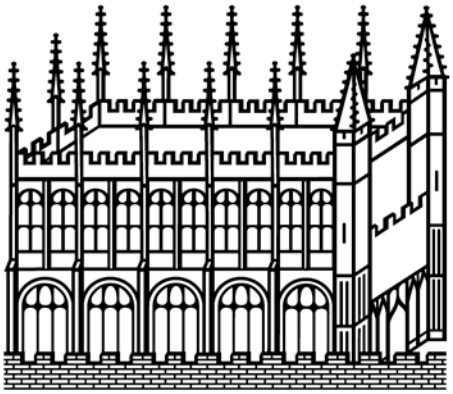

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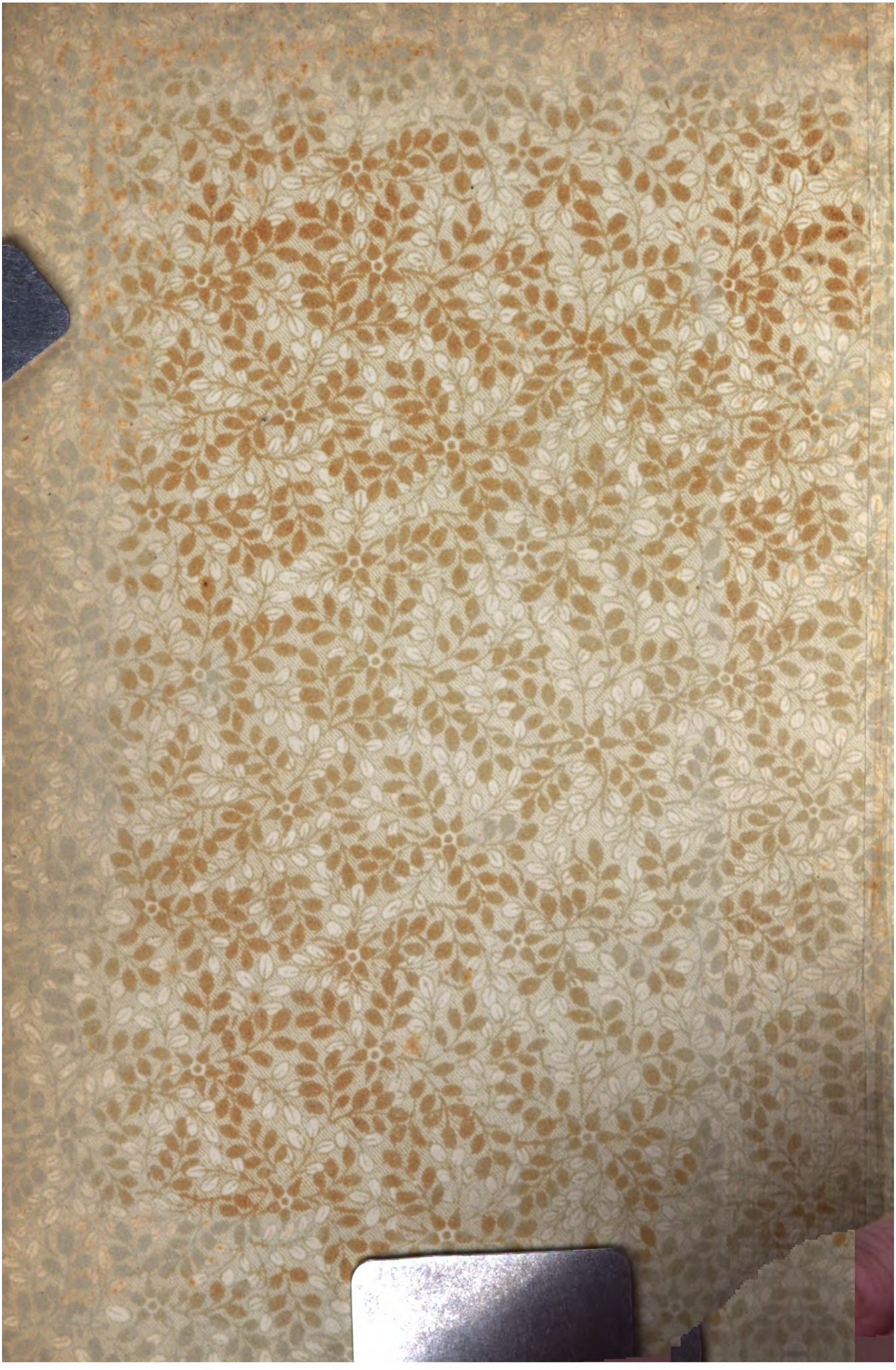
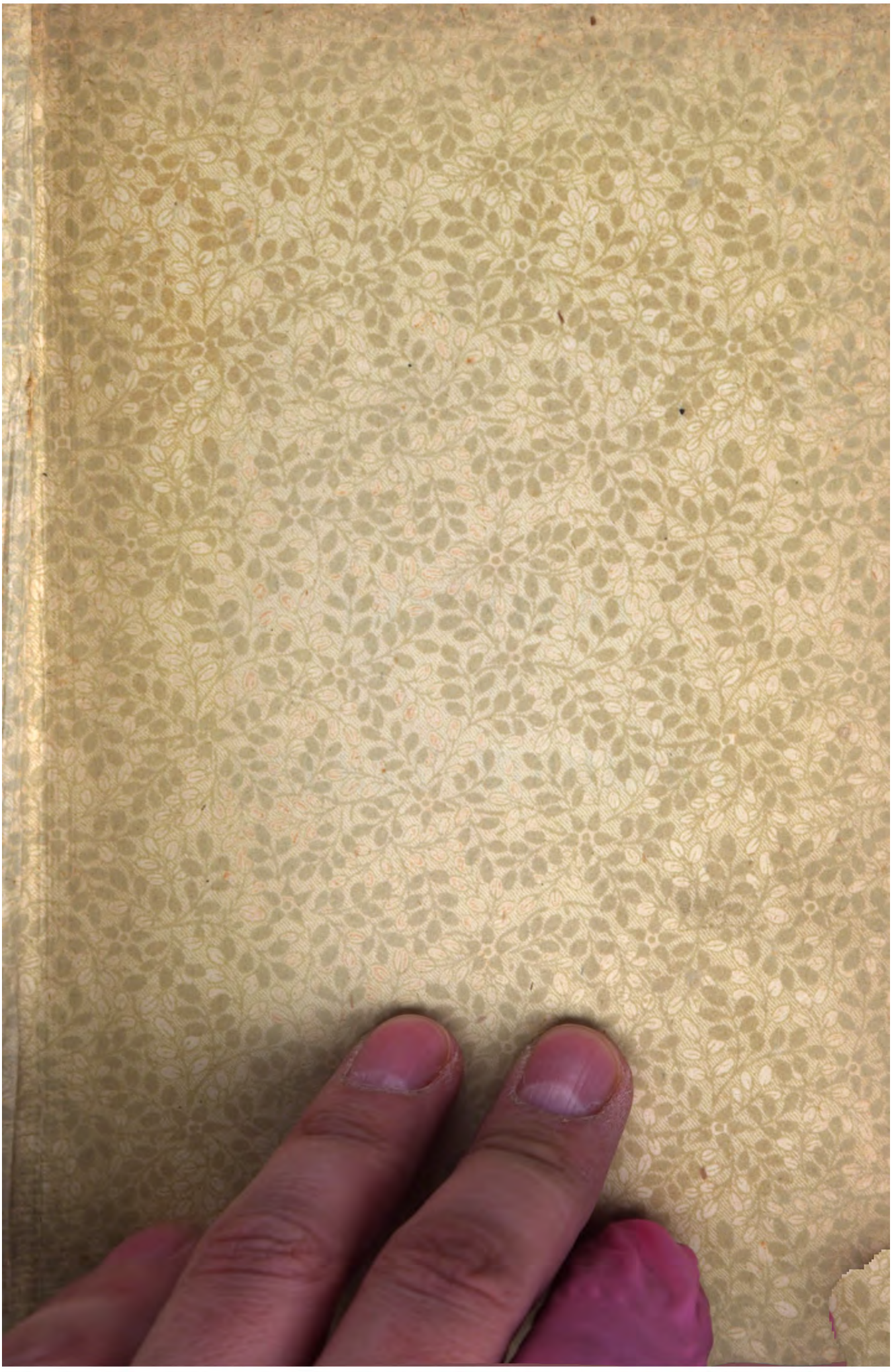
THE STORY OF HELENA MODJESKA

