying ordeal, and when the curtain fell it was evident that her permanent popularity on the London stage was secure.

It is ridiculous to depend upon that "will-o'-the-wisp" called "luck"; but there is no doubt that if we are ready for it, and promptly avail ourselves of it, *chance* will sometimes do us a good turn.

But no one can afford to neglect the truth of the old warning reminding us that opportunities are very sensitive things, and that if you slight them on their first visit you seldom see them again. Of that memorable performance at the St. James's, Clement Scott says:—

"On that never-to-be-forgotten night this young girl, Kate Terry, made an astounding success. Her name was scarcely known; no one knew that we had amongst us a young actress of so much beauty, talent, and, what was more wonderful still, true dramatic power, for the temptation scene wants acting, and not the kind of trifling that we see in these modern and amateurish days."

The next morning, Tom Taylor in the *Times* let himself go, and blew the trumpet in praise of the [101] new actress, Kate Terry. Her fame was made from that minute. She never turned back.

Quickly she became the stage divinity of her day, and she remained the idol of London playgoers until, on her early marriage, she retired into private life. Those who saw her will never forget either her personal charm or the perfection of her art, and they will, I think, like to take a glimpse with me into a cherished past. We are told that times of special happiness should be regarded as a sort of reserve fund, to be drawn upon in dark or cloudy days, and the evenings of long ago, when we delighted in the acting of Kate Terry, were times of exceeding happiness. The little world of the theatre in which we have revelled is still open to us, and it is always pleasant to turn over the brightest pages of its history.

Many of us know how old fox-hunters are never so happy as when they are recalling the glorious "runs" of the past. How they met at Quinton Cross Roads; found "one of the right sort" in Bamkin's Gorse; ran him at a rattling pace over Lickford Common; had a check in Bowler's Wood; lost him in Messer's Osier Beds; found him again, and followed him over that dangerous water jump, Priddis Brook, low lying, as it broadly flows between thick quick-set hedges; and finally ran him to earth in Linnecor Coppice.

So are old playgoers supremely content when with congenial souls they discuss the famous and favourite actors and actresses they have seen and admired in bygone days. So they will follow them from their initial efforts in the provinces, through their series of triumphs in this or that London theatre. To such theatrical enthusiasts as these their collections of old play-bills are as precious and replete with pleasurable reminiscences as are the "pads" of many defunct reynards nailed to the stable doors of the fox-hunter. [102]

At about the time when Kate Terry made her unmistakable mark at the St. James's, Charles Albert Fechter was the actor-hero of the hour.

He came to fulfil his trying ordeal in London with great credentials. Charles Dickens had described seeing him first, quite by accident, in Paris, having strolled in to a little theatre there one night. "He was making love to a woman," Dickens wrote, "and he so elevated her as well as himself by the sentiment in which he enveloped her, that they trod in a purer ether, and in another sphere, quite lifted out of the present. 'By heavens!' I said to myself, 'a man who can do this can do anything. I never saw two people more purely and instantly elevated by the power of love. The man has genius in him which is unmistakable.'"

Photograph by London Stereoscopic Co.

KATE TERRY.

Taken when she was acting with Fechter at the Lyceum, and won the admiration of Charles Dickens.

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In due course Fechter, having made his triumph on English boards, became the manager of the Lyceum Theatre. It was a great undertaking for a French actor, for he had to contend against the conservatism of not only our audiences, but of English actors and critics. That he was the best "love-maker" our stage had seen was readily admitted, and the fascination of his love-scenes was [103]

certain to be an attraction. But no actor can make the success of a love-scene unless he is assisted by a perfectly accomplished and responsive actress. Who was to be the heroine of Fechter's reign at the Lyceum? She was found in Kate Terry, and she right worthily shared in his notable victories.

One of the earliest productions was the first English version of the French play that (in spite of many other and differently named versions) has been made familiar to us as "The Duke's Motto." In this Kate Terry appeared as Blanche de Nevers, and in speaking of the impersonation Charles Dickens, who, for the sake of his friend Fechter, was inclined to be very critical, said that it was "perfectly charming,"—"the very best piece of womanly tenderness he had ever seen on the stage."

No doubt Kate Terry contributed largely to Fechter's Lyceum successes. She could not only act, but she so threw herself into her characters that she could *listen* to those who acted with her, and let her audiences not only see, but believe that she was listening with all her heart and soul. The exercise of this rarely displayed histrionic gift was invaluable in the beautiful love-scenes of Fechter.

But in her girlish days Kate Terry had shown that she understood the value of action on the [104] stage, and knew that when deftly handled it could make an even deeper impression than words.

Speaking of Charles Kean's great production of "Henry the Fifth" at the Princess's in 1859 the notoriously keen critic of the *Athenæum* said:—"The union of England and France in one kingdom is the ambitious sentiment of the play, and the heroism of the English character the spirit that pervades the scenes. This is exemplified in the small as well as the great incidents, and in none, in acting, did it come out more significantly than in the little part of the boy belonging to the Pistol group of characters at the end of the first act. Miss Kate Terry, as the impersonator of the brave youth, in the heroic and pleasing attitude with which he listened to the sound of the drum, and the measured march with which he followed delightedly the spirit-stirring music, showed us at once the sympathetic gallantry of the English lad going to the wars. There was in it an intelligible indication of the wonderful daring by which the battle of Agincourt was won. To men who were once such lads as he nothing was impossible. The trait was well brought out; and that little bit of acting, in regard to its completeness, was the gem of the performance."

And so Kate Terry shared in Fechter's Lyceum conquests, and in "Bel Demonio, a Love Story," adapted by John Brougham from the French drama "L'Abbaye de Castro," she played Lena to his [105] Angelo. A little later she was the "pretty Ophelia" to the much discussed Hamlet of Fechter, and again honours were divided.

How critics differed concerning the new Hamlet!

Writing long after the glamour of the impersonation has passed away, Clement Scott has told us how Hamlet was represented "in a new way, in a fresh style, with carefully considered new business; with a sweetly pathetic face showing 'the fruitful river of the eye,' and in a long flaxen Danish wig.

"'A Frenchman play Hamlet!'" he says. "There was a yell of execration in the camp of the old school of playgoers, and the feathers began to fly. Hamlet in a fair wig indeed! Hamlet in broken English! Oh! you should have heard the shouts of indignation, the babble of prejudice! The upholders of the mouthing, moaning, gurgling Hamlets—the Hamlets who obeyed every precept in his advice to the players, and 'imitated nature so abominably,' the Hamlets who strutted and stormed—held indignation meetings at their clubs, and metaphorically threw their 'scratch wigs' into the air with rage and indignation.

"I, of course, became the easiest convert to the new Fechter school, and elected to serve under his brilliant banner. In fact, I will candidly own that I never quite understood Hamlet until I saw Fechter play the Prince of Denmark. Phelps and Charles Kean impressed me with the play; but with Fechter I loved the play, and was charmed as well as fascinated by the player." [106]

I am among the many who yielded to that charm, and wish that the delightful experience of seeing Fechter's Hamlet and Kate Terry's Ophelia might be repeated.

When, early in 1870, Fechter left England for America, Charles Dickens contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* an article in his praise. "I cannot," said the great novelist, "wish my friend a better audience than he will find in the American people, and I cannot wish them a better actor than they will find in my friend." Charles Dickens, it will be remembered, was one of the keenest of all dramatic critics.

His admiration for Fechter's much discussed rendering of Hamlet is expressed in the following words:—

"Perhaps no innovation in art was ever accepted with so much favour by so many intelligent persons, pre-committed to, and pre-occupied by, another system, as Fechter's Hamlet. I take this to have been the case (as it unquestionably was in London), not because of its picturesqueness, not because of its novelty, not because of its many scattered beauties, but because of its perfect consistency with itself. Its great and satisfying originality was in its possessing the merit of a distinctly conceived and executed idea. Fechter's Hamlet, a pale woe-begone Norseman, with long flaxen hair, wearing a strange garb, never associated with the part upon the English stage (if ever seen there at all), and making a piratical sweep upon the whole fleet of little theatrical [107] prescriptions without meaning, or like Dr. Johnson's celebrated friend, with only one idea in them, and that a wrong one, never could have achieved its extraordinary success but for its animation by one pervading purpose, to which all changes were made intelligently "sub-servient."

And yet of Fechter's Hamlet in America, William Winter, that greatest and most deservedly honoured of transatlantic critics and authorities on things theatrical, has said:—

"About 1861 Charles Fechter appeared upon the English stage and gave an extraordinary performance of Hamlet. It subsequently (1869-70) reached America. It was 'the rage' on both sides of the sea. In a technical sense it was a performance of ability, but it was chiefly remarkable for light hair and bad English. Fanny Kemble tells a story of a lady who, at a dinner in London, was asked by a neighbouring guest whether she had seen Mr. Fechter as Hamlet. 'No,' she said, 'I have not; and I think I should not care to hear the English blank verse spoken by a foreigner.' The inquirer gazed meditatively upon his plate for some time, and then said, 'But, Hamlet *was* a foreigner, wasn't he?'

"That is the gist of the whole matter. We were to have the manner of 'nature' in blank verse. We [108] were to have Hamlet in light hair, because Danes are sometimes blonde. We were to have the great soliloquy on life and death omitted, because it stops the action of the play.[1] We were to have the blank verse turned into a foreigner's English prose. We were to have Hamlet crossing his legs upon the gravestone, as if he were Sir Charles Coldstream; and this was to be 'nature.' Mr. Fechter's plan may have been finely executed, but it was radically wrong, and it could not be rightly accepted. Some courage was required to oppose it, because Mr. Fechter had come to us (to me among others) personally commended by no less a man than the great Charles Dickens."

But if critics differed with regard to the merits of Fechter's Hamlet, there was a perfect chorus of praise for the exquisitely portrayed Ophelia of Kate Terry. It is interesting to note that this victory was won on the same stage on which, in the same part, Ellen Terry was to commence her stage history-making engagement with Henry Irving.

When Fechter's brief reign at the Lyceum came to an end, Kate Terry went to support Henry Neville at the Olympic Theatre. This admirable actor was then at the height of his still well sustained popularity.

Handsome, graceful, endowed with a beautiful voice, and a master of his art, Henry Neville was [109] an ideal hero of romance, and though to-day he elects to play quieter parts, and to delight his audiences with his rich appreciation of comedy, he looks as young and dashing as he did in the days of 1864.

Kate Terry's first appearance at the little Wych Street playhouse was in a piece entitled "The Hidden Hand," an adaptation by Tom Taylor, from the French drama by MM. D'Ennery and Edmond, called "L'Aieule." She and Henry Neville distinguished themselves in the characters of Lord and Lady Penarvon, and the company included Miss Louisa Moore, Miss Lydia Foote, Miss Nelly Farren, and Charles Coghlan. Later came Sterling Coyne's comedy called "Everybody's Friend," which, under the title of "The Widow Hunt," was destined in later years to be made famous by that admirable American comedian, John Sleeper Clarke. Who, having seen it, will ever forget the delicious drollery of his Major Wellington de Boots? The Major of the Olympic days was Mr. Walcot, who, although announced as an American actor, was an Englishman by birth. Kate Terry was the Mrs. Swansdown, Henry Neville the Felix Featherley, and Mrs. Leigh Murray Mrs. Major de Boots.

Other successes were made in Tom Taylor's five-act drama "Settling Day," and the same playwright's "The Serf." The production of the latter piece being the "benefit" night of the gifted [110] actress, she delivered an address written for her by the grateful author.

In "Twelfth Night" Kate Terry doubled the parts of Viola and Sebastian; and a notable hit was made in Tom Taylor's stage version of Miss Braddon's novel "Henry Dunbar." In Leicester Buckingham's "Love's Martyrdom" she again distinguished herself.

On June 20, 1866, she again took a benefit at the theatre she had served so well, and on this occasion appeared for the first time as Julia in "The Hunchback" of Sheridan Knowles, and once more delivered an address specially written for her by Tom Taylor. But the great event of the evening was the appearance (also for the first time) of Ellen Terry as the sprightly Helen. In order that she might serve her sister she made this brief departure from her retirement, and acted with great spirit and animation.

A little later on she appeared at the Prince's Theatre at Manchester in the first performance of a new play by Dion Boucicault originally called "The Two Lives of Mary Leigh" but subsequently renamed "Hunted Down." This proved to be a memorable evening. Not only did Kate Terry add to her laurels as the heroine, but Henry Irving, in the character of Rawdon Scudamore, made his first great impression. Hitherto he had only been known as a very earnest actor in the provincial stock companies—but in this play he found his chance, seized it, and made his mark.

Irving, who was then most anxious to get to London, made a stipulation with Boucicault before he [111] accepted the part to the effect that if he succeeded he should have the opportunity of appearing in it in the production of the play in the metropolis. This was acceded to, and on the opening night the dramatist was so struck with his splendid performance that he induced his friend and brother playwright, Charles Reade, to travel to Manchester in order that he might see this remarkable impersonation. It was then that these two experts decided that in Henry Irving they saw the coming leading actor of his day.

On November 5, 1866, "Hunted Down" was produced at the St. James's Theatre, with Miss Herbert in the character created by Kate Terry; Rawdon Scudamore at once "took the town" and excited the admiration of the critics, and so the name and fame of Henry Irving were made out of material that has never faded. It is curious to remember that our famous actor's first great

success was made with Kate Terry, and that most of his later triumphs have been shared with Ellen Terry.

Kate Terry's next London home was the Adelphi Theatre. There she created the character of Anne Carew in Tom Taylor's evergreen play "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" (a part that was in after years most beautifully played by Mrs. Kendal at the St. James's), and won great favour in "A Sister's Penance," by Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg. In the latter production she was associated [112] with Miss Fanny Hughes, John Billington, and Hermann Vezin. "Good acting by Kate Terry" is the verdict pronounced upon the piece in the pages of Edward Leman Blanchard's happily preserved diary.

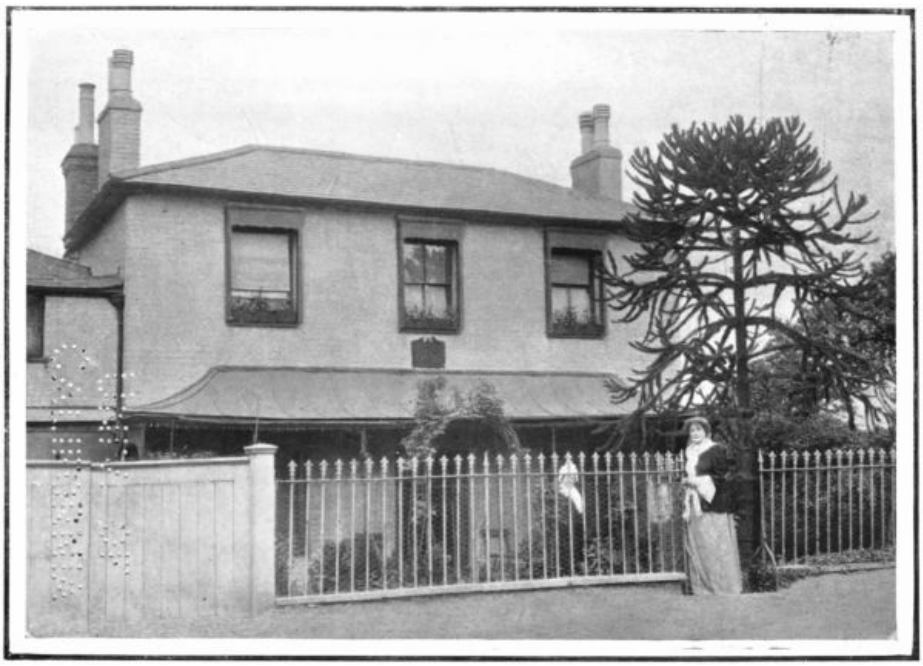
Probably Kate Terry's sojourn at the Adelphi will be best remembered by her exquisitely tender rendering of the sweet character of Dora in Charles Reade's happy stage version of Tennyson's poem bearing that name.

We all know the touching story telling that—

> "With farmer Allan at the farm abode
> William and Dora; William was his son,
> And she his niece—"

We remember how the stern old man desired that the cousins should marry, and we know that while Dora would willingly give her heart to William, he is cold to her. We recall his scene with his father and how he said—

> "I cannot marry Dora; by my life
> I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
> Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:—
> "You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
> But in my father's time a father's word was law,
> And so it shall be now for me."



ELLEN TERRY'S COUNTRY HOME IN KINGSTON VALE.

Its mistress is at the gate of her charming "Vine Cottage."

[*To face page 112.*

Then we follow William out of the house whose doors are mercilessly closed behind him, see him marry his sweetheart Mary, know that all things fail with him until despair brings him to his death-bed. Now we realise the depth and unselfishness of Dora's love. She goes to the aid of the [113] woman who has really spoilt her life's dream of happiness, and through her dead darling's child endeavours to secure poor stricken Mary's prosperity by a reconciliation with the still angry and always stubborn farmer Allan. Her simple, loving plan succeeds. The child softens the obdurate heart—

"And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
'I have been to blame, to blame. I have killed my son.
I have killed him—but I loved him, my dear son.
May God forgive me! I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.'
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kissed him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried to her death."

Yes, we all know the finely conceived and tenderly told story of love, anger, self-effacement, and forgiveness, but I do not think that any of us realised the manifold beauties of Dora's character until it was interpreted to us by Kate Terry. The portrait was painted in the most delicate tints, but beneath the surface of it the pure mind and devoted heart were ever apparent. The impersonation must have been truly satisfying to the poet who always had a longing to see the [114] children of his fancy on the stage.

The critic of the *Examiner* was right when he spoke of Kate Terry's Dora as "still a thoroughly country girl, simple, yet shrewd, with depths of womanly feeling, and little feminine piquancies; meek as a mouse, but with something in her of the power of angels, she trips on her way of quiet loving-kindness in a shabby hat and cotton gloves, and morsel of silk cape over a dress with a narrow skirt. Her uncle gives her money for fine dress; but of that, and of all that she can call hers to give, the utmost toll is taken for the sustenance of the unhappy outcasts. How touching it all is, and true with the real poetry of life, we feel throughout; the interest in the character rises steadily as the play goes on, and culminates as it should in the last scene."

It would be very wrong to take leave of Dora without saying a word of praise with regard to the Farmer Allan of Henry Neville. It was a virile, as well as a pathetic, embodiment of a firmly drawn but not too sympathetic, and, consequently, very difficult character.

Soon after this, the rumour reached envious playgoers that Kate Terry was about to become the wife of Mr. Arthur Lewis—a gentleman very well known in literary and artistic circles—and that her marriage would involve her retirement from the stage.

Crowded were the houses that then assembled to see their favourite as Juliet, Beatrice, Julia, [115] Pauline, and in other great characters. On the 2nd September, 1867, she gave her farewell performance, and the occasion was thus recorded in the *Times*:—

"It is seldom that the theatrical chronicler has to describe a scene like that at the Adelphi on Saturday, when Miss Kate Terry took her farewell of the stage as Juliet. Successes, demonstrations, and ovations of a kind may be made to order; but the scene of Saturday was one of those genuine, spontaneous, and irrepressible outbursts of public recognition which carry their credentials of sincerity along with them. The widespread feeling that the stage is losing one of its chosen ornaments had been manifested by the full houses, more and more crowded on each successive night, which, even at this deadest of the dead season, have been attracted to the Adelphi by Miss Terry's farewell performances. Their attraction came to its climax and its close on Saturday, when the theatre was crammed from the orchestra to the remotest nook in the gallery where a spectator could press or perch, with such an audience as we have never before seen gathered within its walls.

"At the conclusion of the tragedy, in the course of which Miss Terry was called for at the end of each act, except the fourth, when the good taste of the more intelligent part of the audience suppressed the demand, Miss Terry came on before the curtain in obedience to a thundering summons from every part of the house, and almost overcome with the combined excitement of [116] the part and the occasion, stood for some moments curtseying and smiling under the showers of bouquets and the storm of kindly greeting. Nor when she had retired with her armful of flowers—looking in the white robe and dishevelled hair of Juliet's death scene, as she used to look in Ophelia—was the audience satisfied. Again Miss Terry was recalled, and again she appeared to receive the loud and long-continued plaudits of the crowd. Then the stalls began to clear. But the storm of voices and clapping of hands continued from pit, boxes, and gallery, through the overture of the farce, swelling till it threatened to grow into a tempest. The curtain rose for the farce; still the thunder roared. One of the actors, quite inaudible in the clamour, began the performance, but the roar grew louder and louder, till at last Mr. Phillips came on, in the dress of Friar Lawrence, and with a stolidity so well assumed that it seemed perfectly natural, asked, in the stereo-typed phrase of the theatre, the pleasure of the audience. '*Kate Terry!*' was the reply from a chorus of a thousand stentorian voices; and then the fair favourite of the night appeared once more, pale, and dressed to leave the theatre, and when the renewed roar of recognition had subsided, in answer to her appealing dumb show, spoke, with pathetic effort, a few hesitating words, evidently the inspiration of the moment, but more telling than any set speech, to this [117] effect:—'How I wish from my heart I could tell you how I feel your kindness, not to-night only, but through the many years of my professional life. What can I say to you but thanks, thanks and

good-bye!' After this short and simple farewell, under a still louder salvo of acclamation, unmistakably proving itself popular by its hearty uproariousness, the young actress, almost overpowered by the feelings of the moment, retired with faltering steps, and the crowded audience poured out of the house, their sudden exit *en masse* being in itself one of the most flattering tributes to the actress whose last appearance had drawn them together.

"We have to turn over the pages of theatrical history in order to find a parallel to this demonstration of affection coupled to gratitude. And after the excitement of it was over, we, who had learnt to love her perfectly portrayed art and sweet presence, sighed to think that she would no longer grace the stage." Continuing, the *Times* critic said:—

"This remarkable manifestation of popular favour and regard is worth recording, not only as a striking theatrical incident, which those who were present can never forget, but because it proves that the frequenters of even the pit and gallery of a theatre where, till Miss Terry came, the finer springs of dramatic effect have very rarely been drawn on, can rapidly be brought to recognise and value acting of a singularly refined and delicate kind—so refined and delicate [118] indeed that some of those who profess to guide the public taste have been apt to insist on its wanting physical power. On Saturday night it was made evident to demonstration, if other evidence had been wanting, that Miss Terry had wrought her spells over the frequenters of pit and gallery as well as of boxes and stalls. In the interests of refined dramatic art this is a cheering set-off to many indications that seem to make the other way. It shows that if the theatrical masses—those who are roughly lumped up as the 'British Public'—are unable to discriminate nicely between diamonds and paste, and so take a good deal of coarse glassware for real stones, they are nevertheless susceptible to the influence of refined, earnest, intelligent, and conscientious acting when they have the rare opportunity of seeing it. How well Miss Terry's acting merits all these epithets has been abundantly proved, not only through her recent course of farewell performances, in which she has filled a range of parts so widely different as to show a variety of power in itself as rare as the grace, refinement, intelligence, and feeling she has put into her acting from four years old to four-and-twenty."

Surely few actresses have won such heartfelt and well-merited words of praise as these? No wonder that the thousands to whom she had given endless delight grudged her her early won freedom from the perpetual anxieties of stage life.

The Romeo of that eventful evening was her long-time stage comrade, Henry Neville. For more [119] than thirty years Kate Terry was absent from the stage, but her name lived as a sweet memory in the minds of those who had been fortunate enough to appreciate her rare and perfectly cultured gifts. In the spring of 1898 she was induced to emerge from her retirement to support her old friend, John Hare, in Mr. Stuart Ogilvie's comedy, "The Master," at the Globe Theatre. Unluckily, the part that she had consented to play afforded her few opportunities, the lady she represented being simply a sweet and gentle wife and mother, with a pleasant presence, a delightful smile, and a voice (the sweet voice of days gone by) characterised by very winning tenderness. In itself a charming part, but not one that gave scope for acting. But in this piece she had the intense satisfaction of seeing her clever and beautiful daughter, Miss Mabel Terry Lewis, make a marked impression on critical West End audiences. Indeed, this charming young lady was one of the chief attractions of "The Master."

In the autumn of the same year it was my privilege to sit by Mrs. Arthur Lewis (and to hear the ever-to-be-remembered Kate Terry voice) while her daughter was playing with John Hare and his company at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham.

The piece was T. W. Robertson's "Ours." John Hare was in his original character of the Russian [120] Prince Perovsky, and the Blanche Haye was Miss Mabel Terry Lewis. The young artiste played the part with an unaffected girlishness, imbued with true tenderness, that touched all hearts, and it was evident that this latest recruit from the famous Terry family was worthy to bear her honoured name.

It was pretty to watch the mother, the former heroine of a hundred stage victories, as with the skill of an expert she noted how her sweet young daughter won her way into the marked sympathy of her audience.

By way of interesting records of the early appearances of these famous Terry sisters, I am able to produce here some matter that I hope my readers will like to have brought under their notice.

The bills of the "Royal Entertainments" given "By Command" in 1852 and 1853 at Windsor Castle are now historic. It will be seen that in them both Kate Terry and her father took part. The bill of "The Winter's Tale" at the Princess's in which both of the sisters appeared was given to me by Ellen Terry. It dates (after one hundred and two nights) her first appearance as the baby boy Mamillius.

KATE TERRY AS "ARIEL."

In Charles Kean's revival of "The Tempest" at the Princess's Theatre, 1856. The young actress was then twelve years old.

[*To face page 120.*

I am permitted to produce *in extenso* the letter in which Charles Dickens, writing to his friend Macready, referred to the impression made upon him by Kate Terry's acting with Fechter. There is a pleasant little history attached to this letter of which, when he wrote it, Dickens never dreamt. In due course, and in common, alas! with too many household gods, it came under the hammer of the auctioneer. Henry Irving, with that delicate tact and taste which distinguish his every action (and which must mean much preceding thought in the life of an over busy man), bought it, and, on a Christmas Day, sent it as the most delightful of Christmas cards to the Kate Terry of those bygone times. [121]

The letter from Tom Taylor to Ben Terry, in which he signifies his warm approval of his daughter's acting in his greatest stage success, "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," is very noteworthy.

The Manchester bill (October 4th and 5th, 1867) shows that Kate Terry after her London farewell felt bound to say good-bye to her loyal friends and admirers in Lancashire; that Charles Wyndham was among her supporters; and that her sister Ellen (although she had declared that she had retired from the stage) came to the fore in honour of her sister.

The picture of Kate Terry as Ariel was taken in 1856 when she was only twelve years old!

[122]

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT—BY COMMAND.

Her Majesty's servants will perform at Windsor Castle,

On Friday, February 6th, 1852,

Shakespeare's Historical Play, in five acts, of

KING JOHN.

King John	Mr Charles Kean
Prince Henry (his son, afterwards King Henry III.)	Miss Robertson
Arthur (son of Geoffrey, late Duke of Bretagne, elder son of King John)	Miss Kate Terry
William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury	Mr James Vining
Robert Bigot, Earl of Norfolk	Mr G. Everett
William Mareshall, Earl of Pembroke	Mr Wynn
Geoffrey Fitzpiers, Earl of Essex (chief Justiciary of England)	Mr Stacey
Hubert de Burgh (Chamberlain to the King)	Mr Phelps
Robert Falconbridge (son of Sir Robert Falconbridge)	Mr Meadows
Philip Falconbridge (his half-brother, bastard son to King Richard I.)	Mr Alfred Wigan
Philip, King of France	Mr C. Fisher
Lewis, the Dauphin	Mr Stanton
Archduke of Austria	Mr Ryder
Cardinal Pandulph (the Pope's Legate)	Mr Graham
Chatillon, Comte de Nevers (ambassador from France to King John)	Mr C. Wheatleigh
Giles (Vicomte de Melun)	Mr J. F. Cathcart
Peter of Pomfret (a Prophet)	Mr Parsloe
Citizen of Angiers	Mr Addison
English Knight	Mr Paulo
English Herald	Mr Rolleson
French Herald	Mr F. Cooke
Attendants on Hubert	Mr Daly & Mr Stoakes
Elinor (widow of King Henry II. & Mother of King John)	Miss Phillips
Constance (mother to Arthur)	Mrs Charles Kean
Blanch (daughter to Alphonso, King of Castile & Niece to King John)	Miss Murray
King John's Pages	Miss J. Lovell & Miss Hastings
Attendants on Constance	Miss Maurice & Miss Clifford
Director	Mr Charles Kean
Assistant Director	Mr George Ellis

Theatre arranged & Scenery painted by Mr Thomas Grieve.

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT—BY COMMAND.

Her Majesty's servants will perform at Windsor Castle,

On Friday, January 7th, 1853,

Shakespeare's Historical Play of

KING HENRY THE FOURTH.

(Part Second)

King Henry IV.	Mr Phelps
Henry, Prince of Wales	Mr A. Wigan
Thomas, Duke of Clarence	Mr Stirling
Prince John of Lancaster	Mr G. Everett
Prince Humphrey of Gloster)	Miss J. Lovell
Earl of Westmoreland	Mr F. Vining
Lord Chief Justice	Mr Cooper
Scroop, Archbishop of York	Mr Diddear
Lord Mowbray	Mr H. Mellon
Lord Hastings	Mr H. Vining
Sir John Falstaff	Mr Bartley
Poins	Mr H. Marston
Pistol	Mr Ryder
Bardolph	Mr Wilkinson
Robin	Miss Kate Terry
Justice Shallow	Mr Meadows
Justice Silence	Mr Harley
Gower	Mr Graham
Davy	Mr Clarke
Mouldy	Mr Stacey
Shadow	Mr J. Chester
Wart	Mr Terry
Feeble	Mr S. Cowell
Bull Calf	Mr R. Romer
Fang	Mr Worrell
Snare	Mr H. Vezin
The King's Pages	Mr Brazier and Mr Tomlinson
Dame Quickly	Mrs W. Daly
Director	Mr Charles Kean
Assistant Director	Mr George Ellis

Theatre arranged & Scenery painted by Mr Thomas Grieve.

ROYAL ENTERTAINMENT—BY COMMAND.

Her Majesty's servants will perform at Windsor Castle,

On Thursday, November 10th, 1853,

Shakespeare's Historical play, in five acts, of

KING HENRY THE FIFTH.

The Chorus		Mr Bartley
King Henry the Fifth		Mr Phelps
Duke of Glo'ster	(brothers to	Miss Young
Duke of Bedford	the King)	Mr Rousby
Duke of Exeter	(uncle to King)	Mr Cooper
Earl of Salisbury		Mr F. Cooke
Earl of Westmoreland		Mr Belford
Archbishop of Canterbury		Mr Henry Marston
Bishop of Ely		Mr Lacy
Earl of Cambridge	(conspirators	Mr F. Vining
Lord Scroop	against the King)	Mr Meagerson
Sir Thomas Grey		Mr Harris
Sir Thomas Erpingham	(officers in King	Mr Addison
Captain Gower	Henry's army)	Mr J. F. Cathcart
Captain Fluellen		Mr Lewis Ball
Bates	(soldiers in	Mr J. W. Ray
Williams	the same)	Mr Howe
Nym		Mr C. Fenton
Bardolf	(formerly servants	Mr Wilkinson
Pistol	to Falstaff) (now soldiers in same)	Mr Harley
Boy	(servant to them)	Miss Kate Terry
Charles the Sixth, King of France.		Mr Lunt
Lewis, the Dauphin		Mr Leigh Murray
Duke of Burgundy		Mr G. Bassil
The Constable of France		Mr Graham
Governor of Harfleur		Mr Josephs
Montjoy (a French Herald)		Mr Mortimer
Isabel (Queen of France)		Mrs Ternan
Katherine (daughter of Charles & Isabel)		Miss T. Bassano
Quickly (Pistol's wife, an Hostess)		Mrs H. Marston

Scene at the beginning of the play lies in England, but afterwards wholly in France.

Director	Mr Charles Kean
Assistant Director	Mr George Ellis

Theatre arranged & Scenery painted by Mr Thomas Grieve.

PRINCESS'S THEATRE

LAST FIVE NIGHTS

OF THE SEASON

Which will terminate on Friday next, the 22nd Instant, when

THE WINTER'S TALE

Will have completed an Uninterrupted Series of
ONE HUNDRED AND TWO
Representations

On Monday, August 18th; Tuesday, 19th; Wednesday, 20th; Thursday, 21st; and Friday, 22nd, 1856

The Performance will commence with (37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st times) a New Farce

MUSIC HATH CHARMS

Mr Alfred Poppleton Pertinax (an Englishman, residing in Paris)	Mr David Fisher
Captain Bremont	Mr Raymond
Madame Mathilde de La Roche	Miss Carlotta Leclercq
M. Rabinel	Mr Brazier
Adrien de Beauval	Mr Barsby
Lucille	Miss M. Ternan
Victoire	Miss Clifford

Guests—Mr Collis, Mr Warren, Miss Hunt, & Miss E. Lovell

After which (98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, & 102nd Times)
Shakespeare's Play of The

WINTER'S TALE

The Scenery under the direction of Mr Grieve, and painted by Mr Grieve, Mr W. Gordon, Mr F. Lloyds, Mr Cuthbert, Mr Dayes, Mr Morgan, Mr G. Gordon, and numerous assistants.

Music and Overture composed for the occasion by Mr J. L. Hatton.

Dances and Action by Mr Oscar Byrn.

Decorations and Appointments by Mr E. W. Bradwell.

Dresses by Mrs & Miss Hoggins.

Machinery by Mr G. Hodsdon. Peruquier, Mr Asplin (of No. 13 New Bond Street). [126]

For authorities of Costumes, see End of Book, Published and sold in the Theatre.

Performance terminates by a quarter past eleven.

Leontes (King of Sicilia)	Mr Charles Kean
Mamillius (his son)	Miss Ellen Terry
Camillo }	{ Mr Graham
Antigonus } (Sicilian Lords)	{ Mr Cooper
Cleomenes }	{ Mr J. F. Cathcart
Dion }	{ Mr G. Everett
Two other Sicilian Lords	Mr Barsby & Mr Raymond
Elder of the Council	Mr Rolleston
Officer of the Court of Judicature	Mr Terry
An Attendant on young Prince Mamillius	Mr Brazier
Polixenes (King of Bithynia)	Mr Ryder
Florizel (his son)	Miss Heath
Archidamus (a Bithynian lord)	Mr H. Mellon
A Mariner	Mr Paulo
Keeper of the Prison	Mr Collett

An old Shepherd (reputed father of Perdita)	Mr Meadows
Clown (his son)	Mr H. Saker
Servant to the old Shepherd	Miss Kate Terry
Autolycus (a rogue)	Mr Harley
Time, as Chorus	Mr F. Cooke
Hermione (Queen to Leontes)	Mrs Charles Kean
Perdita (daughter to Leontes & Hermione)	Miss Carlotta Leclercq
Pauline, (wife to Antigonus)	Mrs Ternan
Emilia (a Lady)	Miss Clifford
Two other ladies attending on the Queen	Miss Eglinton & Miss M. Ternan
Mopsa } & Dorcas } (Shepherdesses)	{ Miss J. Brougham { Miss E. Brougham

Lords, Ladies & Attendants; Satyrs for a Dance; Shepherds, Shepherdesses, Guards, &c.

Scene:—*Sometimes in Sicilia. Sometimes in Bithynia.*

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[127]

Thursday, 19th February 1863.

"My dearest Macready,—I have just come back from Paris, where the Readings—Copperfield, Dombey and Trial, and Carol and Trial, have made a sensation which modesty (my natural modesty) renders it impossible for me to describe. You know what a noble audience the Paris audience is! They were at their very noblest with me.

"I was very much concerned by hearing hurriedly from Georgey that you were ill. But when I came home at night she showed me Kate's letter, and that set me up again. Ah! you have the best of companions and nurses, and can afford to be ill now and then, for the happiness of being so brought through it. But don't do it again, yet awhile, for all that.

"Legouvé (whom you remember in Paris as writing for the Ristori) was anxious that I should bring you the enclosed. A manly and generous effort, I think? Regnier desired to be warmly remembered to you. He has been losing money in speculation, but looks just as of yore.

"Paris generally is about as wicked and extravagant as in the days of the Regency. Madame Viardot in the Orphée, most splendid. An opera of 'Faust,' a very sad and noble rendering of that sad and noble story. Stage management remarkable for some admirable, and really poetical effects of light. In the more striking situations, Mephistopheles surrounded by an infernal red [128] atmosphere of his own. Marguerite by a pale blue mournful light. The two never blending. After Marguerite has taken the jewels placed in her way in the garden, a weird waning draws on, and the bloom fades from the flowers, and the leaves of the trees droop and lose their fresh green, and mournful shadows overhang her chamber window, which was innocently bright and gay at first. I couldn't bear it, and gave in completely.

"Fechter doing wonders over the way here with a picturesque French drama. Miss Kate Terry in a small part in it, perfectly charming. You may remember her making a noise years ago, doing a boy at an Inn in the 'Courier of Lyons'? She has a tender love-scene in this piece, which is a really beautiful and artistic thing. I saw her do it at about three in the morning of the day when the theatre opened, surrounded by shavings and carpenters, and (of course) with that inevitable hammer going; and I told Fechter 'that is the very best piece of womanly tenderness I have ever seen on the stage, and you will find no Audience can miss it.' It is a comfort to add that it was instantly seized upon, and is much talked of.

"Stanfield was very ill for some months; then suddenly picked up, and is really rosy and jovial again. Going to see him when he was very despondent, I told him the story of Fechter's piece (then in rehearsal) with appropriate action; fighting a duel with the washing-stand, defying the bedstead, and saving the life of the sofa-cushion. This so kindled his old theatrical ardour, that I [129] think he turned the corner on the spot.

"With love to Mrs. Macready and Katie, and (be still, my heart!) Benvenuta, and the exiled Johnny (not too attentive at school, I hope?), and the personally-unknown young Parr,—Ever, my dearest Macready, your most affectionate

"Charles Dickens."

"Canterbury, Fountain Hotel,
Saturday, 15th August 1868.

"Dear Mr. Terry,—I am desirous of letting you know my opinion of Kate's acting of May Edwards in 'The Ticket-of-Leave Man,' here.

"My impression, in the most general form I can state it, is simply this, that I have never had any one character in any piece I have written, from first to last, impersonated so entirely to my satisfaction. She played with a grace, intelligence, and delicacy and truth of feeling which

completely carried away the audience, and what is more—the author. If she had played the part in town I should think it would have doubled the success of the piece.

"You are quite at liberty to make this opinion of mine known in any quarter where you may think it useful to your daughter that it should be known.— Yours very truly,

TOM TAYLOR.

"Mr. B. TERRY."

PRINCE'S THEATRE, MANCHESTER.

Proprietors The Manchester Public Entertainments Company Limited.
Beddoes Peacock, Thorncliffe Grove,
Chorlton-upon-Medlock.

Friday and Saturday, October 4th and 5th, 1867,

FOR THE

BENEFIT

OF MISS

KATE TERRY

And her last two appearances on any stage.

The Performance will commence with an Original Drama,
in Three Acts, called—

PLOT AND PASSION

Fouché (Duke of Otranto, Minister of Police)	Mr J. G. Warde
M. Desmarets (Head of Secret Department of Police) (first time)	Mr F. J. Cathcart
The Marquis de Cevennes (a Legitimist)	Mr R. Soutar
Berthier (Prince of Neuchatel, Grand Chamberlain)	Mr J. G. Nicholson
De Neuville (Secretary to de Cevennes) (first time)	Mr Charles Wyndham
Jabot (House Steward to Madame de Fontanges)	Mr P. Rae
Grisbouille (a Subordinate of Desmarets)	Mr William Mortimer
Madame de Fontanges	Miss Kate Terry
Cecile (her maid)	Miss Ellen Leigh

SCENE.—*Acts 1st & 3rd, in Paris. Act 2nd, near Prague.*

Between the First and Second Acts of the Drama [131]
The Band will play the "Kate Terry Valse"
(published by Hopwood & Crew)

Performed by command before the Sultan, Viceroy, & His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, by the Band of the 1st Life Guards.

Dedicated by the composer, Mr Henry King of Bath, to Miss Kate Terry.

On Friday to conclude with & on Saturday to commence with the

LITTLE SAVAGE

Major Choker	Mr Shephard
Mr John Parker	Mr Charles Wyndham
Mr Lionel Larkins	Mr J. Robins
Jonathan	Mr R. Soutar
Lady Barbara Choker	Mrs Chas. Jones
Kate Dalrymple	Miss Ellen Terry

Musical Director Mr Williams

Doors open at seven o'clock. Performance to commence at half-past.

Private Boxes £3. 3s. and £1. 11s. 6d.
Prices:—Stalls 6/. Lower Circle 5/. Upper Circle 2/.
Pit 1/. Gallery 6d.

Box Office open from eleven to two.

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CHAPTER VI

CHIEFLY AT THE QUEEN'S THEATRE

As the carrier-dove invariably, and often after a period of long absence, wings its way back to its first home, so in due time Ellen Terry, bringing with her her long-desired message, fluttered back to the stage. We have seen how in 1866 she appeared at the Olympic, playing Helen to her sister's Julia, in "The Hunchback." This was a special occasion, but in the following year she, to the great delight of the public, entered once more on a regular engagement. This was at the Queen's Theatre in Longacre, and it came at the right time. In the August of 1867 playgoers had mourned for the loss of their beloved Kate Terry. In the following October Ellen Terry was at hand to take her place in their hearts. In the previous June she had acted at the Holborn Theatre in a short-lived play by Tom Taylor, entitled "The Antipodes, or Ups and Downs of Life." In it she had the support of a good company, which included that wonderful actress Charlotte Saunders; but though the drama dealt more or less effectively with the racing element in England and the digging element in Australia, it gave little or no chance to the performers, and is only mentioned here for purposes of record. [133]

It was at the Queen's that the new laurels were to be won.

To the playgoers of to-day, who are accustomed to the theatres of Shaftesbury Avenue and the Charing Cross Road, and who are even inclined to regard the historic Strand as a decaying home for the players, it may seem strange to think of houses in Holborn and Longacre, but the Queen's was in its brief day very popular, and to mention it conjures up many happy memories. It was there that John L. Toole appeared in some of his best domestic comedy parts, with such actors as Henry Irving, Lionel Brough, Charles Wyndham, John Clayton, and Henrietta Hodson for his comrades; it was there that all London flocked to see Hermann Vezin in F. C. Burnand's convincing drama, "The Turn of the Tide" (founded upon the then deservedly popular novel, "The Morals of Mayfair"), and in W. G. Wills's first ambitious play, "Hinko"; and it was there that Shakespearean students revelled in Samuel Phelps's perfect impersonation of Bottom the Weaver, and George Rignold's striking, nay, almost startling, rendering of Caliban. Alas! for its many memories, the Queen's Theatre is no more, and, instead of stage, footlights, and auditorium, its walls encase the works of a Longacre carriage-building firm.

When, on its opening night, Ellen Terry joined this now defunct playhouse, its fortunes were controlled by Alfred Wigan, with Charles Reade—who, as we all know, was one of the greatest literary geniuses of his time—for an ally. I meet young people to-day who tell me they have never read this fine novelist's glorious romance, "The Cloister and the Hearth," and say they "don't think they should like it." I am truly sorry for them. [134]

Charles Reade, although his works were greedily snapped up by the publishers, loved the stage, had great faith in his own plays, and took endless trouble over their production.

His drama, "The Double Marriage," was taken from his novel, "White Lies" (which had been suggested by a French play from the pen of Auguste Maquet, entitled "Le Chateau de Grantier"), and it was produced at the Queen's on October 24th, 1867.

It is said that when a quick critic found out the source of the plot, Charles Reade was very angry, and it seems difficult to believe that so great a man should annex another writer's story without acknowledgment.

The cast of "The Double Marriage" was not only a strong but a very interesting one. Ellen Terry and Fanny Addison played the heroines; Alfred Wigan was the hero, Charles Wyndham had an effective part, and in a smaller one Lionel Brough made his *début* on the London stage.

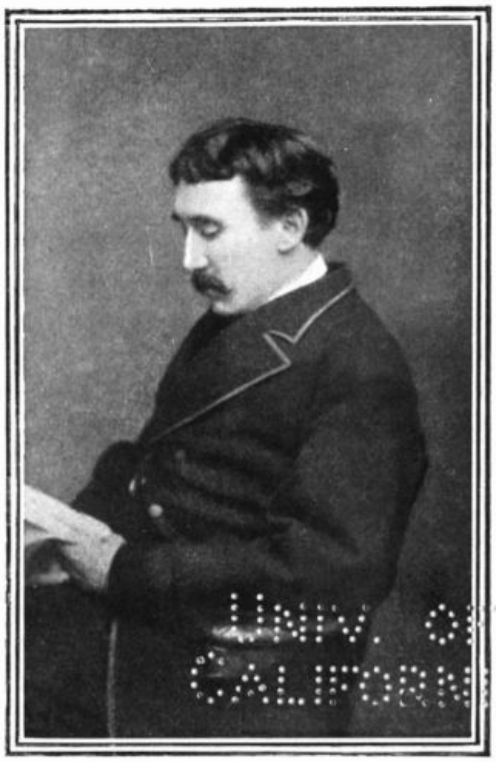
Contrary to all expectation, and in spite of excellent acting, "The Double Marriage" did not attract the public. I shall always think that the play deserved a better fate. Years afterwards, on a provincial tour, it was revived by Arthur Dacre and his wife, the well-remembered Amy Roselle. Poor things! They had great faith in their venture, and had expended much money on special scenery and costumes. It was effective enough, and ought to have been attractive, but "bad luck" once more attended it, and I fear it was one of the many disappointments that led to the unfortunate Dacres' tragic end. [135]

At the Queen's "The Double Marriage" soon gave way to a revival of Tom Taylor's perennial "Still Waters Run Deep." In this Ellen Terry played to admiration the by no means easy character of Mrs. Mildmay. Alfred Wigan resumed his original character of the self-contained John Mildmay; Mrs. Wigan was the Mrs. Sternhold; and Charles Wyndham (destined to become the best of all John Mildmays) the Captain Hawkesley. On December 26th a very interesting event took place. Garrick's one-act excision from "The Taming of the Shrew," dubbed "Katherine and Petruchio," was revived, and in it Ellen Terry played for the first time with Henry Irving. Critics very much differed as to the merits of the new "shrew" and her "tamer," and, indeed, they had not much chance in this abridged version of the comedy of displaying their ability, but in face of later theatrical history the meeting is noteworthy. It is a matter for regret that these distinguished artists have not included "The Taming of the Shrew" in their noble Shakespearean repertory at the Lyceum. Possibly they have been deterred by the perfect success made in the leading characters by their American contemporaries, Ada Rehan and John Drew. It has remained for them to show Shakespeare's comedy in all its glory. In her "Stray Memories," Ellen Terry has thus recorded the impression made upon her by Henry Irving in those early days:— [136]

"From the first," she says, "I noticed that Mr. Irving worked more concentratedly than all the other actors put together, and the most important lesson of my working life I learnt from him, that to do one's work well one must *work continually*, live a life of constant self-denial for that

purpose, and, in short, keep one's nose upon the grindstone. It is a lesson one had better learn early in stage life, I think, for the bright, glorious, healthy career of an actor is but brief at the best."

A very pleasant recollection of these days is Ellen Terry's appearance with John Clayton in Francis Talfourd's pretty comedietta, "A Household Fairy," which, with Mr. H. T. Craven and Miss Wyndham in the two parts that form the cast was first produced at the St. James's Theatre on December 24th, 1859. In later years it was admirably performed at the Globe Theatre, Henry [137] Neville playing Julian de Clifford, and Lydia Foote, Catherine. But the sprightly, warm-hearted, and at the same time serious, "Kitty" of the Queen's added lustre to the author's meaning, and was, as he intended her to be, a veritable fairy of the fireside.



HENRY IRVING IN 1868.
It was at this period of his career that he first played with Ellen Terry at the Queen's Theatre. Long Acre.
[*To face page 136.*

But at the close of this brief engagement Ellen Terry again said *au revoir* (luckily it was not *adieu*) to the stage, and for seven years her gracious presence was withdrawn from us.

During this period she became the wife of Mr. Charles Wardell, a gentleman well known to playgoers as Charles Kelly, the name he adopted when, retiring from his position as an officer in a first-class cavalry regiment, he followed his inclinations and took to the stage. In parts of what may be called a stolid type Charles Kelly had, in his day, no rival, and his successes were many. The character of Richard Arkwright in Tom Taylor's interesting drama, "Arkwright's Wife," was, probably, his greatest original achievement; but, as we shall presently see, he did admirable work in Shakespearean drama as well as in the modern plays in which his services were highly esteemed, and always in request. He was also an excellent comedian. When John Hare first gave his inimitable performance of Lord Kilclare in "A Quiet Rubber" at the Court Theatre, the honours were pretty equally divided between him and Charles Kelly, who, as the hasty-tempered but high- [138] minded Irish gentleman, Mr. Sullivan, gave a masterly sketch of Hibernian character.

> We were all sorry when our well-beloved petrel once more betook herself to the freedom of the winds and the waves; but we waited patiently in the certain hope that she would again return to the shore fringed by the footlights.

In the earliest days of 1874 London theatre lovers who were not behind the scenes were puzzled as to who an "eminent actress" could be who, "after a long period of retirement," was announced to appear at the Queen's Theatre as the heroine of Charles Reade's drama, "The Wandering Heir." With Mrs. John Wood in the character the piece had already made its mark, but that talented actress was under contract to appear elsewhere, and horses had to be swopped in the middle of a stream. Until almost the last moment the secret of the vague announcement was well kept, and then to the general joy it was discovered that the "dark lady" was Ellen Terry.

Of course her admirers rallied round her to a man—and woman—and her difficult task of succeeding an eminent artiste in a newly created part was not only fulfilled to perfection but crowned with well won approbation. There was no false note about the praise. The "wanderer" was not extolled because she was Ellen Terry, but because of the true excellence of her acting. [139]

The enthusiasm of her reception and the appreciation of her critics must have warmed her heart

and encouraged her, for she has said that from that time until the present she has never lost zest for her work.

Of this notable impersonation of Charles Reade's Philippa Chester (by the way, the play was no doubt suggested by the famous Tichborne case, which was then the talk of the hour), the critic of the *Daily Telegraph* said:—

"Miss Ellen Terry possesses exactly the qualifications demanded by such a character as Philippa, and the undiminished brightness and buoyancy of her style became at once apparent in the scene when the hoyden dwells with such delight on her love of boyish pastimes, yet shows how much she retains of girlish modesty and simplicity. Hardly less effective when the action is transferred to America, and Philippa appears in male attire, was her generous devotion to the interests of James Annesley—while the struggle under masculine garb to veil repeated signs of strong womanly devotion was most artistically indicated. Mr. Charles Reade's drama of 'The Wandering Heir,' which possesses a highly-interesting story wrought out with remarkable ingenuity, has thus become endowed with an additional element of attraction, and the prosperous career of a piece having a peculiar significance at the present time promises to be prolonged far beyond the [140] hundred nights it has already nearly attained."

When his tenancy of the Queen's Theatre came to an end, the energetic Charles Reade took his plays and his loyal little company over Westminster Bridge to "Astley's," of immortal memory, and there Ellen Terry distinguished herself not only as Philippa Chester, but as Susan Merton in the famous "Never Too Late to Mend," which, admirable as it was in its volume form, became even more popular when transferred by its masterly author to the stage. Even after this lapse of time the stirring drama, teaching as it does the most useful of lessons, is a good one to conjure with, and in the provinces, at least, is always sure to attract its faithful pit and gallery.

Ellen Terry speaks very affectionately of clever and determined Charles Reade, and cherishes the memory of the time when she served under his somewhat formidably waved banner. "Dear, lovable, aggravating, childlike, crafty, gentle, obstinate, and entirely delightful and interesting Charles Reade," she calls him—and we may be quite sure that while she, despite his foibles, understood his great genius and noble heart, he, in his turn, appreciated her sweet nature and unlimited talents. Before taking leave of "The Wandering Heir" I must make mention of Edmund Leathes, who was the original James Annesley of the cast. He was a gifted as well as a graceful actor, he made his name as an author, and he vanished from us all too soon. [141]

From the days of 1874 to these of 1901 Ellen Terry has always been with us. The carrier-dove had this time come home for good, and the message that she has constantly repeated has been ever a sweet one to those many thousands who, all unknown to her, not only admire but love her.

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CHAPTER VII

IN TOTTENHAM STREET

In 1875 Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft decided to make a bold experiment at the old Prince of Wales' Theatre in Tottenham Street. In that little playhouse which, thanks to their taste and admirable management, had become the favourite resort of playgoers far and near; in the birthplace and home of the sweet and memorable series of T. W. Robertson's comedies, they would soar to Shakespeare, and give an elaborate as well as an artistic production of "The Merchant of Venice."

As far as the company was concerned the cast presented few difficulties. Charles F. Coghlan, who was deservedly regarded as one of the finest and most powerful actors of his day, was to have his chance as Shylock, and, since Mrs. Kendal, who was playing with John Hare at the Court Theatre, was not available, all that was wanted was an ideal Portia.

She was found in Ellen Terry, and in some ways the engagement was the most eventful episode in her artistic career. April 17th was the night of the revival, and even those who had illimitable [143] faith in the Bancrofts were amazed at the scenic treat that had been prepared for them. It seemed incredible that such perfect pictures of Venice, exact in every detail, and painted and modelled from drawings specially taken from the beautiful city of the sea, could be displayed on the small stage. They charmed the eye and satisfied the mind. Venice in all its beauty seemed to have transported some of its loveliest spots to dingy Tottenham Street, and a convincing colour was given to the performance such as had not hitherto been seen.

The costumes were equally artistic and appropriate,—the parts had been well and very carefully distributed, the success of the production seemed assured,—but in spite of its undeniable, and in many respects unequalled, excellences, it proved unattractive, and had to be speedily withdrawn.

The disappointment centred itself, where it had been least expected, in Charles Coghlan's Shylock, and "The Merchant of Venice," without a strongly appreciative and audience satisfying Jew of Venice is doomed to collapse. It was in this way that the beautifully painted and firmly built house of cards tumbled down. It was, and is, inexplicable. Charles Coghlan had over and over again proved himself to be the best of actors. Critics, aware of his latent power, had thought him thrown away on the comparatively trivial parts he had been called upon to play, and felt certain that when he could "let himself go," he would electrify. The power was there—in after [144] years it made itself manifest; but, for some strange reason, it lay dormant in his Shylock—or at any rate in his Shylock of 1875. There was no lapse of memory on the actor's part—no physical

breakdown. The character had evidently been most carefully studied, and the delivery of Shakespeare's lines left little or nothing to be desired. Apparently the actor had made the fatal mistake of thinking that Shylock was one of those strong parts that would—in theatrical parlance—"play itself." He was utterly wrong. If Shylock does not reveal himself in his distinctly true colours, not even the ideal Portia can prevent his fading from the picture, and leaving Shakespeare's canvas a blank.

David Garrick's contemporary, Charles Macklin, whose name will ever live as the first appreciative impersonator of this superbly drawn character—as full of light as it is of shade—said of his first appearance in it, and when he had from the outset found his audience in sympathy with him:—

"These encomiums warmed but did not overset me. I knew where I should have the pull, which was in the third act, and reserved myself accordingly. At this period I threw out all my fire; and as the contrasted passions of joy for the merchant's losses and grief for the elopement of Jessica, open a fine field for an actor's powers, I had the good fortune to please beyond my wildest expectations.

"The whole house was in an uproar of applause. The trial scene wound up the fulness of my [145] reputation; here I was well listened to; and here I made such a silent yet forcible impression upon the audience that I retired from this great attempt well satisfied.

"On my return to the green-room after the play was over, it was crowded with nobility and critics, who all complimented me in the warmest and most unbounded manner; and the situation I found myself in, I must confess, was one of the most flattering and intoxicating in my whole life.

"No money, no title, could purchase what I felt. And let no man tell me after this what fame will not inspire a man to do, and how far the attainment of it will not remunerate his greatest labours. By Heaven, sir, though I was not worth fifty pounds in the world at the time, yet let me tell you that I was Charles the Great for that night."

Soon after this success Macklin received an invitation to dine with Bolingbroke and Pope at Battersea. The latter's couplet on his performance—

"This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew,"

is well known, and the nineteenth night of the run being his benefit, Bolingbroke sent him a purse containing twenty guineas, such a present being then considered a compliment.

On April 17, 1875, poor Charles Coghlan was anything but Charles the Great. Always careful in [146] the details of his make-up, he was a picturesque figure, but his expectant audience waited in vain for the effect that should have been made by the "pull" in the third act—for the fire that was never thrown out—and for the forcible impression of the trial scene. The "nobility and critics" were in front, but they could not compliment the new Shylock, and had sadly to admit that he was anything but the Jew that Shakespeare drew.

Charles Coghlan seemed for the moment to have forgotten that Shakespeare meant his matchless text to be illuminated by the actor. He ought to have borne in mind Mrs. Micawber's adage: "Things cannot turn up of themselves. We must in a measure assist them to turn up."

No doubt his grave and unaccountable mistake killed the production, and from it the Bancrofts must have suffered not only bitter disappointment, but heavy pecuniary loss. It is pleasant to remember how in their published records they very lightly touch upon the shortcomings of their stage comrade. But the Bancrofts were ever kindly and generous, and in every way merit the honours that have been conferred upon them. Were they not the pioneers of a new, tasteful, and pure departure in English dramatic art? Is it not to them that we owe the evergreen comedies of Robertson and the refined theatrical school that he founded?

It is wonderful that thus heavily handicapped with an insipid Shylock the Portia of the evening [147] made a never-to-be-forgotten triumph. But triumph she did, and all along the line. It at once became apparent that we had amongst us an actress who could play the heroines of Shakespeare in a manner that would vie with her great predecessors in the parts, and that she would endow them with new graces and sweet fancies of her own. Such an actress was sorely needed, and we were grateful for her timely advent.

Well did Joseph Knight say of Ellen Terry and that famous night at the pleasant little theatre in Tottenham Street, "She had revealed the gifts which are the rarest on the English stage."

Continuing, he wrote: "More adequate expression has seldom been given to the light-heartedness of maidenhood, the perplexities and hesitations of love, and the inevitable content of gratified aspirations and ambitions. Not less successful were the scenes of badinage. Portia's address before the court was excellent, and the famous speech on mercy assumed new beauties from a correct and exquisite delivery. A very noteworthy point in the performance was the womanly interest in Shylock—the endeavour to win him, for his own sake, from the pursuit of his grim resolve. The delivery of the lines—

"'Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee,'

and

"'Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death,'

were dictated by sublime compassion."

In accord with this was the opinion of Dutton Cook, who wrote:— [148]

"With all the charms of aspect and graces of manner indispensable to the impersonation of the heiress of Belmont, Miss Terry is gifted with a voice of silvery and sympathetic tone, while her elocutionary method should be prized by her fellow actors. Portia has been presented now with tragedy queen airs, and now with vivacity of the soubrette sort—as when in Garrick's time Mrs. Clive played the part, and made a point of mimicking the more famous barristers of her time; indeed, a nice combination of stateliness, animation, sentiment, archness, poetry, tenderness, and humour is required of the actress entrusted with the character. Miss Terry's Portia leaves little to be desired; she is singularly skilled in the business of the scene, and assists the action of the drama by great care and inventiveness with regard to details. There is something of passion in the anxiety with which she watches Bassanio's choice of the leaden casket; while the confession of her love which follows upon that incident is delivered with a depth of feeling such as only a mistress of her art could accomplish."