MABEL COLLIN





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THE STORY

OF

HELENA MODJESKA.

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OF

HELENA MODJESKA.

(*MADAME CHLAPOWSKA*).

BY

MABEL COLLINS.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE FLOWER OF HER YOUTH," ETC., ETC.

LONDON:
W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE,
PALL MALL. S.W.

1883.

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THE STORY OF

HELENA MODJESKA.

CHAPTER I.

To the happy possessors of the artistic temperament, there is abundant romance in what we call the prose of every-day existence. Alma-Tadema has written on his studio ceiling these words: "As the sun colours flowers, so art colours life." The artist lives in a vivid atmosphere of glow and of excitement. There is the ever-recurrent romance of difficulty, and of difficulty conquered; the terrible spur of despair, the eager hope, the continual effort, the glory of success.

The story of Madame Modjeska's life contains

all this, and much more. She is an enthusiastic lover of her art, and has surmounted many obstacles in her pursuit of it; she has in her veins the blood of the mountaineers, who love their country with a passionate, personal affection; she is imbued with that spirit of patriotism which rises to its greatest height among a wronged and oppressed people. Born in the midst of national misery, she was familiarised while a mere infant with the sights and sounds of distress. Her childish eyes saw her countrymen killed outside her mother's windows, she saw the blood of the victims, and the tears that rise from the broken hearts of the oppressed.

Madame Modjeska was born in Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland, to-day the second city of Galicia, or Austrian Poland. Cracow, though a very quiet place, has had a vigour of its own, and remained a free-town, after the Polish people had allowed the independence of their country to be for ever annihilated. Our child-heroine was

destined to see the destruction of her native republic while still a mere infant, and the horrors of this period of her life remain vividly distinct in her mind.

Madame Modjeska was the child of Michael Opid, and of Madame Benda, who had some children by her former husband and also a small fortune from him. Michael Opid, or more correctly Opido, was born among the mountains; his people were all mountaineers. Madame Modjeska can remember once seeing his mother dressed in the peasant dress of the mountains; sabots, and a kind of white sheet folded about the head. But Michael Opid was a man of artistic and scholarly tastes; he became an eminent philologist, and was also a great lover of music. Singers and musicians frequented his house, and after his death continued to visit his widow, who, though not herself artistic, was appreciative.

Thus Madame Modjeska's earliest friends were *artistes* of one kind or another. Her father gave

her the name of Helena because her head was small and well formed; when she was born, he said, "That girl is for me, and must be called Helena, because her head is Greek." Thus she was christened Helena. As a child her name was Helcia, the Polish diminutive of Helena. When she was a mere infant, her father prophesied that she would give her mother much trouble; he thought he could see something strange in the child's eyes. Her earliest memory is of her father's death. Michael Opid took cold in attending at a bed of sickness, and was at the same time grieving over his brother, who had committed suicide. His nature was affectionate and generous, and he would not spare himself. Like a true mountaineer, his instinct, when he recognised that his illness was dangerous, was to go back to the mountains. His wife could not go, with so many children dependent upon her care; so he was accompanied by one of his sons.

Madame Opid owned some houses at the

corner of Dominicans' Place and Grodzka Street. The family lived in a large flat which ran across two of these houses. The mother and her children were sitting together one day, a little while after Michael Opid's departure for the mountains, when one of those mysterious things occurred which can never be explained, and can never be forgotten. Without any knock or announcement, a peasant woman entered the room where the family were sitting. She took no notice of them, walking straight across the room to another door ; her head was bowed, her hands crossed on her breast. Madame Opid started up. "What do you want ?" she cried, but got no answer. The flat had but one entrance, and the room which the peasant woman approached had no other door but the one by which she could enter. "Do not go there," cried Madame Opid ; "there is no way out but this." The woman took no notice, but went through the doorway. Madame Opid rushed after her ; but

she was not there—she had vanished. "Did you not see her?" she asked of the children. "Where has she gone?" None of them had seen her except Helcia. Madame Opid remembered, now the vision had passed, that the woman wore the peasant dress of the mountaineers; all day long she wept bitterly, expecting to hear some terrible news of her husband, and on the morrow came intelligence that he had died at the very hour when this apparition of the peasant woman had visited his family.

After her father's death, Madame Modjeska's earliest remembrance of her childhood is that of seeing a man shot in the street. There was a great scream outside the house; the children all ran to see what it could be, and as they rushed out saw the blood flow from the wound. They were familiarised with the sights and sounds of fighting; and Madame Modjeska can well remember hiding behind the wall to pick up shot and gather it in her pinafore. When she was five

years old she made one of a number of children who were dressed in white, to throw flowers for those victims who, in fighting for their independence, had been killed by the Austrians in the streets. On one occasion she followed seventeen coffins.