And so it was with all the critics. Probably there never was an occasion on which they were so unanimous. In the presence of true genius we must all agree.

How difficult it is to define the word "genius." To my mind it has never been so well done as by [149] George William Curtis, who said—

"The secret of the rose's sweetness, of the bird's ecstasy, of the sunset's glory, that is the secret of genius."

Certainly this seems to sum up the genius of Ellen Terry.

Since that night when she first played Portia, it has never lost its hold upon the public, or its influence upon our stage. With an equally magnetic Shylock the Bancrofts' brave venture with "The Merchant of Venice" would surely have run for many months, and in view of the deep impression she has made, it must have been a great disappointment to Ellen Terry that this was not to be. She did not know then that both in England and America her Portia would prove an ever-recurring joy. It was ordained that as Ophelia she should commence her long and brilliant series of Shakespearean impersonations with Henry Irving at the Lyceum, but it was as Portia at the Bancrofts' Prince of Wales' Theatre that she first won all our hearts, from the scholarly critic of our greatest poet, to those who only regard "The Merchant of Venice" as an interesting play that they pay their money to see. Portia will, I think, ever sparkle as the brightest gem in her well bejewelled crown.

Being human, Ellen Terry must have felt somewhat chagrined that the fiasco of Charles Coghlan's Shylock should, for a time, banish her Portia, and it is characteristic of her generous [150] nature that a few months later she should be playing, for a single performance, Pauline Deschappelles to his Claude Melnotte at the Princess's Theatre. It was one of those ephemeral stage experiments that could lead to no immediate good. It involved much study, great anxiety, and hard work. Probably in undertaking the task Ellen Terry was actuated by the unselfish desire to help to reinstate her old comrade of the Bristol days in the public estimation. I know that in the long period of her unalterably established fame she has ever been the first to help a fellow actor fallen by the way. If this was her desire she succeeded beyond her expectations. As Claude Melnotte Coghlan did much to redeem his recent unfortunate venture, and as Pauline she evoked pæans of praise. Writing of this performance Joseph Knight said that its effect was to set the seal upon a growing reputation, and to make evident the fact that an actress of a high, if not the highest, order had arisen in our midst. He felt, as every one felt, that in Ellen Terry an artist had developed in whom there was that perception of analogies, that insight into mysteries, and that power of interpretation on which the world has bestowed the name of genius. "Circumstances," he truly remarked, "took Miss Terry from the stage at a time when men dimly perceived in her the promise which has since been realised. It is probable that some delay in that maturity of style [151] indispensable to perfection in histrionic art has resulted from this break in her career. The interval can scarcely have been misspent, however, since Miss Terry reappeared on the stage with ripened powers and with improved methods."

In saying that her presentation of Pauline "comprised a series of pictures each more graceful than the preceding," he echoed the general opinion; but I do not think that the great mass of enthusiastic playgoers could be with him when he added that they were "all too good for the lackadaisical play in which she appeared."

Poor "Lady of Lyons"! There are still a little band of your faithful admirers who hate to hear you condemned as you are to-day, as tawdry, cheap, and artificial. They look back fondly on happy and soul-stirring hours spent with you in the past; they know that you can still hold intelligent, if somewhat sentimentally inclined, audiences spellbound; and they believe that if any later-day dramatist could write a play containing as good a character for a stage heroine, he would reap a fortune. But among the superfine, my sweet "Lady of Lyons," you are condemned as "old-fashioned," and your loyal followers, if they open their lips in your praise, must be content to share the same ridicule and fate. It is very terrible to be old-fashioned; but I, for one, shall be true to you as long as I live. In the course of his criticism the writer said, "It is too early yet to gauge fully the talent which has revealed itself. It seems probable that Miss Terry's powers will [152]

be restrained to depicting the grace, tenderness, and passion of love. In the short scene in the third act, in which Pauline chides her lover for treachery, the actress scarcely rose to the requisite indignation. Limiting, however, what is to be hoped for her within the bounds indicated, what chance is there not afforded? Juliet, in the stronger scenes, would be, we should fancy, outside the physical resources of the artist. Beatrice, Rosalind, Viola, Imogen, Miranda, and a score of other characters of the most delicate and fragrant beauty, are, however, all within what appears to be her range. In the present state of public feeling respecting the Shakespearean drama, it will be strange indeed if some manager does not take the opportunity of mounting some of those plays for which her talent is so eminently adapted. The period during which an actress can play such parts with effect is brief; and a portion of Miss Terry's career has already been lost so far as the stage is concerned. There will be regrettable waste if talent, so specially suited to the Shakespearean drama, is confined to Lord Lytton's facile sentiment and sparkling rhetoric."

Do not heed these final words, dear "Lady of Lyons." Believe me, there are still many hundreds of gardeners' sons, Princes of Coma, and Colonel Moiriers, ready to be your lovers, and worship at your feet.

Twenty-six fruitful years have elapsed since the foregoing criticism was written, and we can be [153] wise after the event. Joseph Knight has proved himself to be a good prophet, but by the light of to-day we know that he might have added to his list of Shakespearean characters within Ellen Terry's range. To the regret of all, we have not yet seen her Rosalind and Miranda, but she has triumphed as Viola and Imogen, and (though she did not satisfy every one in the part) has proved that her physical and artistic resources were equal to the portrayal of the passion and sorrow of Juliet. She has shone as Beatrice, Cordelia, Desdemona, Lady Anne, and Ophelia; she has astonished us and excited our admiration as Queen Katherine and Lady Macbeth, and has even made a great personal success as the determined Volumnia. Add to these the Mamillius, Puck, Prince Arthur, Katherine, and other parts of earlier days, and we see what a Shakespearean record has been made.

During her engagement at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, she also appeared as Clara Douglas in Lord Lytton's comedy, "Money"; as Mabel Vane in Charles Reade's and Tom Taylor's "Masks and Faces"; and as Blanche Haye in one of the many revivals of T. W. Robertson's "Ours." In each of these characters her peculiar grace and distinction, coupled with tenderness, were apparent, but none of them offered her a chance worthy of her now fully recognised power. In H. J. Byron's [154] comedy, "Wrinkles; or, A Tale of Time," she was doomed to disappointment. Byron, as a writer for the stage, was then in the zenith of his fame. Everywhere his comedies and burlesques were in demand, and it was only natural that he should receive a commission for a play from his old friends the Bancrofts. Writing for the best comedy company in London, and with Ellen Terry, the idol of the hour, designed for his heroine, he no doubt intended to produce his masterpiece; but, somehow, "Wrinkles" failed. Indeed, on the first night, failure was in the air. Not only did the piece prove unattractive in itself, but (a most unusual thing for any play directed by the Bancrofts) it seemed hardly ready for production. Hereby hangs a characteristic story of poor Byron. At the end of the third act ("Wrinkles" possessed four), though no open hostility had been displayed, his dramatic instinct told him that his work was doomed. Inwardly suffering the torments of the defeated playwright, but outwardly putting on a brave show of *nonchalance*, he lounged about the front of the house. The long waits between the acts had already been a source of dissatisfaction, and now had come the weariest interval of all. Added to this, sounds were heard behind the act-drop as of a carpenter sawing wood, suggesting—ominously suggesting—that the scenery was defective. "What on earth are they doing, Byron?" asked a friend. The poor author was gloomy and dejected, but, even at his own expense, he could never resist a joke. "I [155] don't know," he said, "but *I hope they're cutting out the last act*!"

The last act was not cut out, but it did not save the already foundering play, and the part in which Ellen Terry had been intended to shine (she did not appear in it) flickered out.

But her engagement in Tottenham Street will ever be remembered by her first appearance as Portia, and to the Bancrofts we owe her introduction to one of her greatest parts.

"How I loved playing Portia," she has said. "I have tried five or six different ways of treating her. Unfortunately, the way I think the *best* way does not find response with my audiences."

Be that as it may, she continues to play Portia in a way that her critics as well as friends deem the best, and assuredly it requires no alteration. May she thus go on playing it for many a year to come!

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CHAPTER VIII

IN SLOANE SQUARE

At this time the Bancrofts' old and well loved comrade, John Hare, was acting and managing in friendly rivalry with them at the original Court Theatre in Sloane Square. In 1876, the Kendals, having concluded a most prosperous season with him, left to fulfil an engagement in Tottenham Street, and he secured the services of Ellen Terry, whose husband, Charles Kelly, was already serving under his banner.

Before he went to fulfil his first engagement in America, John Hare entrusted me with the task of

writing his biography, and, apart from my own observations of them, I became very well acquainted with the history of the series of plays in which Ellen Terry appeared in the dainty Chelsea playhouse.

Her first venture in her new home was as Kate Hungerford, in an original comedy by Charles Coghlan, entitled "Brothers," of which great things were expected. The cast included John Hare, Charles Kelly, H. B. Conway (one of the handsomest young actors of his day), G. W. Anson (a born comedian), Miss Bessie Hollingshead (the pretty and gifted daughter of the valiant and erudite [157] John Hollingshead), and the always delightful Mrs. Gaston Murray. It was a cleverly written play, and the acting had the *ensemble* that John Hare had striven so hard and so successfully to impart, but it did not "draw the town," and it was very speedily succeeded by a revival of Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg's charming comedy, "New Men and Old Acres," in which Ellen Terry played the part created by Mrs. Kendal on the original production of the piece at the Haymarket Theatre, and Hare followed Chippendale as Vavasour. By all concerned this was so beautifully performed, and by the indefatigable actor-manager so perfectly stage-managed, that solid and lasting success was assured. The good work that was being done was generously as well as generally recognised, and the critical *Athenæum* spoke for the public when it said:—

"Without going to the best Parisian theatres, it is not easy to rival the performance now given, and there even the majority of the impersonations would call for notice. The result is highly gratifying to the public, unused to spectacles such as are now presented to it, and is most honourable to the management.... We may congratulate accordingly Mr. Hare and his company upon a performance that lifts off a portion of the reproach under which we have lain, and that is the more noteworthy inasmuch as of the dozen actors concerned in the performance, there is no one that does not deserve praise."

The character of Lilian Vavasour had been so inseparably associated with the name of Mrs. [158] Kendal, who when she first appeared in it was still using her maiden name (well loved by the public) of Madge Robertson, that it must have been difficult for Ellen Terry to take it up, as it were, at second-hand. That she succeeded in it to admiration, and once more secured a long run for the pretty comedy, speaks volumes for her talent and personal charm. I suppose nowadays "New Men and Old Acres" would be called "old-fashioned." Many of us would like to see it again as played by those dozen actors who all "deserved praise."

Early in 1877 it was apparent that Henry Compton, the veteran Haymarket comedian, whose name will ever rank with the greatest of his art, would be unable to return to the active work of the stage. By his professional brothers and sisters he was both loved and respected, and they resolved to give evidence to their sympathy by organising a history-making benefit performance.

This was given at Drury Lane Theatre on March 1. The substantial item on the bill of fare was Lord Lytton's "Money," with a cast that included the well-known names of Henry Neville, John Hare, W. H. Kendal, Benjamin Webster (he emerged from his retirement to play his original character of Graves, and it was his last appearance on the stage), David James, and Squire Bancroft. Mrs. Bancroft played Lady Franklin; Mrs. Kendal, Clara Douglas; and Ellen Terry, [159] Georgina Vesey.

All concerned in this undertaking were anxious to do honour to the name of Henry Compton, and the happy thought was conceived of inviting his son, Edward Compton, then a young fellow "serving his time" with the provincial stock companies, to play the central part of Alfred Evelyn. It was a nervous first appearance in London for so youthful and inexperienced an actor, but he performed his task bravely, and delighted his worthy father as well as his audience. He has often told me of the kindly encouragement he received from the great artists by whom he so unexpectedly found himself surrounded. Since then, as the founder and indefatigable manager of the Compton Comedy Company, he has helped many excellent actors and actresses to reach the coveted London boards.

As a motto to "Money," the following cynical lines are often used—

"It's a very good world that we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in,
But to beg, or to borrow, or get what's your own,
It's the very worst world that ever was known."

In the little world of the theatre lending and giving ungrudgingly goes on; the worthy, unfortunate, and unasking beggar is (to put him in that light) charitably treated; and one will cheerily help another to obtain his own.

Until October 1877, "New Men and Old Acres" pursued its prosperous course, and by that time [160] John Hare was ready with one of his most ambitious efforts.

This was the production of Lord Lytton's posthumous work, "The House of Darnley," and concerning it I cannot do better than quote Dutton Cook, when he said: "A critic wrote concisely of the late Lord Lytton's play of 'Not so Bad as we Seem' that it was 'not so good as we expected.' Perhaps a like judgment might fairly be passed upon the noble author's posthumous comedy, 'The House of Darnley.' It was inevitable, however, that Lord Lytton's fame should stimulate hope unduly. The author of 'The Lady of Lyons' and 'Money' may reasonably be reckoned the most successful dramatist" (let it be remembered that this was written in 1877) "of the nineteenth century. It may be said at once that with those established works the new comedy cannot afford comparison. But in estimating the worth of 'The House of Darnley' it is very necessary to bear in

mind the peculiar conditions under which it is submitted to the public. The play was left in an unfinished state; the whole of the last act has been furnished by Mr. Coghlan, who was without other clue than his fancy could suggest as to the original design of the dramatist. More than any other literary work, a drama must benefit by revision and reconsideration on the part of the author; in such wise weak points in construction may be strengthened, gaps in the story supplied, [161] the dialogue braced, and the action quickened."

That in the face of all these very properly pointed out difficulties success should have been won, speaks volumes for the tact of the courageous manager, and the skill of his fellow-workers.

Let me again quote my authority:—

"With all its defects," he says, "'The House of Darnley' secures the attention and the respect of the audience, and succeeds in right of its own good qualities, and not merely because of the esteem in which the performances of its departed author are generally held. If the theme be weak, it is yet strongly handled, and demonstrates sufficiently the wit and the humour and the literary accomplishments of the late Lord Lytton. The comedy has been provided for with the good taste and liberality which have so laudably distinguished Mr. Hare's management."

Ellen Terry acted with great distinction as Lady Juliet, and excellent work was done by John Hare, Charles Kelly, Alfred Bishop, Amy Roselle, and others, but, interesting though it was, the play did not long hold the stage.

There was another performance in 1877 that must not be forgotten. This was on June 20th, at the Gaiety Theatre, for the benefit of Charles Lamb Kenney, who had through illness lasting over a considerable time been unable to ply his facile pen. "The School for Scandal" was the *pièce de* [162] *résistance*, and it was then that Ellen Terry appeared for the first time as Lady Teazle. Charles Kelly was the Sir Peter; Henry Neville, Charles Surface; and John Clayton, Joseph Surface. By those who remember the prodigiously long run of Sheridan's masterpiece at the Vaudeville Theatre, the last mentioned performances of the admirably contrasted brothers will ever be borne in appreciative memory. Mrs. Arthur Stirling was the Mrs. Candour; and Mrs. Alfred Mellon the Lady Sneerwell. As may be imagined Ellen Terry played Lady Teazle with winsome high spirits in the earlier acts, and plaintive remorse in the great screen scene.

John Hare's next venture at the Court Theatre was not successful. In spite of the care lavished upon its production, and of much clever acting on the part of the company, Tom Taylor's comedy "Victims," originally presented at the Haymarket in 1857, failed to attract audiences in 1878, and was speedily withdrawn. Withdrawn, it may be unhesitatingly said, in favour of his greatest managerial success—the stage version by W. G. Wills of Oliver Goldsmith's immortal story "The Vicar of Wakefield," entitled "Olivia." John Hare suggested the subject to Wills, and it was at once seized with the characteristic avidity of a prolific and graceful writer. No one who knew that unquestionable, but all too kindly and erratic, genius will be surprised to hear that the first draft [163] of the play was for stage purposes impossible. It was made up of scenes of great beauty hopelessly choked with vast quantities of irrelevant matter. It was not consecutively written, but was jotted down at random in untidy copy-books, on the backs of used envelopes, chance scraps of paper, and even on the eager but unmethodical author's wristbands. At one time the task of bringing all this heterogeneous matter into workmanlike form seemed to be a hopeless one, but with full faith in his project and his author, John Hare was not to be baffled.

Night after night the two sat up together, and the play was re-constructed and re-written in accordance with the practical managerial views. When it was at last completed the dramatist prudently withdrew from the scene. W. G. Wills had no interest in or talent for stage management, and he wisely left the production in the experienced hands of John Hare, only attending the perfected rehearsal on the eve of the first performance.

John Hare can rarely be induced to talk about himself or his work, but in connection with this production he is inclined to be somewhat enthusiastic. "The beauty of the subject," he told me, "made the stage management of this play profoundly interesting to me, and stimulated my imagination and inventive powers to a greater height than I had ever reached. By working out the whole scheme of the play in my home study I planned all the movements and minute stage [164] directions, so that at the very first rehearsal it practically was the same as when it was presented to the public. The part of the Vicar I offered in the first instance to Alfred Wigan, making every effort to induce him to return to the stage in order that he might create this beautiful character. I could not induce him, however, to face the footlights again. So Hermann Vezin became the 'Court' Vicar, and how admirably he played the part we all know."

No one grudges Hermann Vezin his well-won success in the part, but some of us who ponder over things theatrical, sometimes wonder whether, if the Court Theatre had had another manager, and the services of John Hare had been available, he might not have been induced to impersonate Dr. Primrose.

The part of Olivia had of course been designed for Ellen Terry, and how much she was pleased with it is proved by the following little note impulsively dashed off to the author:—

"Court Theatre,
Monday, March 5, 1878.

"Dear Mr. Wills,—I can't tell you how *much* I was delighted with the play, and with my part, but I *was* delighted!

"I only hope I shall be able to please you in my part of the work.—Believe me to be, very sincerely yours, Ellen Terry."

Indeed, she always liked to study the words of this author. At the Lyceum, in addition to the repetition of Olivia, she played his Queen Henrietta Maria in the revivals of "Charles I."; his Ruth Meadows in "The Fate of Eugene Aram," and his Margaret in "Faust." [165]

Concerning "Charles I.," she wrote to him (this letter was published by Mr. Freeman Wills in his highly interesting memoir of his brother):—

"I'm just returned from our last rehearsal of 'Charles I.,' and, coming home in my carriage, have been reading the last act, and I can't help writing to thank you and bless you for having written those *five last pages*. Never, *never* has anything more beautiful been written in English—I know no other language. They are perfection; and I—often as I've acted with Henry Irving in the play—am *all melted* at reading it again. An immortality for you for this alone."

She greatly grieved over her well-loved author's death, and concerning it wrote to her friend, Alfred C. Calmour:—

"22 Barkston Gardens, Earl's Court, S.W.,
December 15, 1891.

> "Thank you for writing. Wretched news, is it not? A genius and a dear fellow. I know how much you will miss him, and I'm very sorry for you and for myself too.
>
> "I hope he was conscious and had folk he cared for by him.—Yours ever, Ellen Terry."

She is indeed the most charming of letter writers, and, if it were permissible, it would be pleasant to fill a chapter with her lively, as well as sympathetic, correspondence with the famous men and women of her day; but she very strongly, as well as very rightly, holds the opinion that to publish private letters intended for one person only is like asking an audience to put their ears to a keyhole and listen to a private conversation. [166]

But to return to "Olivia." The beautiful play was produced at the Court Theatre on 30th March 1878, and at once won its well deserved victory. The first-night audience having watched the course of the story with that breathless silence which is the highest form of applause, having been over and over again moved to tears, became, at the fall of the curtain, a demonstrative one, and the unrestrained enthusiasm of the plaudits could be heard without Sloane Square. The critics were in their appreciation and praises as loud as the audience, and Ellen Terry's triumph was complete. She was the idolised heroine of a memorable evening.

"Mr. Wills," said Dutton Cook, "has been fortunate not merely in his performers, but also in his manager. Mr. Hare demonstrated anew that he has elevated theatrical decoration to the rank of a fine art; indeed, his painstaking and outlay in placing the play upon the stage justify suspicion that it was produced almost as much for its pictorial as for its dramatic merits. In either case, advantage has been taken of the opportunity to present a special reflection of the artistic aspects of the last century with regard to furniture and costumes, china and glass, &c. A sort of devout care has been expended upon the veriest minutiæ of upholstery and ironmongery; a fond ingenuity is apparent in every direction of the scene; and the foibles and fancies of those who love, or imagine that they love, cuckoo clocks, brass fenders, carved oak, blue and white crockery, and such matters, have been very liberally considered and catered for. Prettier pictures have not, indeed, been seen upon the stage than are afforded by the Primrose family, their friends and neighbours, goods and chattels, and general surroundings in this play of 'Olivia.' [167]

"But a higher claim to distinction arises from the method of its representation. In the hands of Miss Ellen Terry, Olivia becomes a character of rare dramatic value, more nearly allied, perhaps, to the Clarissa of Richardson than to the heroine of Goldsmith. The actress's singular command of pathetic expression obtains further manifestation. The scene of Olivia's farewell to her family, all unconscious of the impending blow her flight is to inflict upon them, is curiously affecting in its subtle and subdued tenderness; while her indignation and remorse upon discovering the perfidy of Thornhill are rendered with a vehemence of emotion and tragic passion, such as the modern theatre has seldom exhibited. [168]

"Only an artist of distinct genius could have ventured upon the impulsive abrupt movement by means of which she thrusts from her the villain who has betrayed her, and denotes the intensity of her scorn of him, the completeness of her change from loving to loathing.

"Miss Terry is not less successful in the quieter passages of the drama, while her graces of aspect and manner enable her to appear as Olivia even to the full satisfaction of those most prepossessed concerning the personal charms of that heroine—so beloved of painters and illustrators—to whom have been dedicated so many acres of canvas, so many square feet of boxwood."

This criticism well sums up the general opinion. Joseph Knight was equally full of praise, and said: "Miss Terry was altogether life-like as Olivia, and much of her business was extremely natural and touching. It was full of suggestion, and, in one point at least, when she repelled the further advances of the man who had wronged her, it touched absolute greatness."

Clement Scott pays his tribute as follows:—"'Olivia,' as I first saw it at the Court Theatre, is a memory that will never die while life lasts. It is one of the most precious souvenirs in my collection.... Words fail to convey an adequate impression of the original Olivia—the spoiled child and darling of the English home as portrayed by Ellen Terry. I see the idol of her old father's heart. Vividly and clearly is presented to my memory the scene where Olivia, under the hypnotic influence of love, bids farewell to her loved ones, scattering around her little treasures, and that [169]

'white face at the window,' when 'Livy' is on the high road to destruction. All that was pathetic enough; but the dramatic effect was bound to follow, and it came with vivid truth in the great scene between Ellen Terry and William Terriss. At that time, both actor and actress were perfect specimens of manly beauty and feminine grace. Terriss was just the dare-devil, defiant creature, handsome to a fault, that women like Olivia love. He looked superb in his fine clothes, and his very insolence was fascinating and attractive.

"When Olivia struck Squire Thornhill in her distraction and impotent rage, an audible shudder went through the audience. It was all so unexpected. But the truth of it was shown by the prolonged and audible 'Oh!' that accompanied it. When we talk of the Ellen Terry manner, and her indescribable charm, may I ask, were they ever better shown than in the scene where Olivia kisses the holly from the hedge at home, and then hangs it on a chair and dances round it with childish delight? And so it went on from perfection to perfection. For me there will only be one Olivia—Ellen Terry."

No wonder that this fascinating Olivia became the rage of the day. Her photographs went like [170] wildfire; the milliners' windows were full of Olivia hats, caps, 'kerchiefs, and other items of feminine adornment; everywhere such dainty trifles were in evidence; and how many little "Olivias" were christened in 1878 it would be hard to say.

Among the pretty schoolgirls who figured in the play a young aspirant for dramatic honours made her first appearance on the stage. This was Kate Rorke. How highly Ellen Terry thought of her sister artist's talents will be seen in the course of these pages. She has ever been ready to recognise merit in her fellow-workers—ever willing to render them a helping hand.

Ellen Terry has modestly declared that it was because of her popularity as Olivia that Henry Irving invited her to be his helpmate in his great projects for his management of the Lyceum Theatre. It was not only this: many things pointed to the fact that she was destined to be the greatest Shakespearean actress of the latter years of the nineteenth century.

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CHAPTER IX

SOME SPLENDID STROLLING

In the early autumn of 1878, before entering upon her all-important Lyceum engagement, Ellen Terry, accompanied by her husband, appeared in some of our leading provincial cities. Everywhere they were most warmly welcomed, and the experiment proved so successful that, even after her Lyceum duties seemed sufficient to engross all her time and attention, it was, during a period extending over two years, repeated.

That was a splendid time for the so-called "country" playgoer. I well recall how within one week at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham (this was in 1879), I saw Ellen Terry in her matchless rendering of Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," as Ophelia in "Hamlet," as Lady Teazle in the "School for Scandal," and as Lilian in "New Men and Old Acres." I would gladly live that week over again. In Shakespearean characters Charles Kelly was not, I think, seen at his best, but in his comedy parts he was admirable, and there is always an interest in seeing husband and wife act together. Actors and actresses love playing to ardent and sympathetic provincial audiences. [172] Their absolutely unrestrained appreciation and applause delight them. The intent faces and eager ears, bent on losing neither a movement of the expression nor an inflection of the voice, act as a tonic to them; there is magnetism between the stage and the house, and under such conditions acting is sure to be at its best. There is nothing *blasé* about the provincial playgoer. He pays for a play that he wants to see, and if he is pleased he expresses his gratitude in no uncertain terms. If he is disappointed he goes sadly and quietly away, but he is never rude to those who have done their best to entertain him. "Boos" and author-baiting are happily unknown in the provinces, and no doubt this is why actors of eminence are fond of exploiting new plays in the country before exposing them to the exasperating risks of a London first night. It seems astounding that people should exist who can wantonly deride the failure of anxious authors and actors, who, having honestly sought to conquer, are miserably conscious of their own defeat. No play can be depended upon until it has gone through the ordeal of a public performance. If the piece that has read well and rehearsed well fails to grip the public, the sensitive actors and author are the first to feel it, and surely in their keen disappointment they should be spared the humiliation of rowdyism.

Not long ago there was a discussion as to the "rights" of first-night audiences to "boo" a new play [173] and the performers in it. The views of leading actors and dramatists were sought, and Ellen Terry replied as follows:—

> "I so entirely believe in the verdict of the great public that I long to have the first night of a new play over and done with, for it is, to my mind, the second night which tells me of the future good or bad fortune of the play and of our efforts. On the first night there are one's friends, so many so prejudiced; and one's enemies—not so many, but equally prejudiced, and so it seems to me that the first night scarcely counts. Then comes the second night, and all the nights. I can't tell how much it affects me—moves me—the enthusiasm, the attention, the encouragement. I just adore the public, and the public loves me back again. I know it, feel it, and am grateful for it. It refreshes my heart."

This is very prettily put, and it is all very true, but such a universal favourite is hardly a judge with regard to the feelings of her less loved sisters who are subject to the baseness and vulgarity of a detestable faction of first-nighters.

I may be told that provincial audiences can be very noisy, and even unruly, and it must be admitted that the gallery "gods," when packed together like dried figs in a wooden drum, are apt to be unpleasantly emphatic concerning their discomfort; but their objections are raised against [174] each other, and rarely refer to the stage. Moreover, when anything really good or impressive is offered to them they will at once forget their grievances and become as quiet as mice.

As an instance of this, I recall an evening at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, Birmingham, when Henry Irving was announced to appear as Shylock. It had been raining hard all day, and the streets were filthy with hopeless slush. As the evening drew in the torrents descended pitilessly, but in spite of them great crowds of the faithful had assembled before the doors of the pit and gallery hours earlier than they would be opened to them. Long before curtain-rise the house was uncomfortably crowded. Outside it was wet and muggy. Inside it was oppressively close, and the hot atmosphere was redolent with the odour of saturated clothing and sodden shoe leather. Ill-temper was in the air, and at the commencement of the play the actors were greatly troubled by the noisy quarrels that arose among playgoers ill bestowed. Then Henry Irving made his striking entrance, and, instantaneously, all was silent. As if by magic, he, aided by Ellen Terry as Portia, held his audience as in a vice, and continued to do so until the end of the performance. The only sounds heard in the theatre were those of boisterous applause and ejaculations of half suppressed gratification and emotion. It was a great tribute to the power exercised by the true [175] acting of a masterpiece.

ELLEN TERRY AS LORD TENNYSON'S "DORA."

Played in the Provinces in 1879. In London the part was created by Kate Terry.

[*To face page 174.*

Ellen Terry must ever bear in fond memory those splendid strolling days when the hearts of her sturdy audiences went out to her, and she, bewitchingly, responded to them. On the 1878 tour she relied chiefly on her former success as Lilian in "New Men and Old Acres," and her appearance in her sister Kate's original character of Dora, in the Tennyson-Reade play of that name. This not only conjured up happy reminiscences, but was in itself a sweetly tender and sympathetic impersonation. Charles Kelly, too, was very well placed in Henry Neville's old part of Farmer Allan, and in his make-up looked a perfect picture.

I often maintain that, if they only knew it, provincial theatre lovers have certain advantages over Londoners. Here is a case in point. They saw Ellen Terry as Dora.

In 1878 they also had the opportunity of seeing her as Iris, in an adaptation by Alfred Thompson

of "La Revanche d'Iris," called "All is Vanity." In it were the elements of popularity, but it was short-lived. She and her husband subsequently appeared in it at a benefit performance given at the Lyceum on behalf of that sound actor of the old school, Henry Marston, and then it was forgotten.

In 1879 the Terry-Kelly programme was augmented by the production of an ephemeral version by [176]
Mrs. Comyns Carr of the everlasting "Frou Frou," entitled "Butterfly." Guided as it has been, and happily still is, by that great authority on dramatic art, Sir Edward Russell, the *Liverpool Daily Post* has always been famous for its theatrical criticisms, and in dealing with these days it is interesting to cull the following lines from its columns:—

"We cannot find words to express the charm with which Miss Terry, than whom there is no more tender and graceful actress on the British stage, invests the character of Butterfly, but those who can appreciate versatility of acting should see her play the part, and then ask themselves the question—'Could any one do it better?' She was most ably supported by Mr. Charles Kelly and Miss Fanny Pitt, whose acting greatly contributed to the success of the piece."

Of "New Men and Old Acres" the same authority rightly said:—

"It is seldom that such a piece is rendered with such perfection as that which the leading members of the cast succeeded in achieving. There is only one word which can adequately describe Miss Terry's personation of Lilian Vavasour, and that word is perfection. Natural and graceful in expression, with an inexhaustible vivacity, she maintains an unbroken spell, which is only deepened by each fresh stroke of humour and girlish outburst of sentiment, accompanied by a bewitching artillery of attitude and expression. The acting of Mr. Charles Kelly as Mr. Brown, [177]
the quiet, self-possessed man of business, was excellent in the extreme."

Of her reading of Lady Teazle in the screen scene of "The School for Scandal," it was recorded that her tenderly, tremulous, and broken accents touchingly conveyed the womanly contrition which so pathetically points the moral of a dramatic incident in which human infirmity, passion, perfidy, generosity of sentiment, and youthful gaiety and frivolity are so wonderfully and skilfully blended. And of her Dora, it was "something more than a mere stage-picture—a living, breathing reality, a perfect embodiment of Tennyson's conception."

In the September of 1880 a very interesting event took place, and as it foreshadowed one of my heroine's greatest subsequent triumphs I shall speak of it at length—or rather, I shall take the liberty of letting that eminent critic, Mr. Davenport Adams, speak for me.

"On Friday, September 3rd, Miss Ellen Terry will play Beatrice *for the first time on any stage* at the Grand Theatre, Leeds."

That was his text for an article from his pen that appeared in that unhappily defunct periodical, *The Theatre* magazine.

"I forget," he continues, "when and where I first cast eyes on this delectable announcement. It may have been here, it may have been there. I only know that when I saw it I came to an immediate and irrevocable resolution. Miss Terry as Beatrice! Why, it was one of the dreams of [178]
my existence! I say 'one of the dreams,' because I had hoped, and still hope, to see Miss Terry not only as Beatrice, but as Viola, and Imogen, and Rosalind, and perchance as Juliet, if the gods but prove propitious. But Miss Terry as Beatrice! To me it was an 'opening paradise.' My dreams were coming true. Here was the first instalment, and who should say when the remainder might not be realised? Assuredly there might be some who would resist such an attraction as the above; but I was not among them. Friday, September 3rd, saw me duly speeding northwards as fast as the Midland Railway Company could be induced to carry me. I had never been in Leeds before, and I do not hesitate to say that, save under similar provocation, I have no anxiety to go there again. Yet what cannot the imagination do for one? For me, on this occasion, Leeds was 'apparelled in celestial light.' Boar Lane and Briggate became for the nonce the primrose path which led me to the halcyon doors of the Grand Theatre. And fine doors they are! Everything is a little new, perhaps; there is nothing of the venerable temple of the drama about this brand-new building, with its imposing frontage and evident commodiousness. Clearly, you say to yourself, this is a specimen of recent handiwork, and requires time in which to mellow; but once get [179]
through the delightfully cool passages, which lead from the vestibule to the stalls—once put your foot within the auditorium—and you are charmed with everything you see. It may be all very fresh, but it is all very magnificent and impressive. *O si sic omnes!* If every theatre roof were but so high—if every pit were but so spacious and well-lighted—if every circle, upper circle, and gallery were but so gracefully superimposed one above the other—and, especially, if everywhere there were such a rich profusion of decoration as one sees around one! Evidently there could be no more gorgeous frame for the picture which Miss Terry was about to paint for us.

"It was Miss Terry's benefit night, and every stall was taken. This seemed to be the case, too, with the circle, and may have been so with other portions of the house. It seemed as if the pit were crammed, and in the stalls standing room was diligently sought for. It was obvious that Leeds playgoers had understood the nature of the treat that was before them. Whether it was that Miss Terry was personally the attraction of the evening, or whether Miss Terry as Beatrice had drawn the crowd, I cannot say. Suffice it that the crowd was, and that the crowd soon showed itself to be delighted."

I cannot refrain from quoting this at length, because it supports my contention as to the [180]
privileges and appreciation of provincial audiences.

"In the meantime," my authority goes on to say, "one did not occupy much time in looking round.

It was not a London *première*, and certainly I did not hope to see a single face I knew. Yet, what was this? I could not be mistaken. There at any rate were two faces which I could not fail to recognise. At least, if that winsome countenance were not that of Miss Marion Terry, and if that not less winsome countenance beyond were not that of Miss Florence Terry—twin roses on one stalk—then did mine eyes deceive me. For myself, I opine that I was not deceived, and that Miss Terry's first appearance as Beatrice was witnessed not only by the art-lovers of the wood and iron metropolis, but by two of her sisters, both in art and by blood.

"It was not long before the curtain rose, and disclosed to us the entrance of 'Leonato, Hero, Beatrice, and others.' The Beatrice was immediately singled out, and loud and long was the applause with which she was received—applause which she insisted, first, upon sharing with the Hero (not the heroine) of the evening (Miss Ruth Francis),[2] but which she was compelled afterwards to acknowledge for herself. The opening scene, as everybody knows, plunges us at once *in medias res*. Beatrice shows by her first utterance what way her thoughts are tending, and [181] this strikes the key-note of the comedy. Her first expression is a gibe at Benedick, and when, shortly afterwards, the 'Signior Montano' himself appears upon the scene, the war of wits immediately begins. Let it be said *in limine* that Miss Terry at once asserted herself as the very Beatrice that Shakespeare drew. That she would do so as far as personal presence was concerned was to be expected. Never was any one so well fitted to represent the 'pleasant spirited' lady, whose charms of face and figure are as irresistible as her verbal daggers. Somehow or other Miss Terry always is a perfect vision of the picturesque. Others may surpass her in special and particular marks of beauty or of manner, but no lady on the modern stage is so much of a picture in herself, or falls so readily into the composition of the larger picture formed by the combinations of a drama.

"In this case Beatrice seemed to be bodily before us. Ere she had opened her mouth she had already begun to fill the imagination. We do not have many opportunities nowadays of seeing the heroine of 'Much Ado,' but here was the only Beatrice who had hitherto completely fulfilled the requirements of the part, so far as the outward and visible person is concerned. I cannot describe the vision. I admit my incompetency so to do without a blush. A pen is useless. It is the brush of a Millais that is wanted. The picture is in my mind, but not even a Ruskin could put it on paper. [182] For, to the mere details of face and figure and attire, have to be added all the indescribable charm of facial expression and of bodily movement—of tone, of laugh, of gesture, and of bearing —which neither the penman nor the painter can successfully reproduce.

"For such a character as that of Beatrice Miss Terry is, in fact, by nature indicated. Characteristics, which elsewhere might be out of place, are here in keeping. Miss Terry is tall, and Beatrice should be tall; a little woman could hardly have said and done such things as she says and does. Miss Terry has high spirits, and so has Beatrice; they are of the essence of her character, and without them she cannot be reproduced. Miss Terry has charm of manner as well as incisiveness of speech, and so has Beatrice, with whom the 'poniards' of her tongue are half blunted by the fascination of her smile. You would think that her eyes pierced as keenly as her words, but it is not so; the words may wound, but the eyes mitigate or charm away pain. So with Miss Terry. Speeches which in any other mouth would grate upon us are in hers but so many incitements to admiration and regard.

"And if Miss Terry is thus personally fitted for the character, it need hardly be said that it is quite within the range of her artistic capability. Indeed, it is well within the range of many less admirable artists. It is a straightforward character. There is no mystery about it. Two different [183] notions of Beatrice are, I should say, scarcely possible—her nature is so entirely on the surface. She tells us herself that she was 'born to speak all mirth and no matter.' 'She was born,' says Don Pedro, 'in a merry hour.' Benedick calls her 'My Lady Disdain' and 'Lady Tongue.' 'Shrewd of tongue,' according to her uncle, she also 'apprehends passing shrewdly.' In a word, she is clever, she is high-spirited, she is witty; but she is more. She can feel keen indignation, and for all her 'mocking at her suitors,' she can look tenderly upon one at least. For obviously she loves Benedick, more or less, from the beginning. Her first inquiry is for him, and she thinks him worthy of her most unsparing raillery. She sneers at him so pointedly that all the world marks the fact and smiles at it. Nothing seems more natural to the bystanders than that they should make a match.

"And so, it seems to me, Miss Terry sees the character. In the very first scene she pursues Benedick with her flouts and quips, and evidently takes pleasure in the encounter. Though she hits so hard there is evidently an *arrière pensée* of respect for the gallant cavalier whose 'approved valour' cannot but impress her, whilst his 'quick wit' not unmingled with self-satisfaction spurs her on to action. One can see that when she scoffs at marriage it is with no [184] more real sincerity than Benedick displays on the same subject. Her wit must have its way; conscious of possessing it, she is fain to exercise it. She revels in the contempt she pours upon the 'sons of Adam.' And so in the scene in which she taunts the masked Benedick to desperation. It is all done in pure *diablerie*. It is simple mischief, inspired by keen delight at finding her butt so agreeably vulnerable. That she is no mere shrill-tongued termagant is shown in the passage where she so gracefully turns off the Don's gallant offer of his heart and hand. And as for her deeper nature—the real Beatrice, hidden underneath the everyday veneer of wit and raillery—what could be more truly descriptive of it than the scene in which, led into the belief that Benedick is really fond of her, she says farewell to maiden pride and to contempt, and prepares to 'tame' her 'wild heart' to his 'loving hand'? The accusation brought against her cousin is not less effective in arousing the latent forces of her character; and the church scene, in its combination of passionate anger against Hero's slanderers, and charming half-confession of

affection felt, is conclusive in its testimony to the open naturalness of the character which Miss Terry has so aptly and admirably conceived. As for the *technique* of the performance, it must be remembered that it was a first assumption. Miss Terry *may* have played the part somewhere before September 3rd, but the fact is not recorded, and there is no reason to believe that the [185] announcement of 'first time' was anything but literally true. And that being the case, it would be unfair to expect the impersonation to be *totus teres atque rotundus*. Miss Terry has all the ultra-sensitiveness of the true artist, and it is not improper to suggest that, on the occasion in question, she was not entirely mistress of her powerful resources. The most experienced players are the most nervous on first nights. And assuredly there are points in which Miss Terry will improve upon her first assumption of this latest part of hers. Some artists grow into their *rôles*, and Miss Terry is one of them. Her Portia nowadays is very much superior to what it was when played originally at the Prince of Wales'. And no doubt Miss Terry, who has since played Beatrice at Manchester and elsewhere, during her provincial tour, has already added the touches necessary to make the representation as near perfection as art and aptitude can make it. No doubt every word, every phrase, every sentence now has its due weight and effect communicated to it; no doubt details of 'business' have been arranged until there is now no room for further elaboration; no doubt the character, thoroughly grasped in the study, has by this time been thoroughly grasped upon the stage. On the first night it was hardly possible not to notice the nervousness indicated in the opening scene, and throughout there were slight slips in the words, and occasional misplacements of due emphasis, together with a lack of perfect roundness in the [186] general form of the assumption. The artist was obviously to a great extent feeling her way.

"And yet how enjoyable and admirable was the assumption! In spite of these minor blemishes of execution, it was yet Shakespeare's Beatrice, I repeat, who stood and moved and spoke before us. The impression made at the beginning was continued to the close, gathering in force and effectiveness as it went. The raillery against marriage, and the wit combats with Benedick, were carried off with exhilarating vivacity, so that applause and laughter followed inevitably upon both. The former was accompanied by a running fire of cachinnation from the delighted audience. The next point was made when Benedick was charmingly chaffed as the 'Prince's jester,' and the short but exquisite *rencontre* with Don Pedro was evidently very much relished. The first 'call' was made when Beatrice came to summon her knight to dinner. The curtain fell on this, and Miss Terry and Mr. Kelly had both to bow their acknowledgments. Then came the scene in which Beatrice listens in the arbour to the delusive tale of Ursula and Hero. The short speech which follows was very agreeably declaimed; and when, declaring her belief in Benedick's deserts, Beatrice sank upon the seat in one of those attitudes possible only to Miss Terry, the impression made was naturally very great indeed. The chief scene for Beatrice is, however, in the [187] church after the bridal party has dispersed, all save herself and Benedick. Up to that point she has little to do but contribute her share of byplay to the situation (always appropriately done by Miss Terry), to comfort her cousin with all sorts of feminine attention, and incidentally to make that vehement declaration—

'Oh, on my soul, my cousin is belied!'

which gives the earliest indication of the characteristic outburst that is to follow. In that outburst itself, Miss Terry was hardly sufficiently varied in her representation of the feeling which is supposed to consume her. It was very impressive, especially in the sudden violence of her 'Kill Claudio!' but it wanted that absolute adaptability of means to end which has no doubt been communicated to it since. Best of all, perhaps, was the brief exchange of love vows with Benedick; a very brief but charming and beautifully-indicated episode in a scene which, as a whole, pleased the audience mightily, and secured for both the artists a persistent 'call.' After this, as we all know, Beatrice has but two short appearances on the stage, which serve chiefly to complete the picture, but, on this occasion, served further to consummate the triumph which, anything or everything notwithstanding, was unquestionably and deservedly accorded to Miss Terry. The curtain fell, in fact, upon an unmistakable popular success which it wanted only [188] practice and experience to convert into a permanent artistic victory.

"It should be recorded that Miss Terry was effectively seconded throughout by Mr. Kelly. That able and accomplished actor was the Benedick of the occasion, and a very acceptable performance did he give. I confess I was not altogether prepared for the excellence of the effect created by Mr. Kelly in this *rôle*. His very make-up was a surprise. Could this gallant cavalier—bearded, whiskered, and moustached, with the bronze of battle on his cheeks, and just the faintest *soupçon* of the dandy and the lady-killer in his manner—be the quiet, serious-minded Brown of 'New Men and Old Acres' in another guise? It was a revelation. And if the appearance of Mr. Kelly was a revelation, so, to some extent, was his enjoyable and largely satisfying rendering of the *rôle* itself. Mr. Kelly's conception of Benedick is that of a man who has passed the first flush of youth, has seen many men and cities, has had his experience of 'the fair,' and is inclined to think somewhat lightly of them, save, indeed, of this 'Lady Disdain,' who so stabs him with her words. It is easy to see that he is not indifferent to her charms, else why is he so affected by her quips and cranks? else why is he so readily converted from his vaunted woman-hatred? It is easy, too, to see that this stalwart knight, of 'noble strain' and of 'quick wit,' is the very man on whom [189] such a woman as Beatrice would naturally bestow her thoughts. He, too, has his deeper nature as well as she. And Mr. Kelly brought out the various differentia of the character very artistically. The woman-hatred was soon seen to be skin deep. The irritation at the 'chaff' of Beatrice was skilfully indicated without being over-done. The soliloquy in reference to his 'not impossible she' was spoken with excellent abandon, whilst the speech after his supposed discovery of Beatrice's love for him was admirable in its delineation of delighted surprise. Equally successful was Mr. Kelly in the scene where Benedick is badgered by Claudio and Don Pedro, and that other passage

in which he conveys his challenge to the former. The unconscious comedy of the one was as well considered as the serious dignity of the other.... For the rest, I have but one regret in reference to this performance, and that is, that the exigencies of the play do not permit Beatrice to be upon the stage throughout the whole of the comedy. Dogberry and Verges are inimitable, and Benedick is everywhere acceptable; but still if Shakespeare had only given us a little more of this not least charming of his charming heroines! Could he have foreseen the Beatrice of Miss Ellen Terry, he would, perhaps, have done so. And yet, I do not know. Too much exhilaration is not good for us, and it is perhaps the truest mercy that Beatrice should not be for ever scattering about her [190] verbal diamonds, and that Miss Ellen Terry should not for ever make the stage brilliant and enchanting by her delightful presence."

The cast of this memorable Leeds production was in many ways an interesting one. Mr. Philip Beck was Don Pedro; Mr. C. Brookfield, Don John; Mr. Norman Forbes, Claudio; Mr. Arthur Mood, Dogberry; Mr. Lin Rayne, Verges; and Miss Elinor Aickin, Ursula.

How, in accordance with Davenport Adams' prediction, Ellen Terry's Beatrice developed into a "permanent artistic victory" we all know to-day. Undoubtedly, and as we shall presently see, it was one of the finest, and in some respects (for her comedy is so winsome) one of the most attractive of her long series of Shakespearean triumphs at the Lyceum.

What a series it has been! It is not surprising that she should say—"I seem to have made the acquaintance and to *know* quite intimately some noble people—Hamlet and Ophelia, Portia, Benedick, and Beatrice, Romeo and Juliet, Viola, the Macbeths. All this makes me rejoice and wonder how it is that I'm not a superior person! I have dwelt with such very good company. It has been all sunshine, with a wee cloud here and there to give zest to life; and my lines have been laid in pleasant places. How terrible it must be to have to do the work one abhors!"

It is because she has done the work that she loves, and has made the sweet tenderness of her [191] love for it so manifest, that she has continually stirred the imagination, and lastingly won the hearts of her audiences.

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CHAPTER X

MARION AND FLORENCE TERRY

While Ellen Terry was firmly cementing her popularity and ever adding to her fame, two of the younger members of her gifted family had come to the front to add to the honour of the name they bore. These were her sisters, Marion and Florence. It is generally understood that the *début* of Florence Terry was made in 1870, while the first appearance of Marion Terry was delayed until 1873, but I think there may have been a good many previous tentative performances. The Terrys always believed in groundwork, and we may be sure that these young ladies were carefully taught the art of acting.

My old friend, W. H. Vernon, has told me how, when he was fulfilling his long engagement under Henry Neville's management at the Olympic Theatre, the two young sisters played with him in an old-fashioned one-act drama by John Howard Payne, entitled "Love in Humble Life." Their mother was constantly with them, and Kate Terry used to "coach" her sisters at rehearsal. They were quite unaccustomed to the stage, but, says my friend, "the Terry charm was there, crude, and [193] unformed as it all was."

"Love in Humble Life" does not offer much scope for acting, and the girls had to content themselves with playing on alternate nights the one feminine character of Christine.

In 1870 Florence Terry was certainly ripe for a public appearance in a piece of importance. On June 15th, at the Adelphi—the theatre in which, it will be remembered, her sister Kate had said her farewell—she went through the ordeal and acquitted herself right worthily. The piece was an English version of Molière's "Le Malade Imaginaire," entitled "The Robust Invalid," and her part was that of Louison. Although his name did not appear in the bills, it was generally understood that the adaptation was from the pen of the Terrys' old and well-tried friend, Charles Reade, and the chance was a good one for the young artiste. Vining and Mrs. Seymour were in the cast and all went well.

In connection with "Le Malade Imaginaire," it can never be forgotten that Molière was playing his own creation in it when he broke a blood-vessel. Gallantly he struggled on to the hour of curtain fall, and then, in a dying state, was taken to his home.

In the November of 1870 Florence Terry was engaged to play Little Nell at the Olympic Theatre in Andrew Halliday's stage version of "The Old Curiosity Shop"; probably one of the best adaptations from Dickens (how unsatisfactory they all are!) that has been seen in the theatre. [194]

No one who saw it will forget the exquisite pathos and tenderness with which she endowed the character of the sorely tried, yet always gentle-souled and trusting child. She made us think, as Bret Harte has sweetly put it, that we

"Read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of 'Little Nell,'"

and she took us by the hand until, "on English meadows," her audiences

"Wandered and lost their way."

No doubt she was greatly helped by the deeply impressive and affecting portrayal by George Belmore of the weak-minded but affectionate old grandfather. The two made a perfect picture. The Quilp of the cast, in the person of clever John Clarke, is a thing that, in its effective, savage, grotesque, and always true realism, haunts the memory.

Photograph by [Lallie Charles.

MARION TERRY.

Showing her autograph, 1901.

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Marion Terry made her first bold, histrionic plunge in 1873. This was at the Crystal Palace, when she played Ophelia to the Hamlet of Steele Mackaye. Mackaye was the *protégé* of Tom Taylor, and the then leading English dramatist made a new acting version of Shakespeare's masterpiece for his behoof. Great things were expected of it, but the production merely excited passing [195] curiosity, and though it was taken to the Shakespeare-loving provinces it soon flickered out. Thus did Marion and Florence Terry—"twin roses on one stalk," as Davenport Adams called them—take the rank of Princesses in Stage Land.

The career of Florence Terry was destined to be a brief one, but, happily, Marion Terry is still with us, still charming us; and every one will agree with Clement Scott's words—"She is one of the very few actresses I have known who has never gone back from her gentle career of continued success. On and on she has wended her way, improving and improving. With her gifted sisters, some characters have suited her better than others; but from the old Olympic days down to the present time I never remember to have been disappointed with Marion Terry, or wished she had not appeared in such and such a character."

In 1874 she became a prominent member of Henry Neville's company at the Olympic, appearing (*inter alia*) in an English version of "Le Mariage de Figaro," by James Mortimer, entitled "A School for Intrigue." Henry Neville was the Almaviva, Edward Righton the Figaro, and Emily Fowler the Suzanne. Later, in a revival of "Much Ado about Nothing," she made a very winsome Hero to the Beatrice of Emily Fowler, the Benedick of Henry Neville (this was a delightful reproduction of Shakespeare's spirited picture), the Don Pedro of W. H. Vernon, the Dogberry of [196] Edward Righton, and the Verges of G. W. Anson. Then she migrated to the Strand Theatre, to play in some of H. J. Byron's pleasant comedies, such as "Old Sailors" and "Weak Woman." Of the last-named play, Edward Leman Blanchard (never inclined to be enthusiastic) said that it was "a brightly written and most ingeniously constructed piece; excellently acted, and having a well-deserved success." As its heroine, Marion Terry became very popular, and successes were also made by Ada Swanborough, W. H. Vernon, J. G. Grahame, Harry Cox, and Edward Terry. In the hands of the last-named admirable comedian—and thanks to the excellence of his acting in the eccentric character of Captain Ginger—"Weak Woman" still holds the stage. On September 11th,

1876, came the young actress's first great chance, and right worthily she availed herself of it. On that evening W. S. Gilbert's three-act drama, "Dan'l Druce, Blacksmith," was produced at the Haymarket Theatre, and to her was allotted the one feminine, but all-important, part of Dorothy. The dramatist had avowedly taken the episode of the first act—the finding by the saturnine blacksmith of a wee but winning girl-baby in his lonely hermitage—a mere hut by the sea-shore—from George Eliot's beautiful story, "Silas Marner," but that was all the better, for it formed the prelude to a most interesting play. In it Marion Terry made an instantaneous success by the [197] absolute simplicity of her acting. With a grip rare in so young an artiste, she had realised her author's meaning; her love-scenes (with Forbes Robertson) were finely presented, and, throughout the two acts in which she appeared, her quietly won victory was from the first apparent, and ultimately complete. With such actors as Hermann Vezin, Henry Howe, Odell, and Forbes Robertson, she easily held her own, and shared in the honours of a notable artistic success.

In the October of 1877 there was a greater and even a unique triumph. This was in W. S. Gilbert's whimsically conceived and wittily written farcical comedy "Engaged,"—in its way a gem of the first water, with its every facet cut and polished to the point of resplendency. Good as was the acting of George Honey as Cheviot Hill, Fred Dewar as Angus Macalister, Harold Kyrle (Kyrle Bellew) as Belvawney, Henry Howe as Mr. Symperson, Lucy Buckstone as Miss Symperson, Emily Thorne as Mrs. Macfarlane, and Julia Stewart as the "Lowland Lassie," Maggie Macfarlane, the Belinda Treherne of Marion Terry capped them one and all. It was, indeed, an impersonation as humorous as it was original. If it had not been interpreted as she interpreted it, the very fabric of the work might have fallen; but the extreme cleverness of her acting in a most difficult part [198] held it up, and she became a joy to all endowed with a true sense of fun. It will be remembered that the character is that of a young lady who, apparently steeped in romantic notions, possesses a remarkably matter-of-fact mind. She manifestly believes in herself, but, under the surface of her honeyed rhodomontade, she has to let the audience see the under-current of her secret and worldly aspirations. Badly done, the character would have been impossible. Handled as it was by Marion Terry it became not only delicious in its humour, but strangely convincing. Let us listen to the ring of one or two of the sentences with which she was called upon to deal.

In the first act she meets the susceptible Cheviot Hill; he immediately falls in love with her, and in reply to his words of gushing admiration she says—

"I cannot deny that there is much truth in the sentiments you so beautifully express, but I am, unhappily, too well aware that, whatever advantages I may possess, personal beauty is not among the number."

And when he has replied—

"How exquisitely modest is this chaste insensibility to your own singular loveliness! How infinitely more winning than the bold-faced self-appreciation of underbred country girls!"

She answers—

"I am glad, sir, that you are pleased with my modesty. It has often been admired." The whole [199] house rocked with laughter, and there, on the stage, stood the graceful, pretty, and impassive girl, who, in a very remarkable way, had given meaning to the writer's every word. Her lines were so ridiculous, yet so telling, that we all felt it a wonder that she did not laugh with us. No! Like the perfect, well-graced actress she has ever been, she lived in her part, and seemed absolutely to forget that she was playing to a crowded audience.

One more instance.

In the third act the amorous Cheviot returns from his mission to Scotland to find that during his absence his two English lady-loves, Belinda Treherne and Minnie Symperson, have (at least) been amusing themselves with the dangerous Belvawney. Prompted by absurd jealousy, the ridiculous man expostulates; he cannot bear to hear that the girls, who ought to have been pining for him, have been amused by the impostor's conjuring tricks, that they have, in short, to use his own words, been "Belvawneying." The following conversation ensues:—

> Minnie. Have you seen him (Belvawney) bring a live hen, two hair-brushes, and a pound and a half of fresh butter out of his pocket-handkerchief?
>
> Cheviot. No, I have not had that advantage.
>
> Belinda. It is a thrilling sight.
>
> Cheviot. So I should be disposed to imagine. Pretty goings on in my absence. You seem to forget that you two girls are engaged to be married to *me*!
>
> Belinda. Ah, Cheviot, do not judge us harshly. We love you with a reckless fervour that [200] thrills us to the very marrow—(*to* Minnie) don't we, darling? But the hours crept heavily without you, and when, to lighten the gloom in which we were plunged, the kindly creature swallowed a live rabbit, and brought it out, smothered with onions, from his left boot, we could not choose but smile. The good soul has promised to teach *me* the trick.

Could anything be more superlatively or irresistibly ludicrous than this? And yet Marion Terry, with an unmoved and quietly angelic face, spoke the words as if she absolutely believed in them, and scored a success for the author that he could hardly have anticipated.

Again, when with all her own carefully planned motives in full play, Belinda comes dressed in funereal and stately black to the home of her rival, Minnie Symperson, on the day of that outwardly artless young lady's strictly "quiet" wedding with the fickle and faithless Cheviot Hill, she serenely says: "At last I am in my darling's home, the home of the bright, blythe, carolling thing that lit, as with a ray of heaven's sunlight, the murky gloom of my miserable schooldays. But what do I see? Tarts? Ginger wine? There are rejoicings of some kind afoot. Alas! I am out of place here. What have I in common with tarts? Oh, I am ill attuned to scenes of revelry," and then takes a tart, and, with calm appreciation, eats it. Once more the house shook with merriment, but she remained as composed as if she were taking part in some solemn and sacred rite.

Many very clever actresses have since played the part, but they have perforce acted on the lines [201] originally laid down by its creatress. They have all been popular, but there has been only one and incomparable Belinda Treherne, and she was Marion Terry. To those who could appreciate its extreme cleverness, "Engaged" made a delightful and even fascinating entertainment, though it has truly been said that the play afforded a picture of humanity more cynical than had been painted since the days of Swift.

In March 1879, Marion Terry earned another debt of gratitude from W. S. Gilbert. This was at the Olympic Theatre in "Gretchen," a play in four acts. The author stated that the leading idea of this work was suggested by Goethe's "Faust," but that, with the exception of a scene between Mephisto and Martha, the dialogue was original. It was not only original but brilliant, and if the piece failed to draw the multitude it was through no fault of its author.

Joseph Knight said of it:—

"Never, perhaps, in the history of letters has an experiment been tried bolder or more startling than that of Mr. Gilbert in the production of 'Gretchen.' When Dryden and Davenant and their successors undertook to remove the crude work of Shakespeare to suit their own more cultivated tastes, there was nothing especially courageous in the action. The fame of Shakespeare did not [202] then stand on the pinnacle in the sight of all men it has subsequently occupied. From its first appearance, however, the 'Faust' of Goethe took intellectual Europe by storm. So sensible is Mr. Gilbert of the worth of the work with which he deals, he justifies his own effort on the one ground that the play he alters is not suited to dramatic exposition, and he fortifies his opinion on this point by quoting the assertion of Schlegel, in his lecture on German drama, that 'Faust' runs out in all directions beyond the limits of the theatre." To the thoughtful, "Gretchen" was a most interesting production, and no doubt much of its charm was due to the gentle and maidenly style, and quiet earnestness of Marion Terry as its deeply sinned against heroine.

We have only to take these three important and original characters—Dorothy, Belinda Treherne, and Gretchen—to prove that she is not only a consummate, but a curiously versatile actress.

But the three striking triumphs did not follow each other in succession. In 1877 she had, at the Haymarket, followed Mrs. Kendal (this, seeing what a matchless performance that had been was a formidable ordeal) as Galatea, and won much and well-merited praise—and in the following year she supported Sothern as the heroine of that ill-fated production, "The Crushed Tragedian," by H. J. Byron.