She was accustomed to the sight of death, and her mind was filled with the recollection of horrors. Even in her own family, tragedy was strong, and she heard tales of murder and suicide about her close relations. One of her uncles was engaged to a young girl, and became jealous of his own father, who was a widower, and who, as he thought, paid too much attention to his sweetheart. One day he came home from a shooting expedition, and found his father and the girl talking together in the garden. He raised his gun and shot the girl; then turned it upon himself and took his own life. Another suicide in the family was that of a young girl who drowned herself from despair and jealousy,

because she believed that her mother cared more for her sisters than for herself !

The beginning of Helcia's education was a very pleasant one. The elder children were in the habit of telling stories every evening; and one of the brother's friends joined this family gathering. He came regularly, and instead of telling fairy tales as did the others, he repeated to the children, chapter by chapter, a Polish translation of the "Iliad" of Homer; and after that the "Odyssey." The brothers were now at school and college: and the child, who loved books, read those they brought home with them, and copied their exercises.

When she was seven years old, Helcia was taken, for the first time, to the Opera. At the conclusion there was a little ballet: a fantastic dance, called the "Syren of the Dniestr." The nymph floated in the air; and this wonderful exploit took great hold of the child's imagination.

She went into the kitchen when she got home,

in order to make the experiment herself. She built a great pile of all the saucepans and frying-pans, and then, climbing to the top, tried to stand there upon one toe. Naturally this venture ended in disaster; and Madame Opid vowed Helcia should go no more to the theatre, for it excited her too much. Nor did she again enter a theatre, until she was fourteen. But in the meantime she amused herself by imitating the nymph; she would make poses and watch her shadow on the wall, as there was no large looking-glass to study herself in, except in her mother's room.

It was about this time that the Polish people attempted to rise, led by Mieroslawski; this revolution was speedily stopped. In the same year there was a rising among the peasants against their nobles in Galicia, which gave an excuse for the destruction of the republic of Cracow. Then it was that the great fire burst out in Cracow, doing so much damage to the

citizens. Among the sufferers was Madame Opid, whose property and possessions were all destroyed. This fire, though the authorities considered it to be the work of vagabonds, was attributed by the people to the Austrians. And one good reason for this popular belief was, that the authorities took no steps to find or punish the vagabonds. In the night the fire flamed out, and everybody rushed from the town to save their lives. Helcia and her little sister ran by themselves, clothed only in their night-dress, Helcia feeling full of pride because she had succeeded in saving a doll and a Life of Saint Genevieve. The two children ran hand-in-hand out of the town, among the terrified people; they came to a stream, and the little sister fell into it. Helcia called for help, but no one noticed the distress of the two infants. Distress so much more personal was present to everyone that they had no time to pause, no ears or eyes for anything but the terrors of the fire. Helcia succeeded,

alone, in saving her little sister, and soon after she saw her grand-aunt hurrying by, carrying a pillow and another doll! Helcia, child as she was, and amid this terrible scene, laughed till she was weary at the treasures which her aunt had saved from the cruel fire. All else was gone—her mother's houses, jewellery, valuables of all kinds. The family was without home, without money, without even clothes. For many nights after that the children slept upon straw, in cellars or barns, wrapped in borrowed clothes. They were among people who were in the deepest distress, who, like themselves, were ruined by the fire and the political disturbances. Thus Helcia became accustomed to misery; she had now no home except among the bereaved, the ruined, and the desperate. Her childhood was taken from her too soon by this early acquaintance with misfortune.

When the town had again become quiet, Madame Opid hired a house in Cracow, where

she lived with her children in the greatest poverty. Every expedient to earn a little money had to be resorted to. The youngest boy, only fourteen, went to work as a simple carpenter, and brought home all his earnings. His talent was for architecture, and afterwards, when he was able to carry on his studies, he attained an excellent position, and in due course was appointed a Professor of Architecture. At the present time his only idea was to help his mother by means of any work that came to hand.

An elder brother, who was married, was now left a widower, with one child. This child he gave in charge of his mother, and went upon the stage. His name was Josef Benda ; a name well known, soon afterwards, in the Polish country towns, as that of a very clever comedian. His child, Helcia took care of ; for Madame Opid had already as much as she could do. Thus, at the age of ten, Helcia was playing the part of a mother; a *rôle* which she still likes to fill in

private life, as she is very fond of children, and especially of young girls who have the ardent and romantic temperament which characterised her own youth.

Helcia now went to a convent every day to gain some education from the charitable nuns. She did not learn much there, except to recite prettily, for she was too fond of reading fairy tales to do much work. Grammar and history were her two favourite studies; but arithmetic she never liked. Besides the reading of every book she could get, she had now another absorbing occupation—the reading and copying of her brothers' theatrical plays. Two were now on the stage, a second brother, Felix Benda, adopting the profession about this time; he became one of the most popular actors in Poland. At home the children had a theatre of their own. When a mere baby, Helcia had sat on the table and was the audience for her brothers, who sometimes acted Greek plays, sometimes wrote plays

themselves. They had some scenery painted by their elder brother. Now Helcia was getting ready to be a performer. At fourteen she left the convent; and then she and her brother wrote a play together. It was a tale of a Greek revolution, and was full of tragedy, emotion, and patriotism. This play was produced on the family stage, with the family and the servants for audience. Helcia played in it, and wept and made the servants cry with her. She grew so excited that her mother interfered, and said there must be no more such nonsense. She said also that Helcia must never go to the theatre, unless it might be the German theatre, which would be safe, as she did not understand that language.

A year afterwards she was taken to the German play, which her mother supposed would not interest her. The effect upon her was so great, that she went to her brother's library when she got home, found a volume of Schiller and a

dictionary, and sat up in her room trying to find out the meaning of the play.

Having found an interest in the language, she persisted in its study, and in a year had learned to read it. Madame Opid gave Helcia a small sum of money a month to spend on gloves and little articles of dress ; but she chose to go bare-handed and to buy books. She bought also a bust of Schiller to worship ; for with her understanding of his language came also a phase of Schiller adoration. She went about her ordinary work, accomplished it without thinking of it, living in complete oblivion of the world about her. Her head was full of romance. It was necessary for all the family to work hard, for Madame Opid's fortunes had never recovered the wholesale devastation made upon them by the fire of Cracow. Helcia had to sew, to help her mother in domestic duties ; and her time was very fully occupied. But while she sewed, or made pastry, her mind was far away: she was reciting poetry—some-

times composing it. She lived alone, with her fancies for friends, her great authors for lovers, her dreams for pleasures.