That was poor Sothern's last bid for popularity in an original character, and its failure in London [203] (it had been a great success in America) was a disappointment from which he never quite recovered.

Concerning it he had written:—

"It appeared to me that if I could good-naturedly satirise the old school of acting, contrasting it through the several characters with the present school, I should arrive at the same effects in another manner which were produced in Dundreary; that is to say, that though stigmatised by everybody as a very bad tragedian, I should gain the sympathy of the audience in the satire, however much they might laugh at my peculiarities. The character is not an imitation of any one actor I have ever seen. I have simply boiled down all the old school tragedians as I boiled down all the fops I had met before I played Dundreary. I tested the piece in Philadelphia, and its success was immediate. In my judgment, 'The Crushed Tragedian,' if not the best part in my repertory, is likely to command popular favour at once wherever it is performed, and to retain its hold upon the stage for many years."

Before producing the piece in London he had, according to his custom, "tried" it in the provinces, and in Birmingham it was most enthusiastically received. Sothern was in high spirits that night. "I have got my second Dundreary success," he declared to me; "I didn't know how my 'Fitz' would go in England, but I see it's all right, and, mark me, this means five hundred nights at the [204] Haymarket!" Full of assurance he left the next day for London. In the evening "The Crushed Tragedian" was produced at the Haymarket, and—well, the sad fate of that version of Byron's play is a matter of theatrical history. The next day he wrote: "An organised system to d—n the piece. Rows of hissers. We'll see who'll win!" We know now who won—and I fear that the loss of that game told heavily on Sothern's heart. It is not for me to defend, in the face of abler critics, "The Crushed Tragedian," but I think that all who saw the impersonation will allow that it contained many touches by no means unworthy of the creator of Dundreary. It was, however, *caviare* to the general, and in London failed to attract.

In the midst of his disappointment Sothern told me how delighted he was with the acting of Marion Terry in the character of Florence Bristowe. As the old prompter Henry Howe was excellent.

Her next engagement was with the Bancrofts at the old Prince of Wales' Theatre, and her first important part there was that of Mabel Holne in James Albery's adaptation of Victorien Sardou's "Les Bourgeois de Pont-Arcy," entitled "Duty." In all these impersonations it was aptly said (in the words of Ruskin)—she possessed "a serenity of effortless grace."

[205] Of course within the limits of these pages it is impossible to follow her throughout her distinguished career. On several occasions she has followed her sister Ellen in some of her most famous parts, playing Olivia, Clara Douglas, and Margaret in the famous Lyceum version of "Faust." Her blind girl in "The Two Orphans," and her sweetly tender Mrs. Errol in "Little Lord Fauntleroy," will never be forgotten.

Her successes with George Alexander at the St. James's Theatre in "Sunlight and Shadow," "The Idler," "Lady Windermere's Fan," "Liberty Hall," and other plays, are fresh in the memory; and so is her appearance at the Criterion Theatre with Charles Wyndham in "The Physician." Her acting as Lady Valerie in this play by Henry Arthur Jones was indeed charming.

In the same author's "Michael and his Lost Angel," produced by Forbes Robertson at the Lyceum, her acting of a most difficult character was summed up by that sternest of critics, William Archer, as "perfect." And so, indeed, it was. She also did good work with the Bancrofts in some of their revivals of the Robertson comedies, especially distinguishing herself as Blanche Haye in "Ours," and Bella in "School."

[206] The comparatively brief stage career of Florence Terry is necessarily less noteworthy, but she is gratefully remembered in the provinces as Olivia, as Lady Betty Noel in Tom Taylor's stirring historical play "Lady Clancarty," as Dorothy in W. S. Gilbert's "Dan'l Druce," and as Jenny Northcote in the same brilliant author's evergreen "Sweethearts." She also figured in some of the great Lyceum productions. In "The Merchant of Venice" she was a very pretty and engaging Nerissa, and she was entrusted with the character of the unfortunate Lady Ellen in the revival of the younger Colman's drama "The Iron Chest," in which Henry Irving took John Philip Kemble's original character of Sir Edward Mortimer. In all these parts she evinced the almost unique persuasive charm possessed by her sisters.

On June 21, 1882, in view of her forthcoming marriage and retirement from the stage, a singularly interesting event took place at the Savoy Theatre. In W. S. Gilbert's dainty fairy play "Broken Hearts," Marion Terry appeared as the Lady Hilda and Florence Terry as the Lady Vavir, parts originally taken at the Court Theatre by Mrs. Kendal and Miss Hollingshead. This was followed by the trial scene from "The Merchant of Venice," in which Henry Irving was the Shylock, Ellen Terry the Portia, Marion Terry the Clerk, and Florence Terry the Nerissa.

Thus, and for the first and last time, the three gifted sisters appeared on the stage together.

Florence Terry (Mrs. William Morris) died in 1896.

[207] It is surely good for the old playgoer to conjure up such recollections as these. Some of us already live more in the past than in the present, and one's pleasure is the sum of happy memories of other times and faces gone.

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[208]

CHAPTER XI

HENRY IRVING

Before Ellen Terry gratefully and gracefully acknowledges the great roar of welcome that greeted her on her first appearance on the Lyceum stage, it seems right to say a few words concerning Henry Irving and his position in the theatrical world at the time when (not far short of twenty-five years ago) he made this all-important engagement. He had already achieved far greater things than he could have dreamt of in his toilsome 'prentice days, and for some time had deservedly been recognised as the head and leader of his profession, as an actor whose name will live with those of Burbage, Betterton, David Garrick, Edmund Kean, and the other histrionic giants of the past, whose memories we cherish. Not suddenly, but by dint of sheer hard work, the victory had been won, and those who had in his earlier days detected his genius were very proud of him.

[209] I had seen him in the days when he acted as a more or less obscure member of the good old provincial stock companies, when he was often called upon to appear in three plays on one night, and earned little or no money for his services. He has told me of an engagement when with his poor salary in hopeless arrear he was compelled (armed with a well-studied appeal) to thrust himself into the managerial presence, and to be rewarded with—a *cigar*!

Never had a young actor so many formidable conditions to face. His first appearance on any stage was at Sunderland, in the September of 1856, and, in representing the small part of the Duke of Orleans in Lord Lytton's "Richelieu," the first words he uttered, behind the footlights, were (surely there was something prophetic about them!), "Here's to our enterprise!" How little did those who acted with him that night, and looked down upon him as a novice, think that as Richelieu himself he would ultimately win that chorus of applause which forms the world's tribute to genius.

But poor young Irving's "enterprise" at first appeared to be a forlorn hope.

While at Sunderland he suffered terribly from nervousness, and, being cast for the subordinate part of Cleomenes in "A Winter's Tale," he broke down. He had been called upon at very short

notice to take the character, and, through no fault of his own, had inadequately studied it. He got through the first four acts well enough, but when in the fifth act he had to speak alone, his presence of mind, and his memory, entirely left him. He could not remember a word of his part; [210] he merely muttered, "Come on to the market-place, and I'll tell you further," and rushed off the stage in despair.

Then the local critics were down upon him, and his friends warned him to abandon an effort that was evidently beyond his powers. But young though he was, and disheartened though he must have been, Henry Irving had faith in himself, and determined to overcome all obstacles. He had to work hard, and he had to live hard, but his career, though often crossed by the forbidding stream of discouragement, was one of steady progress, and his comrades of these struggling days have told me that whatever he had to endure (and the endurance must have been as bitter as it was long), he never forgot to be that thing so impossible of definition, and so capable of recognition—a gentleman. Indeed, having from the very outset keenly watched his public career, while I have for many years been privileged to enjoy his personal friendship, I have often thought that Henry Irving might have taken for his motto the well-known lines:—

"The World has battle-room for all,
Go! fight, and conquer if ye can;
But if ye rise, or if ye fall,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

One of his most charming characteristics is that he has never forgotten an old friend. *Videlicet*: in [211] the troubled days of 1856 there was playing at the Sunderland theatre a comedian named Sam Johnson. He never achieved great things, but he encouraged the anxious aspirant with kindly words, and in the after years he found himself an honoured member of the famous Lyceum company.

In these early days I did not see any performance by Henry Irving that could strictly be called impressive, and yet, to me, and to many others, there was something in his appearance and manner that was singularly attractive. We did not realise it then, but no doubt it was that subtle charm that, for want of a better name or definition, we call, in an actor, "magnetism." Added to this was his wonderful capacity for painstaking, which, according to Thomas Carlyle, is the very essence of genius. For some time he was a member of the well-conducted stock company of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. The late Robert Wyndham, the genial and highly-esteemed proprietor of that historic playhouse, once told me that though in those early days he did not look upon Henry Irving as a particularly promising actor, he was always struck with the intense care that he took over any part entrusted to him, however small and insignificant it might be. "I am certain," he said, "that Henry Irving, without being in the least degree a fop, would have gone without his dinner in order to buy a 'button-hole,' or any such trivial adornment that he thought might add, [212] even in the minutest degree, to the effect of the part in which he had to appear."

But for a long time the critics were painfully and, as I think, perversely against him. They either did not understand or waywardly resented the crack of the new whip. In 1865, at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, Birmingham, I saw him play Laertes to the Hamlet of Fechter. It was an original Laertes, and not modelled on the perfunctory reading of the part generally adopted by the ordinary provincial stock-actor of those days. To me, and I am sure to the large majority of the audience, it was a very interesting and entirely satisfying performance, but it was recorded by a local critic as "as bad as could be."

This is only one example of many little stabs that must have wounded him at the time. But I noticed that he never altered his methods, and in due season he convinced his would-be censors that he knew more than they did. From the time when he played Rawdon Scudamore at the St. James' Theatre, to the day when he made his first great triumph as Mathias at the Lyceum, it was my good fortune to see him in nearly all his London impersonations—as Harry Dornton in "The Road to Ruin," as Bob Gassitt in H. J. Byron's "Dearer than Life" (in which at the Queen's Theatre he shared honours with J. L. Toole and Lionel Brough), as Compton Kerr in Dion Boucicault's much discussed "Formosa" at Drury Lane, as Mr. Chevenix in H. J. Byron's "Uncle Dick's Darling" [213] at the Gaiety, and in many other parts (one and all played with the touch of a master); until at the Vaudeville Theatre, as Digby Grant in James Albery's "Two Roses," he put the seal to his reputation. How some of us, who had faithfully followed him about from theatre to theatre, carefully watching and delighting in his growing reputation, rejoiced when we knew that he had conquered his opponents and become a king of the stage. How excited we were when in "The Bells" at the Lyceum he made the world ring with his praises.

It was when he was playing the part of Redburn in H. J. Byron's "Lancashire Lass" at the Queen's Theatre that he excited the admiration of Charles Dickens. Some years later the eldest son of the great novelist said in the course of a speech that his father had spoken with enthusiasm of "a young fellow in the play who sits at the table and is bullied by Sam Emery; his name is Henry Irving, and if that young man does not one day come out as a great actor, I know nothing of art."

Charles Dickens might have seen Henry Irving's graphic impersonation of Bill Sikes in a poor stage version of "Oliver Twist," in which Toole used to revel in the character of "The Artful Dodger," but he did not live to appreciate his life-like impersonation of Jingle. Sensitive as the author always was with regard to the interpretation of his creations in the theatre, that inimitable [214] and realistic stage-portrait would surely have satisfied him.

Never, it may safely be said, has any actor been more popular than Henry Irving, not only with

the public but with members of his own profession. That he deserves his popularity no one who has studied his remarkable career will deny; that he has won it "facing fearful odds" his most intimate friends and ardent admirers must candidly admit. Even to-day, when his fame is so firmly established, that he could, if it troubled him at all, laugh at adverse and hostile criticism, we find any number of self-constituted and ridiculously complacent censors ready to tell us that he won his spurs by a fluke, and that he cannot be regarded as a great actor. Men existed who said the same of Betterton, Garrick, and Kean. But how absurd it is to hear such opinions when we know that, thanks to him, the Lyceum Theatre has for years and years been the cherished resort of all that is intellectual in modern life.

When he first began to make his successes, and had the jealousy that he has long since vanquished to fight, his so-called "mannerisms" (and is it not a truism that there never was an actor, or, for the matter of that, author, yet without some mannerism or speciality that made him a man of mark and so attracted the public to his piping?) were mercilessly caricatured and lampooned, and a weaker man might well have been crushed under the heaps of ill-natured ridicule that were, mud-like, hurled at him. But an indomitable worker as well as a brave and [215] generous man he rose superior to it all, and in a few busy, and no doubt very anxious, years the difficult sum was done in order that it might be incontestably proved, and to the satisfaction and advantage of all except the croakers, who even less than any one else understand their own croakings, our great English actor of to-day holds his throne.

"What a blessed thing it is," said wise Oliver Wendell Holmes, "that Nature, when she invented, manufactured, and patented her authors" (and original actors take rank amongst the best of authors), "contrived to make critics out of the chips that were left."

No actor more conclusively proves the rightly held theory that the perfection of dramatic art can only be achieved by early apprenticeship and many years devoted to earnest study and incessant hard work than Henry Irving. In a period of three and a half years he had played no fewer than four hundred and twenty-eight parts before his claim to be regarded as one of the most promising actors of his day was even considered. Well might the actor ponder over Chaucer's beautiful lines —

"The lyfe so short,
The crafte so long to lerne,
The essay so hard,
So sharpe the conquering."

If he cared to make one, Henry Irving's reply to his detractors might well be that he has stood the [216] inexorable test of time. Since he first wore his laurels a new and very critical generation has sprung up—a generation that has little or no respect for tradition, that has abundant choice of entertainment, and only cares to pay for what it chooses to see.

Face to face with this somewhat intractable tribe, Henry Irving has for more than a quarter of a century held his own, and America has united with England in hailing him as the living master of dramatic art in its purest and highest form. From the first he was wise enough to know that even the best and greatest of men, to say nothing of the greatest and best of actors, cannot afford to stand alone. As a matter of consequence he surrounds himself with a company composed of the best dramatic talent of the day, and his productions are mounted with a general and generous richness, and a minute attention to detail never, until his time, attempted on the stage.

Then take the quality of the plays produced at the Lyceum, as compared with those morbid and unsavoury ones that during recent years we have seen in too many leading playhouses. Somebody wondered the other day why Adam had never been made the hero of a play, and a cynic suggested that it is because it is not possible to mix up his name with that of some married woman. If Adam is to have his stage chance it must be under the unsullied banner of Henry [217] Irving.

Great as a leader of men as he has proved himself to be, modesty and unselfishness are prominent among his characteristics. Although Queen Victoria, in recognition of his personal worth and public services, created him a Knight (let it be remembered this was the first time that such a distinction had been conferred upon an actor), he still loves to be called plain Henry Irving. Proud as he was—and is—of the honour that, through him, has been bestowed upon his profession, on the day when he was privileged to call himself "Sir Henry" in the play-bills, he merely put his pen through the prefix "Mr.," so that he might remain to the public, as well as to his friends, "Henry Irving." When Ellen Terry was asked, "Have you got used to Sir Henry's title?" she prettily replied, "Oh yes! He has been a Prince in my eyes for many years;" and in doing so she unconsciously spoke for all his associates. Well, in 1878, Irving, having completed his brilliant engagements with the renowned Bateman family, found himself not only the chief actor and attraction, but manager of the Lyceum Theatre.

"His first effort," says Percy Fitzgerald, "was to gather round him an efficient and attractive company. It became presently known that Ellen Terry was to be his partner and supporter on the stage, and it was instantly, and almost electrically, felt that triumph had been already secured. [218] People could see in advance, in their mind's eye, the gifted pair performing together in a series of romantic plays; they could hear the voices blending, and feel the glow of dramatic enjoyment. This important step was heartily acclaimed. No manager ever started on his course cheered by such tokens of goodwill and encouragement, though much of this was owing to a natural and selfish anticipation of coming enjoyment."

To-day we know how that dream of enjoyment has been realised, and how, under the reign of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry at the Lyceum, we have found, in the words of the poet Campbell—

"The spell o'er hearts
Which only acting lends,
The youngest of the Sister Arts
Where all their beauty blends.

For ill can Poetry express
Full many a tone of thought sublime,
And Painting, mute and motionless,
Steals but a glance of time.

But by the mighty Actor brought
Illusion's perfect triumphs come,
Verse ceases to be airy thought
And Sculpture to be dumb."

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CHAPTER XII

AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE, 1878-1883

Those who are truly interested in the stage must be more or less familiar with a Lyceum first-night under the reign of Henry Irving. He has made the long series of them prominent among the events of the day, and rich and poor alike are eager to be present. We know how the frequenters of the cheaper parts of the house will, in order to obtain good seats, assemble and wait patiently in the Strand from sunrise to sundown; we know how difficult it is to obtain seats at the besieged box-office; we know how from the front row of the pit to the back seats of the gallery the house is densely packed with an audience assembled to hear and see all that is noblest in English dramatic art. It is more than impressive to watch the faces of the patient and expectant pit; and to listen to the sounds in the eager and impulsive gallery; while as to the stalls and boxes, in them you see the cream of those who are distinguished in the paths of art, science, and literature. It is magnificent to be able to command such an audience; on the other hand it must be formidable to face it.

[220] It was to such an assemblage as this that Ellen Terry had to make her bow when on the evening of December 30, 1878, she first appeared at the Lyceum, playing Ophelia to the Hamlet of Henry Irving. No doubt it was a trying and anxious moment for her, but the true ring in the long and loud welcome which greeted her on the threshold of the home in which she was destined to do so much noble work must have gone to her heart, and assured her that all would be well.

It was indeed a momentous evening in the history of our stage. Of it Dutton Cook said:—

"Mr. Irving's managerial career has commenced most auspiciously. The opening representation was, indeed, from first to last, triumphant. A distinguished audience filled to overflowing the re-decorated Lyceum Theatre, and the new *impresario* was received with unbounded enthusiasm. These gratifying evidences of goodwill were scarcely required, however, to convince Mr. Irving that his enterprise carried with it very genial sympathy. His proved devotion to his art, his determination to uphold the national drama to its utmost, have secured for him the suffrages of all classes of society. And it is recognised that he has become a manager, not to enhance his position as an actor—for already he stands in the front rank of his profession—but the better to promote the interests of the whole stage, and to serve more fully, to gratify more absolutely, the [221] public and his patrons. Let it be added, as a minor matter, that he has followed the good examples set by Mr. Hollingshead and Mr. Bancroft, and has been careful of the comfort of his audience, neither permitting them to be pinched for room, nor subjecting them to those petty imposts which, like so many turnpike dues, have so persistently impeded the visitor on his passage from the street to his seat within the theatre.

"The tragedy of 'Hamlet' was well chosen for the first performance under the new management—as Hamlet Mr. Irving has obtained his greatest success. It has been said that no actor has ever been known to fail as Hamlet; it may be added that no actor has ever as Hamlet completely satisfied critical opinion. To many the play is a metaphysical study wholly unsuited for theatrical exhibition; 'an enigmatic work,' as Schlegel says, 'resembling those irrational equations in which a fraction of unknown magnitude always remains that will in no way admit of solution.' To many Hamlet is a mysterious and complex character, beyond the power of histrionic art adequately to interpret. Mr. Irving can, at any rate, point to the fact that, four years ago, for two hundred nights in succession, he played Hamlet to delighted crowds at the Lyceum. Weighed against popular success so consummate and prodigious, objections of any kind are as but feathers in the scale; and even those least disposed to accept this latest stage portraiture of Hamlet can afford [222] to admit that the picture is in itself consistent and harmonious, the work of an ingenious and intellectual artist."

Yes, there were some who (in a hopeless minority) were still indisposed to accept the new Prince of Denmark, but by the sensible and appreciative his impersonation by Henry Irving will ever be

honoured as one of the most complete, harmonious, profound, and artistic seen on the stage. Never was more thought given to the study and representation of very small phases of Hamlet's character. The result was a powerful, refined, graceful, intelligent interpretation in every detail, and as such it was applauded by the public.

Of Ellen Terry's acting on that memorable evening my authority says:—

"An Ophelia so tender, so graceful, so picturesque, and so pathetic, has not been seen in the theatre since Macready's Hamlet, many years ago, found his Ophelia in the person of Miss Priscilla Horton. In characters of this class, the heroines of genuine poetry, Miss Terry is now without a rival, is indeed unapproached by any other actress upon our stage. Her personal graces and endowments, her elocutionary skill, her musical speech, and, above all, her singular power of depicting intensity of feeling, are most happily combined, as the audience was quick to discover and applaud in this very exquisite presentment of Ophelia."

Photograph by **[*Window & Grove.***

ELLEN TERRY IN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY, *CIRCA* 1878.

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In summing up the performance, Joseph Knight said:— [223]

"Of Mr. Irving's Hamlet we have already spoken. It is not greatly changed. The outline is distinctly the same as before, though much pains have been bestowed on the filling up. We do not accept as new readings the delivery while sitting of speeches formerly spoken standing, or other like alterations in arrangement. Nor do we feel that changes of method as regards matters of detail call for special comment. The one vital alteration of conception appears to consist in presenting Hamlet as under the influence of an overmastering love for Ophelia. A knowledge of his own weakness seems to inspire him when, subsequently addressing Horatio, he says—

"Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of hearts."

The chief grace in the new representation consisted in the delivery of the speeches to Ophelia in the third act. In this the mocking tone did not for a moment hide the profound emotion under which Hamlet laboured, and the hands which repulsed her petitioning hands trembled with passionate longing. That this view of Hamlet is correct will scarcely be disputed. That he loved Ophelia he declared over her grave; that he felt it his duty, under the influence of a task such as that enjoined him, to erase from the table of his memory all 'trivial fond records,' he also states. [224] The indications of the pain it costs a nature such as this, quick in resolution and shrinking and incapable in action, to inflict on the woman he loves the grief it is yet necessary she should sustain, are well conceived. That they were effective in action was ascribable to a great extent to the admirable acting of Miss Terry. Picturesque, tender, and womanly throughout, Miss Terry on one or two occasions gave an inspired rendering of Ophelia. The support she afforded Mr. Irving was of the utmost importance, and the scene before the play has probably never been so well rendered."

I think it well to quote these undoubted authorities, lest readers might think that in my palpable admiration for these artists my personal judgment would be biassed.

ELLEN TERRY AS "OPHELIA."

From a portrait by Charles Campbell in the possession of Sir Henry Irving, and kindly lent by him for reproduction in these pages. Charles Campbell was a fellow-worker with Sir Edward Burne Jones. His premature death cut short a most promising career.

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I cannot end my little record of the auspicious evening of December 30, 1878, without noting that then Bram Stoker assumed his position as chief in the front of the house. How much he has done to make the Lyceum Theatre popular its frequenters fully recognise. Always genial and courteous, he plays the important part of host right well, cheerily attending to the comforts of one and all. Probably he would prefer to devote the whole of his time to writing his tenderly conceived and well loved romances (do we not owe to him "Under the Sunset," "The Snake's Pass," "The Shoulder of Shasta," and many other graceful fancies?); but happily for us, though we want more of his charming books, he remains true to his post, and has made himself as well liked in the provinces as he is in London. [225]

Speaking of Ellen Terry's triumph as Ophelia, Percy Fitzgerald tells us that "on this momentous night of trial she thought she had completely failed, and, without waiting for the fifth act, she flung herself into the arms of a friend, repeating, 'I have failed, I have failed!' She drove up and down the Thames Embankment half-a-dozen times before she found courage to go home."

The newspapers of the next morning must have given her assurance that for her was no such word as fail!

The next production at the Lyceum was "The Lady of Lyons." Of Ellen Terry's appreciative rendering of the character of Pauline I have already spoken. It need only be said now that it exercised its former charm. Henry Irving had evidently given great thought to the study of Claude Melnotte, and at times he was deeply impressive; but the part cannot take rank amongst his greatest successes.

Then came a revival of the stage version by W. G. Wills of Thomas Hood's "The Dream of Eugene Aram," which had, of course, been suggested by the impression made through Henry Irving's graphic recitation of that thrilling poem. In this Ellen Terry succeeded Isabel Bateman as Ruth Meadows, but "Eugene Aram" is a one-part play, and affords few chances for an actress. [226]

Again she followed Isabel Bateman in the revival of W. G. Wills' beautiful play, "Charles I.," which was given on June 27, 1879. As the pathetically-drawn Queen Henrietta Maria, Ellen Terry once more had her opportunity, and she grasped it. The hapless Queen ranks as one of her most sympathetic and womanly impersonations, and she played it with even more than her wonted sweetness when the play was reproduced at the Lyceum as recently as June 23, 1901.

As Charles Stuart, Henry Irving unquestionably finds at once one of his most dignified and pathetic creations.

For nearly thirty years the play has held the stage, and in view of that very rare fact it is interesting to recall its original production. This was in the September of 1872, under Colonel Bateman's Lyceum management, when Henry Irving had made his notable success in "The Bells," and was the talk of the town. Both by manager and actor much anxiety was felt as to the next play to be produced, and they were both delighted when W. G. Wills suggested the story of the unhappy Charles I. as a subject.

In common with most successful plays it had its tribulations before it faced the footlights. Though [227] possessed of true feeling and inspiration, the author was carried away by his ardour into a neglect of the canons of the stage, writing masses of poetry of inordinate length, which he brought to his friends at the theatre, until at last they began to despair. Many changes had to be made before the poem could be brought into satisfactory shape. Originally, the piece opened with the second act, but the practical Colonel Bateman exclaimed: "Oh, bother politics! Give us some domestic business." This led to the introduction of the tranquil, pastoral scene at Hampton Court. The closing scene, as desired by the author, represented the capture of the King on the field of battle. "Won't do," said the Colonel bluntly; "must wind up with another domestic act." Sorely perplexed by this requirement, which they felt was necessary, both author and actor tried many expedients without success, until one evening the manager suddenly called out, "Look at the last act of 'Black-Eyed Susan!'" And so it came about that the affecting farewell between the doomed Charles and his weeping Queen was due to Douglas Jerrold's time-honoured nautical play.

That "Charles I." was an immediate stage success is a matter of ancient history, and in an odd way it had bold advertisement. One of those vehement and amusing discussions which [228] occasionally arise out of a play, and furnish prodigious excitement for the public, was aroused by the conception taken of Cromwell, which was, in truth, opposed to tradition; for the Protector was exhibited as willing to condone the King's offences, and to desert his party, for the considerations of a marriage designed to gratify his own social ambition. This ludicrous view, based on some loose gossip, was, reasonably enough, thought to degrade Cromwell's character, and the point was debated with much fierceness. It was also argued that the dramatist had made Charles not only a hero and a martyr, but also a modern gentleman with superior manners and a melancholy smile. But the public forgave the slanders for the sake of the prettiness and the pathos of the domestic scenes.

The play was not only revived in 1879 but in 1883, and again in 1893. In 1901 it exercised all its old charm. The best advice to those who go to see it is not to expect historical accuracy, but, without criticism of the dramatist's portraits of the King and Cromwell, to heartily enjoy a delightful and soul-stirring drama. It is only the other day that Ellen Terry said, "There is nothing more beautifully pathetic in the world than Sir Henry Irving's Charles." And she is right.

At the end of this busy season, in the last days of hot July, Ellen Terry, on the occasion of her [229] manager's benefit, played Lady Anne to his Gloucester in the first act of "Richard III.," and then, as we have seen in a former chapter, she started on her provincial tour.

She did not return to London until the late autumn. On November 1, 1879, we first saw that beautiful revival of "The Merchant of Venice," which, thanks to Ellen Terry's Portia and Henry Irving's Shylock, became one of the greatest of the long series of Lyceum triumphs, and remains to this day one of the most attractive items in the Irving repertory.

His impersonation of the "Jew that Shakespeare drew" is as instinct with purpose to-day as it was in 1879. I know that there are some critics who declare that he imparts so much dignity to the character that he dwarfs the other portraits in the play. That is true of the actor, but surely these critics are wrong? Most students of Shakespeare realise that Shylock never became actively malignant until the Christians, who on the Rialto had insulted him, who had called him misbeliever and cut-throat dog, and spat upon his Jewish gaberdine, had robbed him of his daughter and his ducats. Then the sufferance that he declared to be the badge of all his tribe broke down. Then, being a man as well as a Jew, he became, not unrighteously, savage, showed [230] his teeth, and, living in a cruel age (when human torture was a thing of every day), viciously resolved to have his "pound of flesh." It is hardly likely that he thought it would come in his way when, in "a merry sport," he signed the bond with Antonio. That is the filled-in picture that Henry Irving gives us of this wonderfully outlined character. We may be horrified at the vindictive moods of his Shylock, but we understand him, and realise the cruel wrongs that have worked him up to a frenzied hatred of his bantering tormentors. He makes us see the patient endurance and personal dignity of the man, and, if at the end of the grandly wrought story we cannot quite sympathise with him, we are called upon to acknowledge the infinite patience of his punishment. To thousands and thousands of playgoers, and to those who dearly love their Shakespeare, Henry Irving has illumined the superbly limned design of Shylock.

Of Ellen Terry's Portia, in the days of the Bancrofts at the old Prince of Wales' Theatre, I have already spoken. In 1879 it was found to be as good as ever—nay, better than ever—for not only had time ripened her talent, but brought her into contact with a virile Shylock. She has indeed made the character her own, and this fact has been long acknowledged not only in England but in [231] America. It remains to-day exactly what it has ever been, a perfectly executed realisation of one of Shakespeare's most beautiful feminine creations. And, indeed, whether it be in her handsome Italian gowns, or disguised as the "young and learned doctor" from Padua, she makes a lovely and most fascinating picture. Her illustration of the wonderful text leaves nothing to be desired. It carries with it the inspiration of genius, and yet it is all so sweetly natural. "As the gentle rain

from heaven," it "drops upon the place beneath," and in the hearts of her hearers sets new, bright, and fragrant thoughts upspringing; while throughout it all runs the refined essence of dainty humour. Whenever I see such perfectly soul-satisfying Shakespearean portraits as these, I think of the matchless stained-glass windows in our grand churches and old cathedrals. Beautiful in themselves, as they are now, their designs must have at one time been crude and cold in the hands of their originators. But filled in with softly, yet richly-coloured and exquisitely blended glass (not with the hot reds, violent blues, and gaudy ambers that hopelessly disfigure so many modern efforts in this direction), they seem to soothe while they illuminate, and ineffaceably fulfil their earnest, bright, and inspiring intention.