In the quiet town of Cracow there was nothing now to rouse her or disturb her romantic moods. Its brief season of gaiety had no interest for her; to those who are poor, work, at all seasons, is the one interest. But Helcia, though busy like the rest, was in reality alone, even among her family. Her hopes, her dreams, her ambitions, were what she lived in. There was something strange, something of unsatisfied desire, in her eyes, which made the others wonder what she would become ; it was the same expression which her father had seen in her as an infant. Often her mother feared that she would be wicked, because of this something which she did not understand, and also because the child was intensely excitable. Sometimes when Helcia got a feeling as of compression, as if she could no longer breathe at home, she would run away into the country, and

be quite alone for a while. One of her greatest pleasures was to go out to one of the castles in the environs and remain by herself in some quiet nook in the grounds ; or to sit for a long time in church. She delighted in the sense of isolation, of solitude.

CHAPTER II.

It was about a year after her visit to the German play that Helcia was taken once more to the theatre. Her desire had been for some time to write or to become a nun, because everyone laughed at her for her hunger for the stage, as people will laugh at young girls with large ambitions. But still the theatre seemed to be heaven; having had no experience, she thought all men were perfect, but the men upon the stage appeared to her to be ideal beings, demi-gods. Had an actor been but common-place, still he would have seemed something great in her eyes. What wonder, then, when she saw a really ideal Hamlet, that he should influence her mind and

colour her life? On this great occasion when she first saw Shakespeare acted, Fritz Devrient, nephew of the great Emile Devrient, played the unhappy prince. Devrient had a natural melancholy expression; he was rather stout, with long, fair hair and a womanish face, the true Shakespearian Hamlet, as many people think. Devrient had great talent, but was careless, and did not achieve the reputation which might have been his. But he conceived Hamlet finely, and Madame Modjeska has never been satisfied with any impersonation of the character since then. It fired her enthusiasm. Schiller and Goethe were cast aside; their day was over. She went home, and getting a Polish translation of Shakespeare from among her brother's books, she copied out the play carefully, in order that she might fully appreciate every phrase, and also the better commit it to her memory. From this hour Shakespeare became her idol; she obtained a bust of him which she worshipped in place of Schiller's. She did him

reverence night and morning; she studied his plays and grew more rapt than ever in her dreams and her world of romance.

About this time she had a vivid dream, which, though doubtless arising from her ambitious and enthusiastic state of mind, yet had in it a curious element of prophecy. She saw herself mounting, mounting, climbing a high tower; above her she saw a man whom she adored secretly, because he was then the greatest actor in Poland. He beckoned her to come up to him, and as she joined him she said, "Why, it is quite easy—I will go on higher." She did so, and left him far behind.

When in after years Helcia had gone upon the stage and met this actor, she told him of her dream. He laughed, and said, "It is very likely; you will come up to me, and then you will go on and leave me behind." But she said no, that was impossible. And yet it came to pass, as time went by. She reached

the level of her hero, and then passed on and left him behind her.

But these dreams which fed Helcia's romantic imagination were looked upon as mere folly by those about her. Helcia was useful at home; she was clever at cooking and sewing. She was always discouraged from attempting anything else. But this enthusiastic girl, who spent her pin money upon candles, that she might sit up reading Schiller at night, and upon a bust of Shakespeare to which she might address her adoration, was not likely to give up her dearest ambition, however it might be discouraged. She longed to go upon the stage in spite of her mother, who assured her that her health unfitted her for it, that the excitement would kill her. She desired it ardently, although her brothers and sisters laughed at her, and told her that she was too thin, too small, that she had no voice, no appearance. The child aimed high, and avowed her wish to become a *tragédienne*, which

made her all the more laughed at and ridiculed by those about her. They viewed her with the good old-fashioned idea of a tragic actress in their minds ; to them it appeared that to enter the higher walks of the art a heavy physique and a deep voice were absolutely necessary. This delicate-looking, dreamy child was the very opposite of the received style of *tragédienne.* But the thousand and one objections which were brought against Helcia's burning ambition did not kill it ; they were much the same that every young aspirant hears. Genius does not listen to them. Helcia studied in secret, recited to an imaginary audience, and fancied herself before the footlights while in fact she was busy with some common-place industry. Poverty, the sternest of all taskmasters, let her have no idleness to dream in, but compelled her to work with her hands, while her eyes saw visions of a very different future. She used every means in her power to get the occupation she desired, and

enter the life which seemed to her alone worth living for. Her brother, Felix Benda, who was on the stage, ought, she thought, to help her on; and she tormented him to do something for her. He began his career playing heroic parts, because of his fine appearance and presence. He was, however, more fitted for high comedy. His talent savoured something of the humour of Charles Matthews, tempered by a refinement and elegance equal perhaps to that of Bressant. He was a most sympathetic actor and achieved a great reputation. To him Helcia appealed. Worn out, at last, by her perpetual entreaties, he agreed to take her, in secret, to see an actress of great experience, in order to have her opinion on the momentous question of Helcia's suitability for the profession. The girl went, full of terror. Many an actor has suffered stage fright on an occasion like this to a degree never afterwards experienced, even before a first-night audience. The first professional, personal criticism is very

terrible indeed to a dramatic aspirant. Helcia, with her excitable temperament, realised this to the full, and felt that her whole fate depended on the successful issue of this visit. She found the actress busy embroidering, and thinking a great deal more of her worsted work than of the hopes and fears, the dreams and desires, of the slender girl before her. She told Helcia, to begin with, that she was much too young.

"But," said Helcia, "I shall grow older!"

"True," said the actress; "but you do not know what a difficult profession it is which you desire to enter. It is impossible to get on without great talent. Do you feel that you have talent?"

This was a terrible, a probing question. But Helcia, terrified though she was, had the courage of her convictions.

"Yes," she said, "I do."

"Indeed!" was the answer. "If you are brave enough to think you have talent, show it

me. Let me hear something—recite something to me."

Helcia called up all her courage. A very successful actor has said that although a large audience does not make him nervous, he would not face the ordeal of reciting to one person alone. This ordeal Helcia was compelled to face. She recited a romantic and impassioned poem full of sentiment and patriotism. When she had finished, the actress remained bending over her frame, engrossed in her worsted-work ; nothing was said. When the silence became painful, Helcia made a little cough to indicate that she was still present. The actress looked up.

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

This actress took character-parts, and most often appeared as an old peasant-woman. Helcia thought it would please her to sing one of her

songs. She had not the courage to do this face to face with her, so she got behind the window-curtain, and then began to sing in as big a voice as she could produce. The result was a sort of caricature of the actress, who very soon cried out, "Enough! enough!" and then added, "I think you will be a comedy actress. Come again next week, and I will see what I can do for you." Helcia went away, feeling that she had not succeeded in pleasing her critic. However, she clung to her fond hope, and, when some days had passed, went again to the judgment-seat. This time the actress gave her a piece to learn; a foolish piece about a girl who has never seen a man, and when she sees one at last, takes him for a bird. When Helcia recited this, the absurdity of it made her laugh; an actor read the man's part for her, and when she had to talk to him about the beauty of his feathers she found it impossible to be in earnest. The actress was very angry.

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

This same actress was afterwards one of Madame Modjeska's greatest admirers, and always claimed to have first discovered her talent. But now Helcia went home distressed and disheartened. "It is no use," she said to her family, "I have no talent." She was quite downcast, feeling as if her doom were sealed. She determined to give up all idea of the stage, to think no more of that life which seemed to her so delightful. "But," she said to herself, "I must do something, I cannot be idle."

It was about this time that an event occurred in Helcia's life which might have given another direction to her artistic career. One day she went into a house where one of her friends was receiving a lesson in singing from Mirecki, a well-known Polish composer, and the director of the Musical Institution in Cracow. He was endeavouring to teach his pupil a very difficult

passage, which she found it impossible to accomplish. When he had finished and had left the house Helcia went to the piano and attempted the passage. She sang it correctly and in a full voice. Her voice was then very high and metallic; Mirecki heard it across the street. He turned and ran back to the house.

"Who was that singing?" he cried. Helcia, who was terribly shy, ran and hid herself under the table. But Mirecki found out who she was, and proposed to Madame Opid that he should undertake Helcia's musical education. He would teach her without payment if she would devote herself to the work.

"Then I shall have at least one singer to leave behind me," he said, for he was always talking of his death.

This presentiment which oppressed him proved to have too much truth in it. Three months afterwards he died, and thus Helcia's musical career was at an end.

She resolved to study, in order to be a governess, and she went to the nuns to ask them to take her and educate her for this purpose. They agreed to do this; and Helcia desired the more to go to them that she cherished a vague idea of taking the veil herself. But these hopes, like her more ambitious ones, had to be surrendered. She was needed at home. Her mother was always busy, working hard that the children might live. There was the housekeeping to do, the brothers to be cared for; Helcia's sister was much younger than herself, and she had, in addition, her little niece, to whom she was a young mother. Thus it was that she had to give up her intense desire for education; she was the only responsible one in the family, and she could not leave her duties.

Her "guardian," as she called him, an old friend of her family, and a man very much older than herself, had accustomed her for some time to the idea that she was to be his wife. Lovers

or marriage had not yet entered into her thoughts; but she learned to regard it as a matter of course that in the future she was to marry her guardian. Thus she sank back into her industrious, uneventful daily life, with a feeling that to become great, as she so passionately desired, was an impossibility for her.

About two years more passed in this quiet domestic life. Helcia had to rise early in the mornings, as good housekeepers must. At half-past six she was up and busy. Fortunately for her, she was in reality strong, although her appearance was delicate; otherwise she must have sacrificed her hours of study at night in order to be able to wake early for her morning duties. The Benda family lived high, in a flat on the third floor; opposite the house was a church, and the rooks that lived in the trees of the churchyard were among Helcia's early friends. Outside this church an altar was dressed for the Virgin Mary; and here Helcia

would go for a few minutes in the early morning to say her prayers. Then she had to go to the market to buy the provisions for the day; and, her marketing done, she went home to breakfast. Then came the many duties of a busy housekeeper, the most important of them being the preparing of the dinner. This Helcia cooked, and had ready for one o'clock. When this was over and all put away, Helcia's afternoon had to be devoted to sewing. Every day there was abundance of making and mending for her, for she was responsible for all the work of this kind that had to be done. Then, too, she had to see that her brother's frilled shirts were starched as they should be, and often to do them herself. She learned to be a quick worker, for her aim was to get these duties disposed of, and be able to read a little. After seven o'clock she was generally free for her studies, unless her mother should come in and find some work unfinished; then she would be called from her reading. For

it was the usual complaint in the family, "Helcia is so lazy—she is always reading!"

In truth, her only certain time for study was at night when everyone had gone to bed. Then Helcia would light the tallow candles which she had bought by dint of strict economy, and would sit down to read; often reading on until two or three in the morning. When she was quite young her brothers and her guardian brought her books—novels which excited and interested her, and which sometimes made her very angry by their doubtful morality. For Helcia's young and beautiful dream was to be both good and great. This idea was a constant source of trouble to her, for as she made acquaintance, from books, with the lives of great women, it began to appear to her an impossibility for a woman to be good as well as great. She read Consuelo, and felt in her own being all the artistic passion of that wonderful heroine; but then she found George Sand was very different

from her ideal of a great woman, and she grew disheartened. She was much influenced by the picture of Consuelo's career; but terribly distressed by the daring lawlessness of the great authoress. The only character in history that she loved with all her heart was Jeanne d'Arc. She thought if there were a revolution she would try to act in the spirit of that noble heroine. But, though she was burning with patriotism, it offered her no career. She was full of that strange spirit which artists always suffer from before they find their work—a wild longing to be something, to do something. She fancied herself capable of being a sculptor, an artist, a poet, if she only had education. To temperaments of this kind "the daily round, the common task" bring no comfort, but appear like harsh prison walls. Helcia felt as if she were in bondage and could not escape to the free air. She would look sometimes at the peasant girls, and say to herself, "My life is

not as it ought to be. There is something different in me from these girls, yet I have to cook and wash, and darn stockings as they do."

She saw no hope of escape from this distasteful life except to become a nun ; and she would often long to do this, for she ardently desired to be good. And yet her family sometimes thought her wicked, for occasionally the artistic longing that was in her would burst out in a sort of fury. In the midst of her daily work something would rouse this temper in her, and she would rage with the sense of imprisonment. She would drive everyone away from her, and then soon afterwards be found in tears at the thought of what she had done. Indeed, she was often sad, for she took everything very seriously. Her work did not distress her, in itself ; she would often sing over it. But if she were a little scolded she would fall into despair and think that she must die ; it was no use for her to live if she could not do these little things right.