On December 10, 1879, a benefit performance was given at the Lyceum, on behalf of William [232] Belford, an actor who had done splendid service under Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells, and who in later years had been prime favourite as principal comedian at the Strand Theatre. He was not only a fine actor, but a prince among good fellows, and pre-eminent in the London Bohemia of those days, the happy home of the literary men, artists, and actors, of which Geoffrey Prowse wrote:—

"The longitude's rather uncertain,
The latitude's equally vague;
But that person I pity who knows not the city,
The beautiful city of Prague."

In 1879 poor Belford's health broke down. Like many of his kind in the good-natured, easy-going, and absolutely unselfish circles to which he belonged, he had made little or no provision for such a disaster, and right cheerfully his friends came to his aid, just as in stage-land friends invariably do. Henry Irving played his famous character of Digby Grant in "The Two Roses," and this was supplemented by a performance of the "Trial" scene from "Pickwick," in which many prominent actors appeared. Ellen Terry, who had met William Belford in the Charles Kean days at the Princess's, very appropriately, as well as very beautifully, delivered an address from the deft pen [233] of Clement Scott, which ran as follows:—

"To one and all a welcome! That's the way
To point a prologue, or to start a play;
But something tells me that your thoughts are tending
Towards one who starts no more—whose play is ending.

Nay, look not sad; no suppliant appears
To chase your smiles and undermine your tears;
I ask your sympathy, but it were folly
To join dear Belford's name with melancholy.

On such a merry heart rare friendship waits;
To him Bohemia threw wide her gates!
Up started he the first at laughter's call,
Had found at clubs best welcome of them all.

Full of rare anecdote and riper wit,
Favoured by stalls and idolised by pit;
An airy butterfly, who held in hand
The mirth of Sadler's Wells, the fun of Strand,
Varied and versatile, but ever cheery;
Now Gratiano, mocking, now Dundreary,
He was the sunshine that existence mellows—
Friend, guide, comedian, and best of fellows!

Why do I say 'he was,' and seem to cast
A present favourite into the past?
He's with us yet, and could he but address you,
I'd say for you, 'Shake hands, old friend, God bless you!'
There ran a rumour lately through the town,'
'O have you heard! poor Belford's breaking down!'
A gentleman, and Spartan like the rest,
Too proud to show the fox that gnawed his breast,
He murmured not, sat waiting, did not shirk,
And to the last hoped against hope for work,
Till those who loved him saw in eyes grown dim
The pain he'd saved from others, clung to him.

I'd have you know—tell it from south to north, [234]
Our friend hung back—*his* friends have led him forth,
And we were right—the public heart we knew,
The stage's favourites belong to you!

Behind the curtain, one and all rejoice,
To join their work to your responsive voice;
We've done no more to-day for our sick friend
Than we shall keep on doing to the end;
In our freemasonry there's this relief,
We share life's triumphs—but we share its grief.
Nor for ourselves in thanks we stretch our hand,
But for the stricken soldier of our band;
You found him sorrowing, and gave him ease,
A sight of home and country, waving trees,
And all the blest retirement, deep and wild,
That soothes the body, helpless as a child!
Through me our absent friend would like to say
You've done a noble charity to-day;
For after years of uncomplaining strife,
You've saved anxiety and promised life;
But, best of all, as antidote to pain,
Back to his face you've brought the smiles again.
So promise me, before you all depart,
To wear 'Sweet William' ever next your heart!"

Triumphantly the "Merchant of Venice" pursued its course until, in May 1880, its last act was omitted, and it was succeeded by "Iolanthe," a version by W. G. Wills of Henrik Hertz's Danish play, "King René's Daughter." The chief character in this had been a favourite one with that consummate artiste, Helen Faucit (Lady Theodore Martin). The piece was exquisitely staged, and finely played by Ellen Terry and Henry Irving; it was very tender, and very touching, but it has not taken a permanent place in the Lyceum repertory. On January 3, 1881, Lord Tennyson's two- [235]
act drama, "The Cup," the "great little play," as Ellen Terry called it, was produced, and another great victory was gained. Clement Scott considers her acting in this to have been one of the finest of her many inspirations, and says:—

"Ellen Terry as Camma, aptly realised the poet's lines—

'The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,
But you, twin sister of the morning sun,
Forelead the Sun!'

Who that ever heard it can forget the pathos of Ellen Terry as she parted from Sinnatus, and delivered these lovely lines—

'He is gone already;
Oh, look! yon grove upon the mountain—white
In the sweet moon, as with a lovelier snow!
But what a blotch of blackness underneath!
Sinnatus, you remember,—yea you must—
That there three years ago, the vast vine-bowers
Ran to the summit of the trees and dropt
Their streamers earthward, which a breeze of May
Took ever and anon and opened out,
The purple zone of hill and heaven; there
You told your love; and like the swaying vines—
Yea, with our eyes, our hearts, our prophet hopes,
Let in the happy distance, and that all
But cloudless heaven which we have found together
In our three married years! You kissed me there
For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me now.'

I for one" (and here Clement Scott speaks for many of us) "shall never forget the end of the play, with the libations poured in honour of Artemis, and amidst music and flowers and processions, [236] faultless in colour, and of classic pomp, making the dull mind live in another age, we hear intoned with strophe and antistrophe of chanting chorus, the double appeal by Camma and Synorix, containing as it does the most impassioned poetry of the play.

"I said at the time, 'If there ever was a play that from its intrinsic merits demanded a second, if not a third visit, it is "The Cup." At present the landscape of Mr. W. Telbin, and the decorative splendour of Mr. Hawes Craven's Temple of Artemis, absorb all attention. We seem to see before us the concentrated essence of such fascinating art as that of Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr. Alma Tadema in a breathing and tangible form. Not only do the grapes grow before us, and the myrtles blossom, the snow-mountains change from silver-white at daytime to roseate hues at dawn, not only are the Pagan ceremonies acted before us with a reality and fidelity that almost baffles description, but in the midst of all this scenic allurement glide the classical draperies of Miss Ellen Terry, who is the exact representative of the period she enacts, while following her we find the eager glances of the fate-haunted Mr. Irving. The pictures that dwell on the memory are countless, and not to be effaced in spell or witchery by any of the most vaunted productions of the stage, even in an era devoted to archæology. We see, as we travel back through the [237] enchanting vista, the first meeting of Synorix and Camma—he with his long red hair and haunting eyes, his weird pale face and swathes of leopard skins; she with her grace of movement, unmatched in our time, clad in a drapery sea-weed tinted, with complexion as clear as in one of Sir Frederick Leighton's classical pictures, and with every pose studied but still natural.

"We remember Camma as she reclined on the low couch with her harp, moaning about her husband's late-coming, and can recall the hungry eyes of Synorix, as he drank in the magic of her presence. All was good here, the tenderness of the woman, the wicked eagerness of her lover, the quick impulsive energy of the husband. Difficult as it was to study the acting, when so much had to be seen, still it was felt that Mr. Irving, Mr. Terriss, and Miss Ellen Terry had well opened the tragedy long before the first curtain fell.

"There were time and opportunity, at any rate, to comprehend the subtlety of Mr. Irving's expression in that long soliloquy—how well it was broken up, and how face accorded with action when Sinnatus lay dead, and the frightened Camma had fled to the sanctuary of the Temple. With the first act but little fault could be found. The fastidious among the audience who complained of [238] dulness and want of action, possibly forgot that whilst their eyes were feasting on the scenery, their ears were closed to the poetry, and on another visit will confess how much meaning and study were at the first blush lost to them. With the aid of the text, the beauties hidden for the moment will reappear. As for the second act, with its groupings, its grace, its centre figures and surroundings, its hymns to Artemis, its chants and processions, we are inclined to doubt if the stage has ever given to educated tastes so rare a treat. In the old days, such pictures might have been caviare to the general public, but the public at the Lyceum is one of culture and a very high order of intelligence. Such poems are necessarily for the fastidious and the elegant in mind and scholarship; but granted the right of the stage to demand such poetic studies, it would be impossible for modern scenic art to give them more splendour and completeness. Æsthetic tastes have had their necessary ridicule and banter, for everything that is affected is hateful to the ordinary English nature; but here, in this Temple of Artemis, when Miss Ellen Terry, veiled as the Galatian priestess, stands by the incense-bearing tripod, and Mr. Henry Irving, robed in the scarlet of Rome's tributary King, comes to demand his anxiously expected bride, there is an aiming at the beautiful and thorough, most creditable in itself and distinctly worthy of respect." [239]

No doubt the production of "The Cup" was a bright feather in the managerial cap of Henry Irving,

and Ellen Terry took her full share in its colours.

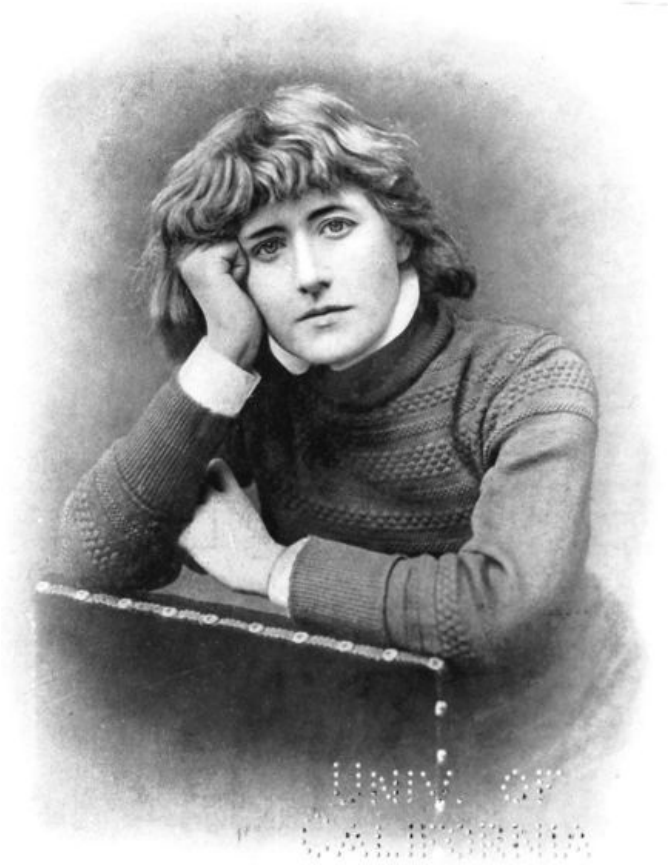
Let me hark back a little to recall an evening in the previous Lyceum season when I was fortunate enough to hear Ellen Terry's thrilling rendering of the one character in Monk Lewis's dramatic poem, "The Captive." This strange writer, with his skulls and his crossbones, his coffins and shrouds, his ghosts and his goblins, is rarely read now; but for the sake of the actress's performance in it this weird piece of work was well worth revival. In the memoirs of Lewis we come across a letter written to his mother in 1803, just before the first performance of "The Captive." "The 'monodrama' (as he called it) 'comes out,' he says, on Tuesday. I have not yet been at a single rehearsal. It cannot possibly succeed." In one way it did succeed. At Covent Garden Mrs. Litchfield (a famous actress in her day) recited the fearsome lines allotted to the wretched maniac prisoner. The character is that of a mad-woman, and Mrs. Litchfield's embodiment of the author's horrible imaginings, combined with the scenic effects and other startling appearances which, with his usual skill, he introduced into the piece, threw a portion of the audience—whose [240] nerves were unable to withstand the dreadful truth of the language—into hysterics, and the whole theatre into confusion and horror. Never, it is said, did Covent Garden present such an appearance of agitation and dismay. Ladies bathed in tears, others fainting, and some shrieking with terror—while such of the audience who were able to avoid demonstrations like these sat aghast with pale horror painted on their countenances.

In another letter to his mother, Lewis says: "The papers will have already informed you that the monodrama has failed. It proved much too terrible for representation, and two people went into hysterics during the performance, and two more after the curtain dropped. It was given out again with a mixture of applause and disapprobation, but I immediately withdrew the piece. In fact, the subject (which was merely a picture of madness) was so uniformly distressing to the feelings that at last I felt my own a little painfully, and as to Mrs. Litchfield she almost fainted away. I did not expect that it would succeed, and of course am not disappointed at its failure. The only chance was whether pity would make the audience weep, but instead of that terror threw them into fits, and of course there was an end of my monodrama."

At the Lyceum Ellen Terry brought about no such scene as that created by Mrs. Litchfield at [241] Covent Garden. It is true that she harrowed as well as held her audience, and that the memory of her acting must haunt all who witnessed this bold venture; but her art was delicate as well as intense, and she was able to draw those tears so desired by the author. It is a pity that he could not see his "monodrama" at the Lyceum in 1880.

On April 16, 1881, "The Cup" was preceded by Mrs. Cowley's comedy, "The Belle's Stratagem," with Ellen Terry as Letitia Hardy. She played the part with invincible vivacity and perfect grace, and in the picturesque costumes of a bygone period, looked like a portrait by an old master come to life. But what a thing to do! Camma and Letitia Hardy—tragedy and comedy—in one evening! It was a proof alike of her marvellous versatility and her great power of physical endurance. To the delight of his admirers, Henry Irving resumed his old part of Doricourt, and played it brilliantly. By the way, in connection with this impersonation, there is another instance of an actor thinking he has failed where he has really succeeded.

Of his first appearance at the St. James' Theatre in the character, he has said:—"I was cast for Doricourt, a part which I had never played before, and which I thought did not suit me. I felt that this was the opinion of the audience soon after the play began. The house appeared to be [242] indifferent, and I believed that failure was conclusively stamped upon my work, when suddenly, upon my exit after the mad scene, I was startled by a burst of applause, and so great was the enthusiasm of the audience that I was compelled to reappear upon the scene, a somewhat unusual thing except upon the operatic stage." Despite his doubts the part has remained one of the best and one of the most popular of his comedy incarnations. Of the new Letitia Hardy, Clement Scott truly said:—"She is as Georgian in her comedy graces as before she was Pagan in her rites as the priestess Camma. Entering heart and soul into the spirit of the play, she attacks it with a wilfulness and an abandon that are indescribable. She trips and floats through the scenes. There is no effort in anything that she does; and when she assumes the character of the hoyden it is in the finest spirit of refined and disciplined fun. With every chance for exaggeration, the rein is never relaxed, and so captivating is the spirit of the artiste that she makes the audience hold its breath to the point of tension, and is rewarded with the quick response of unrestrained applause. Equally charming is the temptation scene at the minuet; and when Miss Terry, mask in hand, floats, glides, and coquets around the bewildered Doricourt, one's mind recalls the records of fascination in varied romance, and understands, possibly for the first time, what Circe might [243] have done to Ulysses—how the fair-haired German nymphs of the Lorelei turned the heads of dreamy knights—how Undine weaved her spells—and how old Merlin collapsed under the influence of the wily Vivien. Unknowingly, Miss Ellen Terry is a poem."



ELLEN TERRY.
On tour. Birmingham, 1881.
[*To face page 242.*

In the autumn of 1880 the great American tragedian, Edwin Booth, came to England to fulfil an engagement at the Princess's Theatre, and his reception had not been one to make those who take loving interest in the dramatic art of this country proud. How well I remember poor Sothern (he was then in his dying days) waxing wroth over the neglect with which the man whom he declared to be the "finest and most graceful actor in the world" was treated. I think many others felt the same, and Henry Irving, at least, was determined that his great rival should not recross the Atlantic until he had had a fair hearing in London. With characteristic generosity and delightful courage, he invited Booth to appear with him at the Lyceum in Othello, so that the leaders of English and American dramatic art might be seen on the stage together, and in all courtesy cross swords, alternating the finely-balanced yet splendidly contrasted parts of the Moor and Iago. The invitation was cordially accepted, and in both countries the event is regarded as one of the most interesting in modern theatrical history.

[244] The general consensus of opinion was that Booth triumphed as Othello, and that Irving eclipsed him as Iago. No doubt Othello is by far the most difficult part to play, and it was better suited to the classical style of Booth than to the methods of Irving, who, while he has reverence for tradition, delights in taking a path of his own making. In some characters this is a distinct advantage, and his Iago was supreme. It will be remembered that Ellen Terry was already familiar with the character of the gentle Desdemona, and she played it with infinite charm and inexpressible pathos. Hers must have been a difficult task, for both Booth and Irving took different readings of Othello and Iago, and she had to adapt herself to both. Hazlitt said:—"All circumstances considered, and platonics out of the question, if we were to cast the complexion of Desdemona physiognomically, we should say that she had a very fair skin and very light auburn hair, inclining to yellow." In Ellen Terry Hazlitt would have found his ideal, not only in appearance but in art.

For Henry Irving's benefit at the end of the season she played Helen to his Modus in those happily conceived comedy scenes from "The Hunchback" of Sheridan Knowles in which the two figure. She once more proved herself to be the most piquant of comediennes, and the Modus was delightfully sketched.

[245] In the opening attraction of the next Lyceum season, which commenced in the January of 1882, Ellen Terry did not appear. This was a revival of "The Two Roses," for by this time playgoers were anxious to resume acquaintance with Henry Irving in his first great original character, that of Digby Grant. In Lyceum history the occasion is noteworthy, for it introduced to its boards—as the blind Caleb Deecie—George Alexander. Alexander had been touring in the country under the management of the younger Robertson, and those who took the trouble to watch him with discriminating eye had predicted for him a brilliant future. So admirable was he in a character part in a humorous piece called "The Guv'nor," that his name, extolled by discerning provincial critics, reached Irving's ears, and thus he won his first engagement in London. His admirable

work at the Lyceum Theatre, before he went into management on his own account, and by his tact, taste, and personality once more made the St. James's (a playhouse which since the departure of John Hare and the Kendals had been allowed to droop) the resort of intellectual as well as fashionable London, is well remembered. It is a grand thing for a young and then comparatively unknown actor to reflect that, with infinite credit to himself, and to the great satisfaction of the public, he played such vitally important parts as Faust to the Margaret of Ellen [246] Terry, and Macduff to the Macbeth of Henry Irving.

But the great production of this season was "Romeo and Juliet." Never, probably, was a Shakespearean play so superbly mounted. All the resources of art were lavished upon it, and cost was apparently outside consideration. The result was a series of stage pictures that were absolutely entrancing. If I were writing a history of the Lyceum under the management of Henry Irving I should gladly dwell on these things, and on the work that he, both as manager and actor, put into them, but I must remember that my text is Ellen Terry, and, save for the all-important part which she took in them, pass them briefly by. Other writers have vividly described these matchless representations in their entirety, and I must content myself with a fragment here and there. My canvas is a small one, and my picture must be that of my heroine. If my accounts of the Lyceum revivals are brief it is not from lack of appreciation of them, and happily the memory of them is green. So it is with the later impersonations of Ellen Terry, and they will require no lengthy record at my hands.

Her Juliet did not quite satisfy all the critics, but she played the part for one hundred and thirty nights to crowded and enthusiastic audiences, and surely there could be no better criterion of [247] success? If, when compared with other Juliets, the extremely exacting part did not seem to suit her as well as others she had played, if it was held to be inferior to her Ophelia, and below her Portia, the impersonation won its way to the hearts of the people, and in the public mind it increased rather than lessened her reputation. Sarah Bernhardt, who was loud in her praises of the performance, said to her sister artiste—"How *can* you act in this way every night?" "It is the audience," said Ellen Terry. "They inspire me!" She might have added that she inspired her audiences.

After the first performance she once more thought, nay, even insisted, that she had failed. She wrote to a friend—"A thousand thanks for your letter. The fact remains that Juliet was a horrid failure. *And I meant so well!* I am very sad, but I thank you. *It is not the critics.* I knew it all on Wednesday night."

She knew far more, and had no reason to be sad, when, at the close of the season, after an extraordinary run, "Romeo and Juliet" was withdrawn.

On October 11, 1882, Shakespearean tragedy gave way to Shakespearean comedy, and "Much Ado about Nothing" was staged. We have seen how, at Leeds, Ellen Terry had tried herself as [248] Beatrice. She had proved that the character suited her to perfection, and confidence in herself no doubt helped her to make one of the most striking of her many triumphs.

Clement Scott has such delightful ideas of Ellen Terry in connection with the character of Beatrice, that I must be permitted to quote him:—

"Two passages from 'Much Ado about Nothing,'" he says, "have always seemed to me to convey exactly the idea of Ellen Terry, both in youth and womanhood; they suggest that extraordinary 'charm' that the actress recently in America was unable to define, though I, for one, could have embodied it in two words, 'Ellen Terry.' The passages from Shakespeare to which I allude are these—

> "Don Pedro. Will you have me, lady?
>
> "Beatrice. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days; your grace is too costly to wear every day. But I beseech your grace pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.
>
> "Don Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of the question, you were born in a merry hour.
>
> "Beatrice. No sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was a star danced, and under that I was born! Cousins, God give you joy!

"Now, if William Shakespeare had had the model before him, he could not have drawn a more perfect picture of Ellen Terry than this. She was indeed 'born to speak all mirth and no matter.' If ever lovely woman was 'born in a merry hour' it was Ellen Terry, for she can scarcely be serious [249] for an hour together, and is never happier than when she is playing some practical joke on her more serious companions.

"And who, whilst life lasts, can ever forget how the actress in the character of Beatrice, one of the most enchanting personations of my time, one of the most exquisite realisations of a Shakespearean heroine that any of us have ever seen, spoke those words, 'No sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was a star danced, and under that I was born.' Why, it was not Beatrice, but Ellen Terry, personated by Ellen Terry. It was a revelation. The other quotation from the same play, 'Much Ado about Nothing,' is Hero's description of her cousin Beatrice, which is simply Ellen Terry in action.

'For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.'

"Is not this an exact description of the Ellen Terry movement which others so ludicrously attempt to imitate? She does not run off the stage, or skip up the steps of an Italian garden. She simply floats seemingly on the air. A more exquisitely graceful movement has never been seen from any other actress. But Shakespeare has hit it. She like 'a lapwing runs close by the ground.' It is the [250] skimming of a bird in the air. Ellen Terry did that lapwing run to perfection when she was sent to invite Benedick to dinner, and left him with the famous chaffing rejoinder—

'You have no stomach, signior; fare you well.'

"And up the marble steps ran the lapwing."

How true this is, all who have been fortunate enough to witness Ellen Terry's bewitching impersonation of Beatrice, will acknowledge. It was a faultless performance, and, as we all know, Henry Irving was equally happy as Benedick. I need not say more. "Much Ado about Nothing" was acted two hundred and twelve times, and might have continued to run, but the day came when the Lyceum company had to think seriously of their departure on their first American tour. With this in view the piece was withdrawn, and all the plays in the now rich repertory were carefully revived. On July 15, 1883, at a benefit performance, Ellen Terry played the small part of Clementine in "Robert Macaire," to the Macaire of Henry Irving, and the Jacques Strop of J. L. Toole. The part was, of course, beneath her notice, but she undertook it in a good cause, and her performance must be recorded in these pages. Irving has always regarded the character of Macaire with affection, and certainly he depicts the devil-may-care and by no means unamusing [251] robber in effectively lurid tints. The piece, however, belongs to a bygone age, and is only interesting to those who, while seeing it, can conjure up the past.

Photograph by **[*Window & Grove.***

ELLEN TERRY AS "BEATRICE."

***Lyceum, 1882*: "*There was a star danced, and under that I was born.*"**

[*To face page 250.*

In October 1883 the whole company sailed for New York, leaving a great gap in the English theatrical world. I wonder if they quite realised how much they would be missed? I have always found it difficult to make popular actors understand how fervently they are loved, and of what value their presence is to those who love them.

CHAPTER XIII

AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE—1884-1901

In 1884, flushed with their triumphant American victories, Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and their faithful followers returned to the Lyceum. They commenced operations with a reproduction of "Much Ado about Nothing," but this soon gave way to a long promised revival of "Twelfth Night." This had given rise to many pleasant expectations. It was confidently thought that the character of Malvolio would fit Irving like a glove, and it was certain that in Ellen Terry we should find the sweetest of Violas.

In the usual beautiful, tasteful, and costly style attendant upon a Lyceum production, the piece was staged on July 8, and why it failed to please the audience is a mystery that remains unsolved. It is ridiculous to plead that it was a very hot night, and that the packed house, through being uncomfortably warm, became unruly and offensive. We expect hot weather in July, and those who object to the interior of a theatre under such conditions generally stay away. Probably, if there is any explanation of the matter beyond the blatant vulgarity of a disreputable gang of foul first- [253]
nighters, it is that "Twelfth Night," not having been played for a long time in London, was as Greek to the ignorant in the house, and was not understood. Be all this as it may, so much low behaviour greeted the actor-manager on the fall of the curtain that he sharply rebuked the coarse-minded malcontents, saying, "I can't understand how a company of earnest comedians and admirable actors, having these three cardinal virtues of actors—being sober, clean, and perfect—and having exercised their abilities on one of the most difficult of plays, can have given any cause for dissatisfaction."

Opinions differ as to these after-curtain-fall demonstrations on the part of disappointed actors. Probably they had better be omitted, but we all understand that human nature has its limits of endurance. The annoyed actor is provoked in the heat of a miserable moment to reprove insulting audiences, and one cannot wholly wonder at it. A writer who, in cold blood, challenges his adverse critics is very foolish indeed, for he not only advertises the fact that he has had a whipping, but has smarted under it. Those who in any way choose to come before the public challenge criticism. It cannot be all honey, and if an occasional dose of vinegar is unpalatable to them they had better retire into their shells. But there was little or no excuse for the rowdies who [254]
ridiculed the Lyceum production of "Twelfth Night."

No doubt the play was in some respects unfortunately cast. The Sir Toby Belch, the Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the Clown, and the Maria, missed the humour of their practical joking, and this greatly handicapped Henry Irving, who had elected to play Malvolio from a somewhat serious point of view.

After putting the question "Is it a good part?" *Mr. Punch* said of his performance: "Good enough in its proper place in the piece, no doubt, but when emphasised, developed, and elevated by an eminent tragedian holding such a position as does the manager of the Lyceum, to a height of tragic melodrama, then Malvolio is no longer the middle-aged, conceited, puritanical donkey who is a fair butt for the malicious waiting-maid, two stupid sots, and a professional fool, but he becomes at once a grave and reverend signior, a Grand Duchess's trusted major-domo, faithfully discharging the duties of which he has an exaggerated opinion, and the very last person to be the subject of an idiotic practical joke, the stupidity of which is intensified by its wanton cruelty. And in the end he gains the public sympathy for his sufferings, just as Shylock does."

Photograph by **[*Window & Grove.***

ELLEN TERRY AS "VIOLA."

First played by her at the Lyceum, July 8, 1884.

[*To face page 254.*

Whether Henry Irving meant his audiences to sympathise with Malvolio is more than I can say. It [255] was certainly very instructive, as well as very enjoyable, to see the part played from that point of view.

But however critics might differ with regard to individual performances in this unappreciated production, concerning Ellen Terry's Viola there was but one opinion. It was simply charming, being at once full of fun and vivacity, and clothed with modesty. The performance ranked with her best Shakespearean impersonations, and it is a thousand pities that it was not seen oftener. It is interesting to note that the part of Viola's brother and counterpart, Sebastian, was played by Ellen Terry's brother, Fred Terry, who was then in the early days of his successful career. The likeness, both in face, expression, and manner between the two was remarkable, and the episode of their thus acting together was very pleasing.

In 1885, after another prosperous tour in America, W. G. Wills' stage version of "The Vicar of Wakefield" was revived, Ellen Terry now playing her famous character of Olivia to the Dr. Primrose of Henry Irving. She repeated her former triumph, and, as the dear old country parson, he was most happily placed. Since then, the delightful play has taken a permanent and honoured place in the Lyceum repertory.

In the December of this year, W. G. Wills' adaptation of "Faust" was staged. Of course I cannot [256] dwell on the splendours of this production. At the time some of the professed students of Goethe were prone to run it down, declaring (generally without seeing a representation of it) that the poem had been turned into a pantomime. These quidnuncs did not know the necessities of the three hours' traffic of the stage. In spite of them the striking and artistic acting version of a Titanic work drew the public, and, as a matter of fact, Henry Irving's enterprise induced more people to read Goethe than had ever been known. To thousands a closed book had been opened.

"Faust" had a prolonged run, and how much this was due to the captivating Margaret of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving (who seemed to revel in the part of Mephistopheles) would be the first to admit. It was indeed a performance replete with pathos and poetry, and she alone gave the indispensable feminine interest to a great work destined to hold its place upon the stage, and in the minds of all earnest playgoers and students of the drama.

It was in 1885 that Charles Kelly died, leaving his widow with her two children, who, under the names of Ailsa Craig and Gordon Craig, have already done excellent work upon the stage and in other branches of art.

With such a lasting success as this on hand, with a rich repertory to fall back upon, and American [257] tours to interfere with London work, new productions at the Lyceum now become few and far between.

In 1886, Irving revived one of his favourite old farces, "Raising the Wind." It was a treat to see him once more enjoying his ingeniously and comically conceived interpretation of Jeremy Diddler, but the character of Peggy offered no real opportunity to Ellen Terry. She made a sweet picture, and it was good-natured of her to act in such a piece, and that is all that can be said. But it gives an opportunity of noting how truly great artists are always willing to play small parts. It is only the self-sufficient semi-amateur who must be Hamlet or nothing. "I love to be a *useful* actress," is Ellen Terry's constant cry.

On July I, 1887, at a benefit performance generously given on behalf of Dr. Westland Marston, Byron's "Werner" was performed, Henry Irving playing the gloomy hero to the Josephine of Ellen Terry. It was an interesting experiment, but, although immense pains were taken over the production, it was not repeated.

Werner had been a favourite part with Macready, and I can never think of the piece without recalling an anecdote that was told me by another veteran actor of the old school—Henry [258] Loraine. Loraine and a brother tragedian had had a difference of opinion concerning the "gouts" of blood mentioned in "Macbeth"—in the famous dagger soliloquy—

"I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before."

Was the correct pronunciation of "gout" as here used the same as the dread malady "gout" from which so many of us suffer? That was the dispute—concerning it a small wager was made—and it was determined that the great Macready should be the referee. In his declining days, and a ripe old age, Macready was then living in peaceful retirement at Cheltenham, and Loraine, who had been an old comrade of his, called upon him. He was admitted, but he found the once vigorous man sadly ill and weak. He was lying back in an arm-chair wistfully gazing at the virile portrait of himself as Werner that has been made familiar to the public by the print-sellers. On hearing this friend's name, the old actor endeavoured to rouse himself, and, being asked the momentous question as to the "gouts," said with animation: "Of course it is as *I* always pronounced it,'goots'—it rhymes with 'roots,'—it rhymes with 'roots.'" And then he seemed to forget his friend's presence, and, as it were, fading away, fell back in his chair, and, with a deep sigh, resumed his [259] contemplation of the once active Werner.

In 1887 the opportunity for a new "creation" occurred, and it is interesting to see how Ellen Terry availed herself of it. To my friend Alfred C. Calmour I am indebted for the history of his graceful poetical play "The Amber Heart."

In common with all plays "The Amber Heart" had its vicissitudes. Indeed, it would be an interesting thing to write a history of successful plays, and the anxieties of their authors before they were safely landed for gratifying production. How many pieces have lain neglected for years until some chance coming in their way disclosed their merit!

But the troubles of "The Amber Heart" were neither many nor keen. Written in 1886, the piece was read first of all to Mary Anderson, who, then in the zenith of her invincible popularity, was playing at the Lyceum. It was at the suggestion of the ill-fated William Terriss that the author submitted it to this charming and accomplished lady. Having heard the play, she was most enthusiastic about it. "Lovely! lovely!" she repeated after the author had read it; "if it can only be produced I am sure we shall have a success." But that season's arrangements having already been fixed gave no chance for it. It was then suggested to Ellen Terry, for whom, indeed, it had [260] originally been written, but who so far had been unable to consider it because of her existing engagements. However, in reply to the author's final question as to whether she could seriously entertain it, she telegraphed, "Yes, with pleasure, to-day at twelve." This was January 6, 1887. The author read the play to her, and she, too, was most enthusiastic. "I'll do it, I'll do it!" she exclaimed; "I've longed for such a part." The difficulty, of course, was how to get it done. Ellen Terry was then playing Margaret in "Faust," and rehearsing other plays besides, and, of course, she was pledged to the arrangements of Henry Irving. At length it was decided that it should be produced at the Haymarket Theatre on May 7th for a matinee. The theatre was arranged for, and the date advertised, when the already too busy actress found that she could not fulfil her promise until a month later. This, of course (and naturally to the intense disappointment of the author), unsettled everything. The following month the Haymarket passed into new managerial hands, and so the piece could not be done there. Then, following his invariable custom, Henry Irving generously stepped into the breach, and offered his friend, the dramatist, the free use of the Lyceum for the production. That difficulty was, at length, satisfactorily settled, but the casting of [261] the piece was not easily effected. The casting of plays for tentative performances seldom is. Ultimately, and after an infinity of trouble, he had good cause to congratulate himself. Ellen Terry, E. S. Willard, and Beerbohm Tree! Never before, and never since, have this talented trio appeared together, and the minor parts were played by excellent actors and actresses. "If I were to write volumes," says my friend, "I could not say how hard Miss Terry worked to make the piece a success. Her whole soul was thrown into it." At the rehearsals her enthusiasm fired her companions. Everything was done most lovingly, and on the eventful afternoon, June 7, 1887, an audience assembled at the Lyceum which was almost as unique as the cast of the play. Mrs. Keeley represented the older generation of actresses, and Miss Mary Moore the younger, and many, like Ada Cavendish, David James, and William Terriss, who have since passed away, were present.

Before the curtain went up his heroine wrote to the dramatist:—

"You will have a great success, I hope and pray. I believe in this, and nobody will be so glad then as your sincere friend, Ellen Terry."

After the first act (which had gone splendidly) he went behind the scenes. "Oh, dear, dear! how bad I am!" she said, suffering (quite unnecessarily) from her usual "first performance" misgivings. "My tongue is parched, and I can't get a smile out of the part." She was terribly anxious to make a great success for her author. [262]

At the end of the second act, which was received with rare enthusiasm, he again saw her. She was crying, for she was still "Ellaline"—the heart-broken maiden, whose lover had tired of her. After a while she smiled through her tears, and said, "I think I was a little better in that act." Her modest appreciation of what was acknowledged to be a noble dramatic achievement showed the true nature of the woman. The effect on the audience in the parting scene at the end of this act was greater than written description can convey. Mrs. Keeley declared that, with all her experience, she had never witnessed anything so fine, and she afterwards wrote to the author: "I am glad to have lived to see such grand acting as Miss Terry's was yesterday afternoon."

Photography by **[*Window & Grove.***

ELLEN TERRY AS "ELLALINE."

In Alfred C. Calmont's Poetical Fancy, "The Amber Heart." Lyceum, June 7, 1887.

[*To face page 262.*

Then Ellen Terry wrote to him: "I hope you are pleased. I am so sorry about one thing yesterday. From nervousness my acting of the first act was strained and artificial, and I confess that I entirely ruined and *missed* your first beautiful soliloquy in the second act! I am *truly* sorry! I know that you are a good creature, and view all my efforts from the point of view of my *intentions* since I succeeded better in some bits. Although I may never play the part again, I never will cease to love the play for its own sake, and to regard and esteem my friend who wrote it—*for me* —I do believe." [263]

Poor self-tormenting lady! From first to last she had played the part to perfection—and every one but herself knew it. However, in that charming letter, so characteristic of her modesty, she unwittingly endowed the author with one of his most esteemed possessions.

He was indeed to be envied! Henry Irving wrote to him: "Yesterday was a veritable triumph for you and Miss Terry. Her performance was a lovely, never-to-be-forgotten thing—beautiful in conception and perfect in execution." So delighted was he with her success in this original character that he purchased the play and made her a present of it. When it is remembered that he took no part in the victory it will be understood that he is not a selfish actor.

This was doubly proved when in the following year (1888) the piece was staged for a run in the evening bill, with Hermann Vezin and George Alexander in the cast. It was again well received, and ran through a season. Sir Edward Burne-Jones wrote of it:—

"I went to the Lyceum Theatre yesterday for the third time to see your beautiful poetic fairy play. It is a most inspiring work to a painter—and Miss Terry's performance a revelation of loveliness. It is not acting—it is a glimpse into Nature itself. Is there any one like her? I think not. I had not [264] been in a theatre for twenty years before I went to see 'The Amber Heart.'"

Lord Leighton wrote—"Beautiful!—beautiful! Acting and play beautiful! A sweet and abiding memory."

In America the play was received with the same enthusiasm. Miss Terry wrote as follows after its production in New York: "'The Amber Heart' went splendidly. It made a distinct sensation, and I wish you had been there. The people simply love it—just as they did at home."

Ellen Terry's next task was in some ways the most difficult she has been called upon to undertake. When it was known that she was to appear as Lady Macbeth, those (and they were in an overwhelming majority) who associated the character with the majestic, awe-inspiring methods of Mrs. Siddons, and who, going back to the Garrick period, recalled a formidable-looking picture of Mrs. Yates as the Thane's wife with forbidding hooped skirts and a dagger remorselessly clutched in each determined hand, shook their heads, and anticipated failure. How could the graceful, gracious, tender-eyed, sweet-voiced, gentle Ellen Terry grasp such a part as this? Stage tradition had claimed Lady Macbeth for its own, and very few playgoers reflected that, as a matter of fact, it would be more likely that Macbeth would be persuaded by a beautiful [265] and fascinating wife than he would be commanded by a cold and imperious one. To fight against these firmly fixed ideas was a most formidable undertaking, but, anxious though she must have been, Ellen Terry went to work with a brave heart.

On November 6, 1888, she wrote (from Margate) to her friend, Alfred C. Calmour:—

"My holiday is nearly over, and somehow I wish it was just going to begin! However, I feel pretty content. Since I last saw you I have been N., S., E., and W. I have seen *very few* people, and I have been absorbed by Lady Mac, who is *quite unlike* her portrait by Mrs. Siddons! She is *most feminine*, and altogether, now that I have come to *know the lady well*, I think the *portrait is much the grander of the two*! But I mean to try at a true *likeness*, as it is more within my means. Like a good friend, send on the notes you spoke of—the notes on Macbeth. I'm staying here to get away from people and to be quiet, but I shall come up for your play, 'Widow Winsome,' if you do it on the 15th. I'm *so* glad you'll have a good cast. Katie Rorke is *quite* the best of our young ones."

Kate Rorke, it will be remembered, commenced her stage career at the Court Theatre when Ellen Terry was in the first flush of her success as Olivia.

This clearly shows that she was intent on giving her own original reading of Lady Macbeth. [266]

Clement Scott has recorded a very interesting conversation that took place between them after the production. In the course of it she said:—

"Although I know I cannot do what I want to do in this part, I don't even *want* to be a 'fiend,' and I *can't* believe for a moment that Lady Macbeth did *conceive* that murder—that *one* murder. Most women break the law during their lives; few women realise the consequences of what they do to-day.... I do believe that at the end of that banquet, that poor wretched creature was brought through agony and sin to repentance, and was forgiven. Surely she called the spirits to be made bad, because she knew she was not so very bad?"

And in response to the inquiry—"But was Lady Macbeth good?" she said:—

"No, she was not good, but not so much worse than many women you know.... Was it not nice of an actress—she sent me Mrs. Siddons' shoes! not to wear, but to keep. I wish I could have stood in 'em! She played Lady Macbeth—*her* Lady Macbeth, not Shakespeare's; and if I *could* I would have done hers, for Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth was a fool to it. But, at the same time, I don't think I'd even care to try to imitate her imitators.... I wish I could have seen Helen Faucit in the part. I do believe she was the rightest, although not to be looked at by the side of the Siddons [267] portrait as a single effective figure."

Now all this goes to prove that though Ellen Terry believed that the "Siddons" view of the character was the most effective from the theatrical point of view, she was not what Shakespeare meant, and that she had resolutely determined to give it her own reading.

On the 29th of December 1888, the tragedy was performed before a crowded, distinguished, and excited audience. What a picture Ellen Terry looked in her queenly and exquisitely-designed robes and her long plaits of squirrel-coloured hair! One could understand a man doing anything at the bidding of such a lovely, commanding, yet withal winsome creature. This made her influence over Macbeth very easy of comprehension, and, so far, a great point was gained; but I remember thinking that night that the new Lady Macbeth seemed, as the play advanced, to become an encumbrance rather than a support to her husband, and that she left him to fight his losing battle alone. She seemed to content herself with presenting an attractive, affectionate, and devoted wife, who could rule her husband at will, and encouraged him in his crimes because she thought they would advance his ambition. Despite her collusion in the series of cruel murders that were designed to clear the Thane of Cawdor's way to the throne, she was always feminine, [268] and far sooner than he, she collapsed under the weight of their mutual guilt.

That the impersonation proved singularly attractive is beyond all doubt, and it was well summed up in the words:—

"Miss Terry's Lady Macbeth filled every one with wonder and admiration. As in the case of her Queen Katherine, it seemed a miracle of energy and dramatic inspiration triumphing over

physical difficulties and habitual associations. The task was herculean, and even those who objected could not restrain their admiration."

Indeed, we were all heart and soul with Henry Irving, when, at the fall of the curtain, and in response to ringing cheers, he said:—

"Our dear friend, Ellen Terry, in appearing as Lady Macbeth for the first time, has undertaken, as you may suppose, a desperate task, but I think no true lover of art could have witnessed it without being deeply interested, and without a desire to witness it again."

He was right: his and her admirers came over and over again, and "Macbeth" was not withdrawn until June 29, 1889.

In the April of 1889 a very interesting event took place. Having received the royal command, Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and the Lyceum Company appeared before Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and many other members of the Royal Family, at what [269] was for the nonce dubbed the "Theatre Royal, Sandringham." For the occasion the ballroom had been converted into a miniature Lyceum, the proscenium and act-drop of the theatre having been produced on a smaller scale. The following was the programme:—

V.R.

THEATRE ROYAL, SANDRINGHAM.

Royal Entertainment. By command of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, before Her Majesty the Queen.

On Friday Evening, April 26th, 1889.

"THE BELLS."

A drama in three acts from the "Juif Polonais" of MM. Erckmann—Chatrian.

Mathias	Mr Henry Irving	President of the Court	Mr Tyars
Walter	Mr Howe	Mesmerist	Mr Archer
Hans	Mr Johnson		
Christian	Mr Alexander	Catherine	Mrs Pauncefort
Dr Zimmer	Mr Haviland	Sozel	Miss Linden
Notary	Mr Coveney	Annette	Miss Coleridge

Alsace, 1833.

After which the Trial Scene from

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE."

Shylock	Mr Henry Irving	Gratiano	Mr Tyars
Duke of Venice	Mr Howe	Clerk of Court	Mr Coveney
Antonio	Mr Wenman		
Bassanio	Mr Alexander	Nerissa	Miss Linden
Salarino	Mr Harvey	Portia	Miss Ellen Terry

Director, Mr Irving; Assistant Director, Mr Loveday;
Musical Director, Mr Ball.

The Scenery painted by Mr Hawes Craven; the Act-drop painted by Mr Hann.

God Save the Queen.

After the performance, Henry Irving and Ellen Terry had the honour of being presented to Queen Victoria, who expressed herself with enthusiasm as to their respective impersonations. Subsequently, through the Prince of Wales, her Majesty presented the great actor with a pair of handsome diamond and gold sleeve-links, and the reigning Portia with a brooch, as beautiful as it was costly. [270]

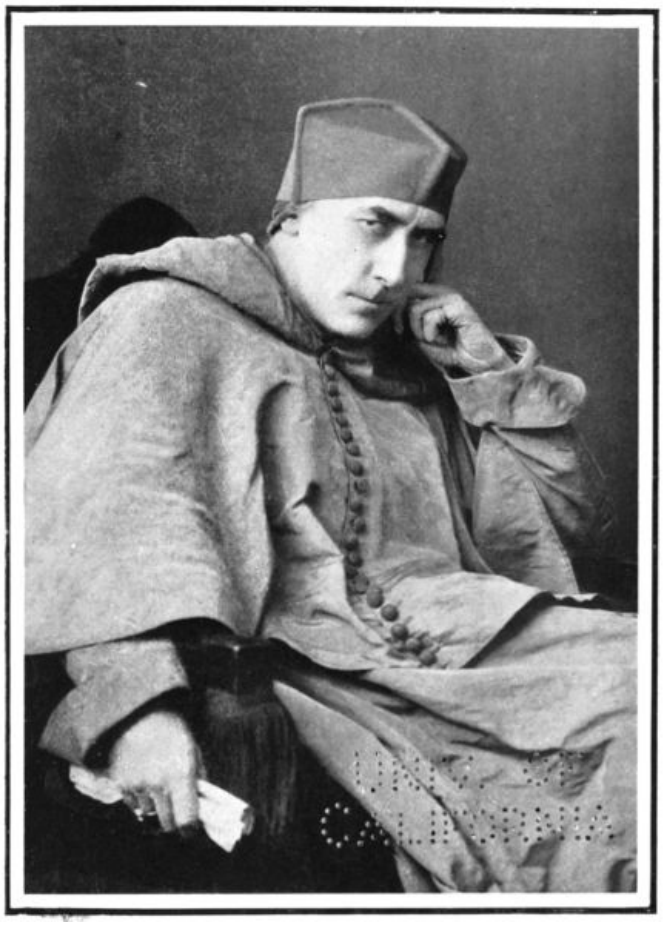
In her next Lyceum part, that of Catherine Duval, in the revival of Watts Phillips's stirring French Revolution drama, "The Dead Heart" (Sept. 28, 1889), Ellen Terry did all she had to do with her usual taste, and evinced much pathos; but the character afforded her no really great chance. The occasion was, however, a very interesting one, for Gordon Craig (Edward Wardell, who had made his first appearance on the stage in America as the boy Joey, in "The Fate of Eugene Aram") played with great skill the part of Arthur, the handsome son of Catherine, after she had become the wife of the Count de St. Valery. It was pleasant to see the mother and son thus playing together, though looking at her it seemed almost impossible that the relationship could exist. Indeed, one writer was induced to predict that the situation would in due course be reversed, and that Ellen Terry, "blessed with perennial youth and undecaying beauty, will successfully portray a character, in some happily-chosen drama, in which she will pose as the daughter of her own son." [271]

On the 20th September 1890, Henry Irving produced Hermann Merivale's stage-version of Scott's great story, "The Bride of Lammermoor," entitled "Ravenswood," in which he played the ill-fated Edgar, and she was the Lucy Ashton. Here again, it seemed to me, that her opportunities were few and far between, though, of course, she seized and made the most of them whenever they came in her way, and thus wove wonders out of rather scant material. In her picturesque costumes she looked most charming, and she has told me that she "dearly loved" the part.

In the next production, the famous revival of "Henry VIII.," in which as far as scenery, costumes, and general splendour were concerned, the Lyceum manager excelled himself, the actress made a veritable *tour de force*. Her Queen Katherine was, as Percy Fitzgerald truly said, an *astonishing* performance, and took even her greatest admirers by surprise. She made the same gigantic effort as she did with Lady Macbeth to interpret a vast character, and one that might well have seemed beyond her strength. It did not aim at being the *great* Queen Katherine of Sarah Siddons. As in the former instance, Ellen Terry founded her conception on different lines, and acted up to her own ideas with marvellous truth and effect. We believed in, and sympathised with, this earnest and tender-hearted woman, and hated those who persecuted her and hunted her down. She could, and did show irritation, indignation, and hot anger, but beneath it all she let us see the woman's heart, and we knew that it was wrongly and cruelly lacerated. Her victory over those who had pinned their faith on the Siddons reading of the character was complete, and, [272]

considering the great difficulties that lay in her path, it was a great one. The pathetic resignation of her death-scene was a piece of beautiful acting ever to be remembered.

Among the dainty gentlewomen attendant upon this heart-touching Queen Katherine was a charming young lady, who figured in the play-bills as Ailsa Craig. This was Ellen Terry's daughter and inseparable companion, Edith Wardell.



Photography by W. & D. Downey.

SIR HENRY IRVING AS "CARDINAL WOLSEY."

In "Henry VIII." in the Lyceum revival of 1892.

[*To face page 272.*

From Queen Katherine to Cordelia is a very far cry, and yet when she felt it to be her duty to undertake the difficult task Ellen Terry did not shirk her responsibility to her manager. It is true, that with the modesty that always goes hand in hand with true genius, she said that she would like to resign the character of King Lear's favourite child to a younger actress, and volunteered to appear in the character of the Fool. That would have been such a bewitching interpretation of [273] one of Shakespeare's most carefully etched characters that it seems a pity it was lost to us; but Henry Irving was right in his judgment. He had determined that his audiences should see Ellen Terry as Cordelia; they saw her, and rejoiced in a new and striking triumph.

How vividly I recall that anxious first night of November 10, 1892. First impressions are generally the best, and therefore I do not hesitate to repeat what I wrote in the early hours of the succeeding November 11:—

"In penning these lines it is not so much my intention to enter into critical judgment on our leading actor's rendering of the most noble and exacting of Shakespearean characters, but rather to give my readers some description of one of the most notable 'first nights' of the modern stage. Under the Irving sway all first nights are important, but this one was especially so, for to the present generation of theatre-goers 'King Lear' is, from an acting point of view, practically an unknown play. There can be few amongst us now who can recall Macready's revival of 1838, that of Phelps in 1845, or Charles Kean's elaborate production of 1858—of which it was said that 'he had equalled his Hamlet and Louis the Eleventh.' That is exactly what every one hoped Henry Irving would do. More he could not do. Edwin Booth played Lear for a few nights at the Princess's [274] in 1881—and it has, fitfully, been seen in the provinces, but to all intents and purposes the tragedy has for many years been laid on the shelf. What was Irving going to do with it? That was the question asked by every one in the house last night, and if his performance is to be judged by the tumultuous applause that greeted his first entrance, that followed him throughout the play, and that called and recalled him at the end of each act, he had done well indeed. And what a house it was! My comfortable and easily arrived at seat happened to be in the last row of the stalls, and consequently I overheard the conversation of the front rows of the pit—which has been rightly called the mouth through which the final verdict of the house is given. Here were any number of ladies who, bringing books, refreshments, and camp-stools with them, had patiently waited for five hours in the pit entrance of the theatre during a foggy and comfortless November afternoon in order to obtain good seats, and who spoke not only cheerfully, but even boastfully, of

their experiences! Such a tribute to the popularity of the actor is surely noteworthy. It mattered nothing to them that the fog got into the theatre and set them coughing, that their camp-stools were sadly in their way, that the play was a long one, and some of the 'waits' were tedious. Eleven o'clock arrived, and there was still an act to be played, but their allegiance was as [275] unshaken as their applause was undiminished. With such a loyal following as this, Henry Irving has no cause to fear a rival. The upper parts of the house were packed. Every available seat in circles and gallery was occupied, and the private boxes can only be described as 'boiling over.' But the fifteen rows of densely thronged stalls formed the centre of attraction. From the first it was noticeable that the house was almost as much interested in the house as in the play. Men stood up to see and be seen, and opera-glasses were as plentiful as blackberries in October. The eager pittites exchanged surmises and certainties with regard to celebrities—and, probably unconscious of the interest they were arousing, celebrities displayed themselves to the best possible advantage, and exchanged greetings with brother and sister celebrities. To give the names of those present would be to quote the very pick of the literary, artistic, scientific, and aristocratic world. That the critics, reporters, and artists were there in full force, goes without saying, and most of them seemed busy, some taking notes of the performance on the stage, others jotting down the names of the lions among the audience, and many making lightning-like sketches of those present, both on the stage and in the auditorium. But, after all, 'the play's the thing,' and it may be briefly said that this was followed with unflagging interest, and listened to [276] with breathless silence. By the time this appears in print[3] those who are interested in things theatrical will have had an opportunity of reading the critical verdict of our leading dramatic censors on Henry Irving's Lear, and Ellen Terry's Cordelia. Whatever the ultimate popularity of these impersonations may be, there was but one opinion in the crowded and brilliant audience of last night. The people seemed never tired of cheering, and late though the hour was when the curtain fell, no one moved until Henry Irving, who throughout the evening looked 'every inch a king,' was compelled to give utterance to a few well-chosen words of heartfelt thanks. His first night of 'Lear,' he said, would be one of the happiest of his memories. A pleasant feature of the evening was the right loyal welcome given to Henry Howe, who, now playing the old man, tenant to Gloster, was the King of France in the Macready revival of fifty-five years ago."

Ellen Terry has told me that it was one of the most nervous and anxious first nights she had experienced, and it might well be so, for the task of all concerned in this great production was a heavy one. But though critical opinion differed as to some points in the representation—though sapient playgoers shook their heads, and, quoting Charles Lamb, declared that "King Lear" [277] should never be acted, there was no argument as to the merits of the new Cordelia. Her maidenly simplicity and delicately expressed, though manifestly intense, love for her father touched the right chord, and once more she won all our hearts. Her initial popularity in the character continued throughout the long and, I believe, unprecedented run of the play.

No wonder that Ellen Terry is fond of saying that she is a "useful" actress to her manager. That, she declares, has always been her desire, and while under an engagement she considers it her duty to play any part that is offered to her and to do her best with it. Though she will not say so, I believe I am right in feeling that she is justifiably proud of having, in quick succession, succeeded in such widely divergent Shakespearean characters as the imperious Queen Katherine (a part in which I am inclined to think she actually satisfied that fastidious critic—*herself*) and the gentle Cordelia.

And here let me emphasise the fact that she repudiates the suggestion that it was her ambition to play Lady Macbeth. She had no desire for the part, but when called upon to take it she did not shirk the task.

Her next original impersonation was that of Fair Rosamund in Lord Tennyson's beautiful play, [278] "Becket," which was brought out at the Lyceum on February 6, 1893. It did not tax her strength very much, but no one who witnessed the impersonation will forget its exquisite tenderness or her perfect delivery of such lines as—

"Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom—
O rainbow, stay."

It is a delightful thing to read Tennyson. To hear his words interpreted by Ellen Terry is a revelation.

In connection with "Becket," I have another little story to tell indicative of my heroine's never-ending unselfishness. Geneviève Ward, who, it will be remembered, played most magnificently as Queen Eleanor, has told me how, in that strong and stormy scene between the jealous Queen and the luckless Rosamund, the stage moon was wont to show a little undue favouritism towards the fair denizen of the bower, flooding her with radiance and leaving her vindictive visitor in comparative obscurity. "This," to quote my friend's own words, "hurt Ellen Terry's sense of justice, and more than once she has turned her back upon the audience, and gently rebuked the [279] too partial moon by a tragic line thrown into the wings—'Take it off me and turn it on Miss Ward.'" Such anecdotes could be told by all the artists who have appeared with her, but this one

will suffice.

Against this I may tell a counter story. Amongst Ellen Terry's treasures there is a ring that was given to her by Geneviève Ward. When she shows it to her friends, she says, "Queen Eleanor, you see, is not at all vindictive to Rosamund off the stage."

When "Becket" had run its course, and pending another great production, some revivals were given. Amongst them was Charles Reade's one-act play—"Nance Oldfield." Most of us know the pretty, imaginative story as related by Ellen Terry's early friend and mentor, Charles Reade. Mistress Nance Oldfield, it will be remembered, was one of the earliest and most popular of English actresses. She made her first appearance in 1699, and was the darling of the stage until she died in 1730, and, with nobles supporting her pall, was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. History records of her that she was not only an admirable actress, but a good and charitable woman, and it is from this pleasant point of view that Charles Reade has limned her in his dainty [280] little cabinet picture. In his play her mission is to cure the love that a romantic young man has conceived for her through seeing her on the stage. How, in order to do this, she converts herself from the most charming of women into a veritable "tom-boyish" hoyden, is known to all who delight in the graceful and consummate art of Ellen Terry. When she is playing this part, her vivacity and high spirits seem to know no bounds, but her winsomeness always fascinates her audiences. The little piece is ever followed with intense interest mingled with much laughter, and the only regret is that it comes to an all too early end. It lives and will live as long as Ellen Terry chooses to play it. By the way, it is on record that a descendant of the original Mistress Oldfield has said, "Anne Oldfield herself could not have played the character better." The part has also been admirably handled by Geneviève Ward.

Later on, at a special performance at Daly's Theatre, Ellen Terry appeared in a short piece by George Moore and "John Oliver Hobbes," entitled "Journeys End in Lovers Meeting." It was very interesting; but the little candle soon flickered out, and the experiment only calls for passing record.

No doubt, before, and certainly ever since, the days of Sir Thomas Malory and the printing by [281] Caxton of "Morte d'Arthur," the Arthurian legends have had a fascination for English-thinking folk. The publication of Tennyson's immortal "Idylls of the King" added a new zest to the glorious old romances, and great delight was expressed when it was announced that Henry Irving and Ellen Terry were to appear as the blameless King and his beautiful Queen in a stage version of the familiar, pathetic, and very human legend of Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot. The project had often been mooted, and several leading dramatists had been named as likely to be entrusted with the important and difficult work, but at last the choice fell on Comyns Carr, and right well he performed his task, writing in fluent blank verse, and telling his story in the true dramatic way.

The play was produced on January 12, 1895, and made a profound impression. The beauty of the scenery designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and the melody of the music that had been composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan, added much to the reality of a presentment which, in its way, was one of the most captivating things ever seen on the stage. No doubt the production surpassed everything that had gone before it in the splendour of its setting, and its effect upon critical audiences. In this connection it was truly pointed out that it said much for the power of the principal performers that their art was not overwhelmed by the magnificence of its [282] surroundings. Their triumph as artists was only the greater because it was won under circumstances that were really adverse to the actor. The tendency of these magnificently staged plays is undoubtedly to make the individual performer wither, as the composition in its entirety of scenery, grouping, and accessories grows more and more.

Photograph by **[*Window & Grove.***

ELLEN TERRY AS "QUEEN GUINEVERE."

In Comyns Carr's drama "King Arthur," Lyceum, 1895.

[*To face page 282.*

A fault that some playgoers found with "King Arthur" was that it afforded few acting opportunities to Henry Irving. The character of the spotless consort of Guinevere, who stands out so nobly in the legends and idylls, somehow seemed unsympathetic when seen upon the stage. Is it, I wonder, that mixed audiences follow the all-seeing Shakespeare when he said, "They say best men are moulded out of faults, and, for the most, become much more the better for being a little bad?" In one of his clever plays Sydney Grundy goes so far as to suggest that such a very good man as King Arthur might be to an ordinary human being "a little difficult to live with." If such be the case, abundant pardon should be meted out to the erring Guinevere. As for Ellen Terry as Guinevere she not only looked a perfect picture, but made the most of every line allotted to her in one of the most touching and pathetic characters that (outside Shakespeare) she has been called upon to play. Mention of this production would not be complete without record of the splendid [283 acting of Johnston Forbes Robertson as Lancelot—and the striking effect made by Geneviève Ward as Morgan le Fay.

I cannot think that "King Arthur" lived as long as it should have done, but I fear it came at a time when frivolous playgoers were so absorbed in the dresses and doings of the Giggling Girl—the Gurgling Girl—the Gargling Girl—or whatever that volatile and versatile young lady was for the moment presenting, that they could not do much homage to Sir Thomas Malory, Lord Tennyson, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Sir Arthur Sullivan, and Sir Henry Irving—for it was at this period that our great actor-manager was honoured with his well-won knighthood.