Helcia's own room was her sanctum, where she read, and thought, and endeavoured to educate herself. She kept it clean with her own hands, washing the floor and the curtains and making it as pleasant as she could. Sometimes when her own time came, the rest of the household being asleep, if the night were beautiful, she would open her window and sit for hours looking at the moon and the stars, and the steeple of the church that rose opposite. She would dream then of what she might do, and hunger for opportunities. Her longing always was for education, that she might develope her powers.

But most often she buried herself in her books, and sat there, in the quiet hours, reading by the faint illumination of her tallow candle. When she was fifteen she began to choose her own books; and, although until she was fourteen years old she played with a well-beloved doll, a year later we find her reading German

philosophy. It is singular that clever women frequently make this abrupt leap from the amusements of babyhood to the interests of maturity. They omit altogether the interval of loving dress and dancing and flirtation for their own sakes, which in common-place girlhood lasts all the time from twelve to twenty, and often longer still.

A book which had a great effect upon Helcia at this time was 'Diätetik der Seele,' by Feuchtersleben. Through studying this theory of the exercise of the will, she obtained a control over herself which she had not before imagined possible. She learned to govern her fiery temper to some extent, and to make her manners soft and agreeable, when she desired. At the same time her romantic and poetic feelings were excited by the influence of two Polish poets—Mickiewicz and Bohdan Zaleski.

One of her chief pleasures, after she had lost all hope of going on the stage herself, was to

go to the theatre where her brother played, and sit at the wings. At first this was an intense delight, and she would get perfectly lost in the excitement ; but much of the charm vanished when she saw what some of the actors were like behind the scenes. She began by thinking all actors heroes, and the illusion lasted a little time, because her brother Felix was so good and so gentle in his manners, and she accepted him as a type of the whole class. But when she had been once or twice to sit in the wings, her illusions gave way. She tried not to see the flirting and quarrelling that went on around ; but when, one day, she saw a man kicking his tailor because his work did not please him, it was impossible to be blind. She suffered a girlish phase of intense disgust, and chose to go and sit in the theatre when it was empty, as if she were at church, instead of going there at night.

CHAPTER III.

THE time passed by very quietly, the days in work, the nights in study, until Helcia's guardian changed the even way of her existence by asking her to delay their marriage no longer. She was then just seventeen; and as there seemed no reason to postpone any further a union which had long been arranged, Helcia consented to take the name which she has since made famous. The original spelling of the name is Modrzejewska; afterwards Helena abbreviated it, when she went upon the American stage. Her husband had a Government appointment in Cracow. He lost this, however, soon

after his marriage, and early in the first year of her new life, Madame Modjeska was made familiar with greater trouble and anxiety than she had ever known before. Her husband had been living for some time in the same house with Madame Opid and her family, so that the marriage did not make much difference in Helcia's life at first ; she continued to lead a very quiet existence, under her mother's care. She had not so much now to occupy her time, and she took up, with great enthusiasm, the study of music. She developed quite a passion for the art, and sang continually to her guitar. She had also another very interesting study now. Her husband thought that she had talent for the stage, and he was willing that she should enter the profession. But he thought there was no scope for her in Poland, and his idea was that she should learn to speak German easily and go upon the German stage. This gave her enough to occupy herself with, for she did

not speak the language easily. A German actor named Axtman, who visited the house as a friend, undertook to give her some lessons. He was very poor, but most generous and unselfish. He worked hard with his pupil, teaching her to speak German, and she studied two parts with him. When they were working together, Madame Modjeska would stamp her foot sometimes, and cry out, "I will be celebrated, I will be celebrated!"

"Ah!" Axtman would say. "That is not so easy—that is not so easy."

His own state was hardly an encouraging example. One day he fainted while he was singing. Madame Modjeska discovered afterwards that this was the faintness of hunger, and that her kind and beloved master, to whom she felt real gratitude, was frequently in a state of starvation. She lost sight of him afterwards, and never again met this friend, the first who took an interest in her dramatic gifts. He

obtained an engagement elsewhere, and left Cracow.

In March '62, Madame Modjeska gave birth to her first and only surviving child, Rudolph Modjeski. (It will be observed that the surname varies in termination according to sex.) Three months after her boy was born, Madame Modjeska left Cracow with her husband, who had no occupation, and, having but very little money, desired to make it last as long as possible. They went to Bochnia, a small provincial town, and took a little furnished house, where Madame Modjeska lived, without aims or interests. She would take a gun into the garden and practise shooting to pass the time. But this monotonous existence did not last long.

Very shortly after they went to live at Bochnia some amateur theatrical performances were organised for the benefit of the poor. Madame Modjeska and her sister were of the company ; all the performers were amateurs

except one actor, who was half a professional. On the first night they put on three short pieces. In the first of these, "Le Camélia Blanc," Madame Modjeska played a countess; in the next she took the character of an Italian peasant girl who became an actress, and, as they always do in plays and novels, became a great star all at once. This character charmed Madame Modjeska's imagination, it fitted in so well with her dreams. She played it in her Polish peasant dress which had to be converted into an Italian costume by the addition of a few ribbons. In the third piece she had to appear in quite a new line of business. The male actors being rather useless at character-acting, she undertook to play a thievish man-servant, who gets kicked in the course of the farce for stealing boots. She went on dressed in her young cousin's clothes, and smoking a cigar. There were three of these amateur performances, and on each night Madame Modjeska played a variety

of characters ; one of them was an old woman of sixty, for which she wore her mother's dress.

The second of these entertainments drew a larger audience than the first, and the third a larger still. Madame Modjeska had attracted attention ; she was pretty, and full of talent. The actor who played with them, prophesied success for her if she became a professional ; a stage-manager from Warsaw who happened to be passing through Bochnia saw the performance, and said she should go upon the stage. He would have taken her himself to Warsaw, had she been alone. But she was not free to do as she chose. Her husband thought he saw the way to use her talents and make a living by them. He got a license for the little company, of which he constituted himself manager. It consisted, at the outset, of Madame Modjeska, her sister, and their one semi-professional actor, whose mother and sister joined them also. Besides this actor, the only man they had was

an amateur of the rawest description. A little prompter completed the company. There was no stage-manager; the company stage-managed itself.