In the early autumn of 1896 a new Shakespearean prize was offered to Ellen Terry, and she eagerly seized upon and materially profited by it. Contenting himself with the unsympathetic part of Iachimo (how admirably he played it!), Henry Irving resolved to revive the far too seldom seen "Cymbeline," and of course the ideal Imogen was at hand. "I love the part!" says Ellen Terry with her infectious enthusiasm, and, loving it, she brought it out in all its beauty and fragrance just as the beneficent sun unfolds the petals and extracts the sweet scent of the rose.

Agreeing as I do with every word he says on the subject, I must here once more quote my good [284] friend, Clement Scott:—

"Ellen Terry," he writes, "astonished dramatic students with her Imogen on September 22, 1896. Ellen Terry's Imogen was not only a surprise—it was a revelation. It may not satisfy the old school, but it will certainly delight the new. It is not the reading of Helen Faucit, the best of the Imogens remembered; it may be picked to pieces by schoolmen and students; it was of course un-Shakespearean; but Ellen Terry's Imogen is Ellen Terry with twenty years or more off her merry shoulders. I can only describe Ellen Terry's Imogen as her Beatrice mingled with her Rosalind that might have been.

"No, it was not that; it was Ellen Terry, that peculiar amalgam of witchery, charm, and wilfulness which has baffled every critic of her work. I shall be told that this is not Imogen; but it is Ellen Terry's Imogen, and she held her audience in the palm of her hand. Imogen was never played in like fashion before. The scene in which Imogen was summoned by her dear milord to Milford Haven may not be Shakespearean, but it was pure Ellen Terry at her best.

"She bounds about the stage like a young fawn, she kisses her hand, she kisses her dear lord's letter, she is a wilful madcap and a romp. Is this Imogen, the King's daughter, the serious, [285] thoughtful Imogen of Shakespeare? Who cares? What does it matter to the audience? It is the Imogen of Ellen Terry, and she has undoubtedly made out a good case.

"It may be heresy to the old school to hear an actress interpolating asides and adding remarks and breaking in upon the text with charming gestures, but Ellen Terry does it, and every one loves her for doing it.

"So far so good for the earlier and middle scenes. There was a hesitating period, and an Ellen Terry period; but when we got to the Fidèle scenes then came the revelation, the touching of the heart, the true tears. There was only one remark in the house, 'Oh, what a Rosalind she would have made!' And many added, 'and ought to make.' Here in these scenes we had comedy of the finest flavour, and pathos exquisitely true. Few will forget the eminently Rosalind-like incident of the sword at the entrance to the cave—it was the bloody 'kerchief over again—and few indeed will fail to admire the nervous passion, the really eloquent grief, over the supposed body of the headless Posthumus.

"The success of the Fidèle scenes nerved the actress to a fresh attack, and in the grand reconciliation scene she played with the romance and activity of a girl of eighteen. It was a surprising effort from first to last; and of all the Shakespearean essays of this delightful artist, [286] from her own stand-point, this was assuredly the best.

"Hitherto I should have said Beatrice; but here we have Beatrice with the pathetic touches of Rosalind superadded. Miss Terry is a model Shakespearean boy; there is no doubt about that, and has both laughter and tears at her winsome command.

"The loss of such a Rosalind to the stage as Ellen Terry would, and must have been, has ever formed a subject for regret with her warmest and most enthusiastic admirers. If ever woman lived who displayed in advance the temperament of Rosalind, it was Ellen Terry. What affection she would have shown for Celia; what tears would have been shed, and what anxiety displayed for Orlando at the wrestling bout; with what incomparable humour such a Rosalind would have started on her romantic journey; and oh! the scenes with Orlando in the forest, the love, the sport, the joyousness, the masquerading, and the tears, it makes one almost sad to know and feel what we have lost in this incomparable Rosalind."

Ellen Terry's performance in "Cymbeline" also excited the admiration of the French critic, Augustin Filon, who, in an article in the *Débâts*, headed "Une Grande Tragédienne," said that her Imogen prevented him from seeing the "absurdities" of the play! Much more than that, she compelled him to accept them. He had only to open his eyes and his ears and Imogen was before [287] him. Her style is marked by a simplicity which, to inexperienced spectators, may seem the absence of art, but which, as a matter of fact, is the perfection of art. She entirely forgets that two thousand persons are following her movements and listening to her words. No glance at the audience, no intonation bearing traces of study, no obvious effort to delight! Désiré Nisand, referring to the *débuts* of Rachel, remarked, "This girl showed me that I had never understood Corneille or Racine." The same might be said of Ellen Terry, that "noble artist," in regard to Shakespeare.

Augustin Filon, it will be seen from this, has little or no patience with those who say that Shakespeare should be read instead of seen on the stage. He quotes the lines between Imogen and the attendant in the bedchamber scene—

"What hour is it?"
"Almost midnight, madam."
"If thou canst wake by four o' the clock,
I prithee call me."

The French censor had not hitherto seen the significance of these words. Ellen Terry's performance served to enlighten him. "She seemed to say," he records, "'Poor girl, it is not your fault if your mistress has sorrows which deprive her of sleep. Unhappy princesses are not the [288] only people in the world. You need rest; get thee to bed, and if you oversleep yourself you are already forgiven.' All this," continues the writer, "is suggested by Ellen Terry's delivery of this simple speech."

In his interesting book on the English stage the same critic says: "Ellen Terry has not only been an incarnation, delicate, moving, impassioned, of Shakespeare's heroines, but has in her pure and sweet elocution set the poet's dream to music."

Ellen Terry has, indeed, always found favour, not only with French critics, but with her sisters and brothers of the Parisian stage.

Sarah Bernhardt has said of her: "She is perfectly delightful, and is one of my best friends. The greatest treat I can give myself, and a pleasure to which I can look forward for months, is to see her act. She is as near absolute perfection as any one can be. In her, English dramatic art has a

splendid exponent."

Again she declared: "Ellen Terry and Henry Irving are perfect! I adore them!—particularly the former. What grace, what ease! It is not acting at all, but the real character before one's eyes. In comedy she is unequalled, at any rate in English-speaking countries, while Henry Irving, in certain emotional parts, it would be hard to surpass."

Coquelin aîné loves her acting—"Angélique, très sympathétique, très tendre!" he once cried, after a glance at her through an opera-glass. "Mais c'est charmant! Elle a des vraies larmes dans ses yeux!" [289]

By the way, the *Saturday Review* once instituted an interesting comparison between Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry. "The latter," the writer said, "is to the English stage what the other is to the French. The two actresses are superficially about as unlike as may be, and yet their method is radically the same; or, in other words, they are both true actresses. It must, of course, be admitted that Ellen Terry has not yet had such opportunities of displaying her powers as have fallen to the lot of Sarah Bernhardt; nor has she yet attained the perfection of art which Sarah Bernhardt can, when she chooses to take the trouble, display; but to her, as to Sarah Bernhardt, one may safely apply the much-misused term of genius. Like Sarah Bernhardt, Ellen Terry has the semblance of spontaneousness; and, like her, she is always identified with every thought and habit of every character that she represents. There is further likeness between the two, in that both are excellent both in tragedy and comedy. It is, however, as Ophelia that Ellen Terry has won for herself a place in the first rank of actresses."

It should be noted that this was written in 1879, long before Ellen Terry had made her subsequent triumphs in that long list of great characters chronicled in these pages. On April 10, 1897, Ellen Terry was called upon to pit herself against another famous French actress—Réjane. This was as Madame Sans-Gêne in Comyns Carr's excellent English adaptation of Victorien Sardou and Emile Moreau's play bearing that name. The ordeal was a trying one. It had been freely suggested and honestly thought that the broad comedy of the character would not be suitable to the methods of our sweet English actress. She soon put all doubts to rest, and, in spite of great difficulties, achieved a success that was in its way unique. Writing after the performance, William Archer, who always weighs his words and never unduly praises, said that Ellen Terry was "a born comedian, and throws herself with immense gusto into this sympathetic part." [290]

Coquelin, who was present at the first performance, and who naturally might have been somewhat biassed in favour of his famous compatriot, was enthusiastic. Without for a moment undervaluing the splendid performance of Réjane, he declared that Ellen Terry had "won his heart." "She is full of gaiety," he said, "and enters fully into the spirit of the *rôle*. Her exquisite freshness in the laundry scene, when she discomfits that shy conspirator, Fouché, by putting a hot hissing iron near his cheek, and her movements in the scene of the Emperor's study, twenty years later, when she astonishes the same Fouché, who has become Duke of Otranto, by the brilliant schemes which she explains to him, and which he successfully adopts, stand unsurpassed. She is natural, bright, impulsive, and embodies the character from first to last. Sir Henry Irving's realisation of Napoleon is—even to a professional actor—an astonishing performance. His incarnation of the great Emperor is superb all through the two important final acts of the play." [291]

Coming from such a source this is indeed high praise, and really it seems needless to add to it. Happily Ellen Terry is still playing the part, and playing it to perfection. Truly has it been said that her laughter is as infectious as her sympathy. The ready tear which springs to the eye at the misfortunes of the Count de Neipperg is as spontaneous and as moving as the victorious smile with which she drives home her sallies against Caroline, Queen of Naples. If she misses some of that wily petulance which belongs to Parisian gaminerie, she more than makes amends by the downright straightforwardness, the rich flow of humour, and the disinterested kindness which enter so largely into the composition of Lefebvre's plebeian and lovable wife. Madame Sans-Gêne is undoubtedly one of Ellen Terry's happiest creations.

On the first of January 1898, Laurence Irving's ambitious, interesting, and in many respects powerful play, "Peter the Great," was produced at the Lyceum. It was essentially "a man's play," and as the Empress Catherine, Ellen Terry had few chances. Nevertheless she acted very finely, and the portrait worthily fills a place in her well-stocked gallery. She had already appeared with much success in America in a short piece by the same author, entitled "Godefroi and Yolande." This had a magnificent first-night reception, and she has told me how, when the curtain fell, Henry Irving stepped forward, and in a few graceful words thanked the applauding audience for the approval with which his son's work had been greeted. [292]

"The Medicine Man," the joint work of H. D. Traill and Robert Hichens, which succeeded "Peter the Great," proved a great disappointment, and Ellen Terry's appearance as Sylvia Wynford need only be mentioned for purposes of record.

Photograph by **[*Window & Grove.***

ELLEN TERRY AS "VOLUMNIA."

In the Lyceum revival of "Coriolanus," 1901.

[*To face page 292.*

In the April of 1899 Laurence Irving was again to the fore with his excellent English version of Victorien Sardou's striking play, "Robespierre." In the character of Clarice de Malucon, Ellen Terry had not one of her greatest opportunities, but she acted with her unvarying and invincible charm, and at once arrested and held the sympathy of her audiences. It was a sweet and womanly performance. Her one great scene came with Henry Irving, and superbly they both played it. It is, indeed, intensely dramatic. Robespierre discovers the terrible fact that Clarice's [293] boy, Olivier, whom he has condemned to the guillotine, is his own son; and then his one frenzied idea is to save his life. But, Dictator though he is, he is surrounded by traitors and suspects; he already knows that his own life trembles in the balance; the task is a difficult one, and Olivier obstinately refuses to accept any favour at his hated hands. Then follows a scene in which the distracted father and mother (for after long years of separation and silence they are now together again) watch the ghastly tumbrils as they drag their victims to the guillotine, trembling lest in one of them they should see their doomed child. During these heartrending moments of suspense Ellen Terry was assuredly seen at her best. Henry Irving's triumph as Robespierre was emphatic.

On April 15, 1901, the long promised production of "Coriolanus" was staged at the Lyceum. As long ago as 1879 Henry Irving had announced his intention of appearing as the noble Roman in company with Ellen Terry as Volumnia.

At that time a writer said:—

"Some surprise may, perhaps, be felt at the circumstance that it is in contemplation to assign the character of Volumnia to Ellen Terry; but the part is by tradition, and by reason of its intrinsic [294] importance, the lawful inheritance of the leading tragic actress of the company. It was one of Mrs. Siddons' famous impersonations, though it was complained she had not the good sense to follow Mrs. Woffington's example as to her face, and consequently was on the stage as off, Kemble's sister, not his mother. No doubt a resolute conscientious employment of the arts which suggest the autumn of life will be needed to enable Ellen Terry to enact Henry Irving's mother, but the part is a very fine one, and there can be no question that in the hands of this actress the great scene of the fifth act, in which the Roman mother's eloquent and impassioned pleading finally moves the proud heart of her son, would, in her hands, produce a powerful impression."

Now time has dealt so tenderly with our charming actress that there was as much need of this suggested "making up" in 1901 as there had been in 1879; but she had the good sense not to overdo it. There was no more reason why the mother of Coriolanus should be a very old woman than there was for Mr. Vincent Crummles to convert himself into a decrepit octogenarian when he was called upon *in loco parentis* to bestow the fair hand of Miss Henrietta Petowker in marriage to Mr. Lillyvick. The consequence was that, acting the part with impressive composure, save where intense vigour was demanded, she made such a stately figure as the handsome [295] Roman matron that she became a treat to the eye as well as to the ear.

For the rest she completely fulfilled the predictions of the writer of 1879, being admirable throughout, and especially so in that grand scene to which he alluded. She played in a more womanly and gentle vein than was the custom with her distinguished predecessors in the part, but the performance was none the less welcome or telling on that account.

What a wonderful list of impersonations—from the prattling Mamillius to the dignified Volumnia! Has any other actress achieved so much?

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[296]

CHAPTER XIV

ENDINGS

I cannot conclude this volume before recording the personal impressions that Ellen Terry has made upon me. It will be feebly done, for what writer could pen a true word picture of such a beneficently radiant creature? I am, from my friendship with her, fully justified in saying (she would call this one of the fancies of my book, but I know that it is a fact!) that her chief delights in life are, in the first place, her power of making her friends and her associates happy; in the second place, her own joy in existence. When with her even the most depressed spirit is buoyed up. Her quick sympathy and ready interest in the concerns of all with whom she comes into contact brings sunshine into their lives. In common with us all she has had her troubles and anxieties, and upon her the effect has been to create a keen and ever active desire to alleviate the distresses and difficulties of others. Hand in hand with her go encouragement and consolation. A word of sympathy from her, coupled with a look from those earnest, eloquent eyes, is the best tonic in the world. And while she can weep with those who weep, she can rejoice with [297] those who rejoice—and she loves to rejoice. It may very safely be said that she never uttered an ill-natured word concerning a fellow-creature. "Why should I?" she says, when taxed with this somewhat unusual trait in her character. "All the world seems to say kind things about me. I am happy in knowing it, and thus I love the world and all who live upon it. Why shouldn't I?" There certainly is no reason for it, and she may be convinced that those who have seen her in the world love her.

Apart from this general, generous, and genial affection for humankind, her devotion is centred in her son and daughter. Very pretty it is to see her motherly pride in their successes, whether histrionic or artistic. Happily, her tender solicitude is well rewarded. Both Gordon and Ailsa Craig are making names for themselves, and doing work of which any parent might well be proud.

Very vividly she recalls her childish days, and, with a sympathetic friend, she is by no means averse to talking of them. It is as pleasant as it is touching to hear her conjure up memories of her own parents and to note the true respect, added to the heartfelt affection, with which she talks of them. I use the word "respect" advisedly, because, in these days (and more's the pity), filial "respect" seems to belong to the past. Possibly, it is as much the fault of parents as of [298] children, but in any case it is a thing to be deplored.

Of course, Ellen Terry's first stage recollection is her appearance as the infant Mamillius, when she saw "the Queen Victoria, the Prince Consort, the Princess Royal, and the Prince of Wales" in the royal box, and was, as a matter of consequence, so awestruck that she could hardly articulate her words. She played this part for one hundred and two nights without a break—a marvellous record for so young a child. This long run of "The Winter's Tale" showed that even in the "fifties," when long runs were almost unknown, a Shakespearean play, faultlessly staged, and admirably acted, could attract a prolonged succession of audiences.

During their engagement with the Charles Keans, she tells me (by the way, she is never tired of singing the praises of Mrs. Kean), she and her sister Kate studied—ay, and carefully studied—all the feminine characters of each play they acted in. This fact she tries to impress on the countless young ladies who want to adopt acting as a profession, and who apply to her for advice. "What do you know?—what have you studied?" she asks them. "Could you, for example, undertake to play Hero to a Beatrice; Nerissa to a Portia; or Celia to a Rosalind?" Their almost invariable reply is that they have studied nothing—that they have only an ambition to "go on the stage." Then she [299] will advise them to devote themselves to learning and understanding such parts in case an opportunity should come in their way.

Poor young ladies! I don't suppose they like such advice, for assuredly they all want to begin as Beatrice, Portia, or Rosalind. Neither, I am sure, are they aware that they lacerate the tender heart of the great actress because she feels she can do nothing for them.

No one knows better than Ellen Terry that life-long devotion to her art is the only way by which a true actress can reach the goal of her ambition, and there maintain her place. She maintains, moreover, that she should be taught to turn her hand to anything. "When I played Titania at Bath," she says with a laugh, "I made my own dress. It was long, and of transparent, clinging white, all 'crinkled' by washing and wringing."

She limns a pretty little sketch of herself as she set forth with her father to seek her engagement with Mademoiselle Albina di Rhona at the Royalty Theatre. "I borrowed Kate's new bonnet—pink silk, trimmed with black lace—and was engaged *at once*. I thought I looked nice in that bonnet, and father said pink was my colour."

Evidently she thought that her bonnet rather than herself had found favour with the manageress.

Speaking of her Haymarket engagement she declares that she had no *real* reason to dislike poor [300]
Sothern, and regrets that she ever publicly expressed a feeling with which we are all familiar, and which is best described in the words, "I do not like thee, Dr. Fell." She admits that at this time she was very good as poor, maliciously maligned Hero, but she qualifies this little bit of self-commendation by avowing that she played Lady Touchwood vilely.

Merrily she recalls her appearance as Britannia, making her entrance up a trap in a huge pearl which opened to allow her egress. On this occasion King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, then, of course, the Prince and Princess of Wales, came to the theatre for the first time since their marriage, and modestly sat in the shadow of a large stage-box. Louise Keeley (afterwards Mrs. Montague Williams) had to sing a song concerning the "Invisible Prince," and by deftly introducing a few improvised lines contrived to let the audience know the state of affairs. Accordingly the uproarious applause of a loyal house stopped the performance until the Royal bride and bridegroom emerged from their obscurity, came to the front of their box, and gracefully and gratefully bowed their thanks.

It was an exciting moment for Ellen Terry when, in 1878, Henry Irving asked her to accept an engagement at the Lyceum, to play Ophelia. So far, she had not seen his Hamlet, and to do so she [301]
travelled to Birmingham. His beautiful, thoughtful, and always human impersonation at once captivated her. "No other Hamlet," she enthusiastically exclaims, "have I *seen*!—*Not in the same hemisphere!* And yet I have seen Charles Kean, Fechter, Salvini, and Rossi play the part."

Concerning her own successes she is very reticent, but I think I speak the truth when I say that she very properly plumes herself on her immediate triumph as Ophelia, and that she cherishes the lines of the writer who said:—

"Ophelia, then, is an image or personification of innocent, delicious, feminine youth and beauty, and she passes before us in the two phases of sanity and delirium. Ellen Terry presented her in this way. The embodiment is fully within her reach, and it is one of the few unmistakably perfect creations with which dramatic art has illumined literature and adorned the stage. Ellen Terry was born to play such a part, and she is perfect in it. There is no other word for such an achievement."

In speaking of her sister artistes she is always generous, and often enthusiastic. She holds that as a pathetic actress there is no one equal to Mrs. Kendal, and she declares that in purely poetic characters her sister Marion is not to be excelled.

Indeed, her sympathy with her fellow-workers is unbounded. In this connection a pretty little story has been told by the Baroness von Zedlitz concerning a conversation she had with Ellen [302]
Terry with regard to Signora Duse. "Although," said the eager English actress of the great Italian actress, "we cannot talk fluently to each other, we became fast friends on the evening of our first meeting. I had seen her in the 'Dame aux Camélias,' and was so overpowered that I sobbed aloud. She heard that I was present, and asked me after the performance to come and see her on the stage. Our meeting was in accordance with our emotional temperaments. She rushed to me across the stage, and I fell weeping into her arms. The tears were a great relief. I could not have expressed my admiration better than by my tears. Later on we spent many a pleasant hour together, and I came to love her as a sister." But much as she loves her art, and her companions in art, I believe her chief delight exists in the quiet of the country. Every one must have a hobby, and her pleasant pastime is to possess picturesque rural homes that she can call her own. Thus she is the happy proprietress of Tower Cottage, Winchelsea; of Smallhythe Farm, Tenterden; and of Vine Cottage, Kingston Vale. To one or other of these sweet spots, surrounded by fragrant country gardens, she loves to hie herself as often as may be from her beautiful London home in more prosaic Barkston Gardens, and in all her houses her chief aim is to make her friends happy.

For what most people would call the luxuries of life she seems to care little, but with regard to its [303]
niceties she is pleasingly fastidious. Her furniture must be in the best of taste, her pictures must be truly good, and the books that she cherishes must not only be delicately bound, but "extra illustrated" by her own hand, and adorned with quaint book-plates, for which her clever son Gordon Craig is responsible. Indeed, and as might have been anticipated, refinement is the essence of her existence.

So far I have said little of Ellen Terry's successes in America, and, indeed, they have been a repetition of her triumphs in England, but, anxious to be certain of the impression she really created there, I asked my kind friend, William Winter, the distinguished *doyen* of American critics, to give me his frank opinion. He replies as follows:—

> "My dear Mr. Pemberton,—Your story of Miss Ellen Terry's life, and your estimate of her acting, have not left anything for any one else to say, and yet your kind wish for a tribute from the present writer must not be denied. Observation on this subject has extended over a period of twenty-five years, and first impressions have only been deepened in the lapse of time. The actress is great, but the woman is greater than the actress, and in the final analysis of Miss Terry's acting, it will be found that her [304]
> enchantment is that of a unique personality. Only to name the characters that she has made her own—the characters in which she is not only unrivalled but unapproachable—is to point directly to this conclusion. Those characters are Ophelia, Portia, Beatrice, Wills' Olivia, and Goethe's Margaret. She has played many other parts, and given great pleasure by the playing of them, and revealed rare qualities of nature and fine faculties of art: in each and every one of these, and in others of slighter fabric and narrower import, her acting has often afforded, if not invariably the ground for unqualified

applause, at least the means of enjoyment and always the occasion of thoughtful study; but her revelation of personality, in a natural embodiment of ideal womanhood, has never been so ample as in those five characters just mentioned. She possesses a marvellously blithe spirit, and, in some of her moods, she revels in the exuberance of frivolous humour. With persons of extreme sensibility that trait—an almost hysterical propensity for mirth, as a relief to the strain of serious feeling—is not unusual; but ultimately, she is a woman of passionate heart, of profound tenderness, and of a most ardently poetic imagination. Nature has been more kind to her—more profuse in the liberality of good gifts—than to any other woman on the stage in our time; for it has endowed her with a commanding yet winsome figure; a stately head, mantled with [305] golden hair; a countenance of piquant charm and exquisite mobility; the grey eyes of genius, through which a brave, pure and noble soul looks frankly into the face of all the world; vocal organs of exceptional power; a voice of delicious cadences and melting sweetness; symmetry of person and natural grace of action; and, within the external equipment it has placed a woman's heart to feel; a woman's unerring intuition to perceive; the gipsy's freedom of spirit, that breaks away from all convention; and the poet's kinship with nature, in everything that is grand and beautiful. Her acting has revealed her as more a spirit than a mind; as one who reaches conclusions instantly, by divination and not by analysis; as a wonderful, complex creature of nerves and impulses; wayward in fancy, strange and erratic, yet lovely with simplicity; and always, at last—surviving every vicissitude—the authentic image of goodness and truth. Not improbably the actress believes that she has carefully and deftly reasoned her way to every effect of inspiration that she produced in the mad scene of Ophelia, in Margaret's ecstasy of love, and in Olivia's unspeakably pathetic surrender; but such effects as those are not planned, they happen; like some of Shakespeare's own happiest lines, they rise out of 'Thought's interior sphere' (as Emerson calls it), and they leap, full-statured, into an immortality of beauty. Her embodiments of Beatrice and Portia were more the creatures of design, yet into them also the unpremeditated allurement of her [306] enchanting womanhood found its way, and the wild heart of Beatrice evoked a tender sympathy, and the moral grandeur of Portia—warmed with human passion—entranced the feelings as much as it impressed the mind. Portia, on the stage, had always been didactic and oratorical until Miss Ellen Terry played the part, liberating all its piquant sweetness, alluring loveliness, and passionate ardour; since which time it has been acted as a lover, not as a preacher. More to her than to any one else the stage of to-day owes the benefits accruing from the growth of a natural style in acting—a style which yet does not sacrifice the ideal, nor degrade poetry to the level of prose. This style has been caught up and imitated in every direction—a thing, however intrinsically desirable, that never would have happened but for the magical achievement of her personality, affecting actors no less than auditors, and making her—to use a line from an old poet—'Mistress of Arts, and Hearts, and Everything.' This view might be enforced by particular examination of each of Miss Terry's representative embodiments, but that process—which would require a volume—is impracticable here. Her acting is, of course, irregular and uneven—the under-woods, full of bramble-roses, not the trim garden, with its rows of tulips and beds of moss, but it is all the more potent for that reason. Her first performance in America (October 30, 1883) was that of [307] Queen Henrietta Maria, in Wills' beautiful play of 'Charles I.,' and the dominion that she then established over the public mind in this country has ever since remained unbroken. Her later visits to America were made in 1884, 1886—when she came as a traveller, not to act-1887, 1893, 1895, and 1899; and now, as these words are written—in fervent admiration of rare genius consistently and continually devoted to great subjects and the welfare of society as affected by the arts—she is once more speeding to these shores, where her presence will always be honoured and her memory always cherished.—Faithfully yours,

"William Winter.

"New Brighton,
Staten Island, New York,
October 11, 1901."

To this it is my great privilege to add a letter from that charming lady who, coming to us from America, fascinated us all under her maiden name of Mary Anderson.

"The Court Farm,
Broadway, Worcestershire,
September 11, 1901.

"Dear Mr. Pemberton,—It is delightful to hear you are writing a life of Ellen Terry. I congratulate you upon having such a subject for your next book, and I congratulate her on having you to tell her story, so replete with success—more, with triumph. [308]

"My first meeting with her was about eighteen years ago; I had come to England to act, and I was very young and retiring, and I felt strange and very home sick. I went to the Lyceum one night when Sir Henry Irving, then Mr. Irving, was acting in 'The Merchant of Venice.' I thought the Lyceum, like most of the London theatres, did not compare favourably with those of America, either in size, decoration, or comfort; but when the curtain arose on that performance, it was a revelation to me, not only in perfect acting,

but in showing me how a play could be staged. I had seen photographs of Ellen Terry (none of which really do her justice), but when she came upon the stage—floating rather than walking—I was enslaved by her grace, her beauty, and her magnetic influence. She seemed to me like a radiant creature from some other sphere; but even she, like everything and everybody during those few weeks in England, seemed far away and very strange. There was a knock at the box door, and there stood the lovely lady herself, with her graceful white hands held out in cordial welcome. Many and dear were her phrases; and her good wishes for my success when I should take possession of the stage upon which she was then acting, rang true, and came from a really generous good will.

"In an instant I felt she had drawn aside that sad veil of strangeness. She was indeed the ideal *sister* artist. I mention this act of hers as it illustrates the kind of kind acts she is ever doing. Her heart is of gold. She has, on the stage as well as off, a fascination for men; but she has more—a power of enkindling real affection and enthusiasm in the hearts of women. No woman has perhaps more loyal and devoted women friends, and this, as far as character and disposition are concerned, is in my estimation the longest and finest feather in her beautifully plumed cap. [309]

"Warm greetings to all your home circle from us both. Ever sincerely yours,

"Mary Anderson de Navarro."

Can I add anything to this? I think not. I know that in dealing with books of this description conscientious censors sometimes say they are replete with eulogy, and offer little or no criticism. If I extol Ellen Terry I do so with a clear conscience and a full heart. I can never forget the happy hours and enlightenment she has given me, and I believe that all my fellow-playgoers will think that I have treated my subject from the right point of view. Why should not our great geniuses of art and literature know, whilst they are amongst us, that we appreciate their work, and love them for the sweet lessons that they teach us?

Shakespeare, who never went amiss, caused his Hermione to say— [310]

"Our praises are our wages."

Happily Ellen Terry is still in the full ripeness of her great and constantly maturing gifts, and no thought of her retirement has yet troubled the lovers and students of the stage. If, in the course of years to come (and may they be far off), she deserts us for her dear country cottages, we might well, in grand chorus, repeat those lovely lines that occur in "Cymbeline"—and, in repeating them, recall the bitter and trembling anxieties that, in order to give us pleasure, she has undergone—

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
  Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone and ta'en thy wages."

---

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THE END

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] Fechter did not discard that soliloquy, but expressed to Lester Wallack, who mentioned it to William Winter, his opinion that the omission of that passage would be advantageous to the movement of the play; and he always spoke it as if it were prose.

[2] Here is another proof of a fact I have already emphasised, *i.e.* Ellen Terry's invariable and sweet unselfishness.

[3] This was written for, and appeared in, an evening paper.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES:

P.68. 'alchoholic' changed to 'alcoholic' in 'somewhat alcoholic'.

P.86' 'Ilseworth' changed to 'Isleworth' according to map referenced of the area.

P.109. 'callid' changed to 'called' in 'called "L'Aieule."'.

P.268. 'beeing' changed to 'being' in 'being deeply interested'.

Fixed various punctuation.

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