They engaged a theatre at a town twelve miles from Bochnia for three months; here they were to try their fortunes as full-blown professionals. They travelled from Bochnia in a peasant's cart, driving eight miles one day, and four the next. This was Madame Modjeska's first journey in the service of her profession; and she was so happy that she could not sit still in the cart—she sprang out and walked a great part of the way. She felt like a queen going to her kingdom.

Arrived at their temporary home, they had to practise the sternest economy, for reputation and money had both to be made. Madame Modjeska and her husband and sister lived in rooms which had no furniture, save a bench and a few chairs. Helcia was happy in the midst of her absolute

poverty; she slept upon the floor with contentment, and did not complain because there were no carpets, no beds, no comforts of any sort, as she had complained when her time had to be given to cooking and darning. Now, if she had nothing else, she had the work she loved; she would sit in the bare room, or on the balcony outside, studying her parts, feeling still that she was a queen, and a queen now who had found her throne. She would walk through the streets, her head bent, absorbed in repeating her parts, not knowing whether those she met were friends or strangers, careless that her dress was old and shabby. She was happy, as she never had been before, as perhaps she never has been since; for everyone knows that the first success in one's work is sweeter than any later glory. Even the scantiness of her theatrical wardrobe did not trouble her much. She had but two dresses, a black one which she wore for tragedy, and a white one

for comedy. Beyond these two dresses she had only her peasant's skirts, and a single pair of fine white stockings. These and her white handkerchiefs, she washed out herself in the morning, and had them dry and ready for the evening. These things were no trouble to her. The theatre at night compensated her for everything. Once there, she was another woman; the atmosphere of the theatre was life to her. Every true actor knows how different the air tastes in the theatre. Its stuffiness, its gassiness, all the abominations common to such buildings and most annoying to ordinary mortals, are intoxicants to the performer who loves his work; for they are its accompaniments. Once on the boards she was intensely happy, and the first bouquet thrown to her, made of a few flowers tied together with a bit of a hair watch-chain, was in her eyes a glorious tribute to her talent. This sublime content she carried home with

her, to her empty room; so that when, on the occasion of her benefit, people came to buy tickets, she received them with as good an air as though she had a well-furnished house to entertain them in. It mattered little to her that her floor was bare; she knew that she was an actress, an artist, and that these people wanted to see her play. Her visitors, looking round and seeing absolute poverty written everywhere, would often offer her more for the tickets than the price. This Helcia would never accept; it militated against her pride, and her regal feelings. She always said, "You have made a mistake," and returned the additional money. When her husband found this out, he was very angry, and would no longer let her sell the tickets herself.

There were no salaries paid in this company, but the profits were divided among its members according to a system of deserts, the better actors getting more money in proportion. This

is not generally an agreeable plan, and yet by degrees other actors joined them, for the company soon began to get a good reputation. At first many funny things happened, as might have been expected in such a queer little troupe composed of bad professionals and amateurs. The "old woman," was a constant source of entertainment, for she would dress herself in a hurry by a dim candle-light, and would go on the stage looking queer indeed. One night when she was later than usual, she asked a boy who was running about, to come and paint her face while she did something else. He painted her face beautifully, adding to the old lady's appearance by giving her a fine moustache. She ran away without staying to look at herself, and created quite a sensation among her comrades on the stage. But a much more terrible occurrence than this, was when the actor who played the lovers fell ill one night, and there was no one to take his place. They had no

"under-studies" in this little company, for there were not men enough to fill the parts, much less to under-study them. Madame Modjeska had only been three months on the boards, when her stage lover failed her, and she saved the play by a very daring piece of improvisation.

The curtain had gone up on the second act, and Madame Modjeska, in the character of a peasant-girl, was on the stage with her stage father and mother, ready for the entrance of her lover. He came, but only to whisper to Modjeska that he was very ill, that he could not go on with his part, that he must go home at once; and then he hurried off, leaving the others to do what they could. Of course he imagined the play would have to stop.

"What will she do? what will she do?" exclaimed the others, and they whispered to her, "Shall we have the curtain dropped?"

"No! no!" said the girl. "Go on with

the scene." Her own was a good part, and she had a charming scene which she would not give up because she had no lover. If one can imagine a Juliet intrepid enough to enact the balcony scene without a Romeo, we may have some idea of what followed. The scene went on—the peasant girl went to the window, and when her lover spoke she put her head out through it, so that her face was hidden from the audience, and gave the lover's speeches in as deep a voice as she could. The audience did not discover the deception ; they only wondered at the oddity of the arrangement.

At the end of the three months passed at Soncz, the troupe had very much increased, and they had bought some scenery. It was with a full company of twenty-one, that they started again on their travels. It was a very hard time this for the actors, for the neighbouring Polish provinces, which were under the Russian government, were full of political disturbances, of

which the vibration was felt in Galicia. Helcia's two dresses, which constituted her first theatrical wardrobe, were one black and one white, because no one wore colours ; these were the two dresses which she had, like other girls. All over the country the women went about the streets in black ; wearing white for a fête or wedding. The actors and actresses were expected also to wear black upon the stage ; if a white bodice were worn, it was always embroidered with black. Only in the case of the national peasant costume being needed on the stage for a character-part, red would be tolerated. The picture of a whole country in mourning is terribly sad ; it is one which almost baffles the imagination. It is little wonder that impassioned patriots are to be found among a people who have suffered so deeply. Constantly the performance at the theatre was interrupted by some ghastly news ; or when the actors were gathering together, laughing and talking before the curtain rose, some one would

come to them and say how many had been killed in Warsaw in the day. On one occasion when the company arrived in a watering-place, intending to give a performance in the evening, Madame Modjeska went into the drawing-room of the hotel to practise over her songs at the piano. While she was practising, a man entered the room, dressed in black, in the national dress, and said, "Madame, they have been killing men to-day in Warsaw."

Modjeska shut the piano, and sang no more; and the company left the place without giving any performance, for the town was in mourning. It was a rare thing, at that time, for a piano to be heard; no one sang, except sometimes the national hymn. People lived as though in the house of death; the country was like a grave-yard.

In the midst of this misery the company of players of which Madame Modjeska was the centre grew larger and larger, and by degrees

more prosperous. They had, now, a leading lady to play the tragic business, Modjeska feeling that she was herself unable to take it. This new member of the company indulged in exciting adventures ; indeed, so did most of them, for the Poles are an imaginative, romantic people, given to adventure. The *tragédienne* was deeply disappointed in some love-affair, and failing any other more reasonable mode of suicide, swallowed the whole of the bottle of mixture that she used for whitening her hands for the stage. Modjeska doctored her with pills ; and whether these did her good, or no, she did not die of her desperate attempt. Another love-lorn actress threw herself out of window ; but she also escaped with her life. Indeed, these suicides seem to have been rather dramatic than fatal ; doubtless they caused considerable commotion in the company. The men had their own absurdities. One favourite amusement which they indulged in was painting

their faces, and grimacing from the windows of the coach they travelled in when they passed through a village, so that the people thought they were madmen, or monkeys, and, being but ignorant peasants, would run away in a fright.

Modjeska, although she engaged a leading lady for the tragic parts, was longing to undertake them herself, but her voice was thin and unformed, and she would not attempt what she knew she was not ready for. She played *vaudeville* and *ingénue* business, light parts in which she sang and danced. One of her chief parts was Preciosa, who is the star in a strolling troupe of comedians, just as Modjeska herself was. She was the favourite with the audience, and was the life and soul of the company ; but this success did not satisfy her. She was yearning for some better work, something more serious ; and she often used to say, with the resolute conviction of an enthusiastic artist:

"When I am thirty I will be the greatest actress in Poland."

But she did not know how to set about preparing herself, until one day she read an account of a German actress who had been a long time on the stage, only playing small soubrette parts, until suddenly she appeared in Marie Stuart. She had been training her voice in the meantime. This gave Helcia the idea she wanted. She set to work reciting for at least an hour every day, repeating prayers, or anything else that came into her mind, speaking loud and deep, so as to develope the lower tones of her voice. In this exercise she persisted patiently, acquiring by degrees the skill with which she has learned to use a naturally weak instrument.

Helena was happier now than at first, for she had her boy with her, and her mother, who had taken charge of the child. Another child was born during this travelling about from town to

town, a girl, who died two years afterwards. Helena was very, very ill after this, for her strength had been overtaxed. Yet very soon she began to get up from her bed about five in the afternoon, go down to the theatre and play her part, fainting after every performance. She could not rest and recover her strength, or the audience fell away, which meant that there was no money. She had to act, and to travel, when she ought to have been nursed as an invalid.

CHAPTER IV.

When the company had been out for about a year, the manager of a theatre at Lemberg saw the performance one evening, and came to speak to Madame Modjeska. He told her he would engage her if she would leave the company and come to Lemberg. This engagement seemed to offer better opportunities than wandering through the provinces, so Modjeska accepted it, and the company was made over to the principal actor, who had been in it from the first. He took the management and carried on the speculation in his own right.

At Lemberg Madame Modjeska played *ingénue*

in poetical drama, and made a success in these pretty parts. Then she was put into operetta, and she got frightened by the great orchestra. At this theatre Madame Modjeska considers she obtained the most valuable teaching she ever received, and this happened in a very odd fashion. In the gallery they gave large metal entrance tickets, on which a piece of paper was pasted. These tickets were retained during the performance, not given up at the door. The members of the gallery audience (an irrepressible class in every country) had a habit of writing critical remarks on the paper. The tickets were given up when they went out, and in the morning the actors and actresses would go into the office to read the remarks made on them by their severe censors. The gallery was chiefly composed, in Lemberg, of University students, and some of the criticisms were funny, some valuable. After Madame Modjeska's appearance in the operetta, she found, when she visited

the office next morning, this terrible warning written on one of the tickets:

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

On another morning, when she had acted the night before in a drama, she found this polite request made to her:

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

She took these suggestions in good part, and tried her best to carry them out. She made a study of speaking the ends of her sentences clearly, beginning, of course, by getting them too loud, but by degrees reaching the correct manner, and pleasing her gallery critics. She had the liveliest appreciation of the service they were to her; for she found herself, notwith-

standing her year's work, little more than an amateur. Many hints were given her on the tickets, funny, but very useful; such as the following:

"Madame Modjeska, why do you go into that corner of the stage and remain there so long without moving?"

"It would be better if Madame Modjeska would not use her arms so much, for they are too thin, and the effect is not pretty."

Some of the actors were very angry when they found themselves thus criticised, and would not listen to the suggestions; but Madame Modjeska took them seriously, and endeavoured to improve. But the daughter-in-law of the manager had the same line of business, and she regarded Modjeska with the greatest scorn and contempt, which appeared so real that the young actress was humbled by it, and felt quite an admiration for this scornful lady. As she wanted to play *ingénue*, these parts were given her, and Madame

Modjeska was put into boy's parts almost entirely. This was not pleasant, as she was so anxious to get on ; but the worst part of it was that they only paid her forty florins a month—rather less than four pounds. Her husband had got a little money saved, which just enabled her to wait on from month to month, hoping for better parts. But when this was all spent, and there was no prospect of a larger salary, then Modjeska said, "This will not do! I must go back to the provinces." She had been for four months at the theatre at Lemberg when she left it to try her luck once more in the country towns.

The new company was quite a family affair. Including Modjeska herself and her husband, who again became manager, there were eight of her family in it. Her sister, and her sister's husband both acted. Three of her brothers joined them : Felix Benda, who played the lovers ; Josef Benda, who took comic parts ;

and Simon, who led the orchestra. The sister played comedy, and character-parts. Then they got a tragedy queen, a tragedy king, and so on, adding to their numbers till they had a good company of about thirty. They started, of course, in the good old style, without any capital save their talents, by which they had to earn money to buy properties, dresses, and scenery.

In such a case one's wits have to be used in many ways. For instance, in a certain play one night they wanted some devils. Stage devils must have black limbs, and there were no black tights. What was to be done? Josef Benda set to work and painted the legs of the boys who were to represent the Satanic imps. The effect was very good; but next day when Madame Modjeska went to the theatre she found the boys crying. She asked them what was the matter? They tearfully explained that their legs were very black and that M. Benda would

not give them the money to get a bath. One boy said his mother would not let him have a shirt, he was so black. Madame Modjeska gave them a little money that she had with her, and they went away to get themselves washed.

By degrees the position of the company very much improved, for it was really an excellent one, and obtained a reputation all through the country. Among its members were some who afterwards occupied a leading position on the Polish stage ; Felix Benda, Rapacki, Hennig, and others.

Eventually Madame Modjeska and her husband settled at Czerniowce, the capital of Bukowina, where they remained for three years. It was here that Modjeska's ambition, the aim for which she had worked so long, was first accomplished. She entered upon tragedy. At Czerniowce she played Marie Stuart. A German critic wrote favourable articles to the Vienna papers about her ; he considered her great fault

in Marie Stuart to be that she was too young for it. This was an exciting event, as Helcia's great desire was to go on to a foreign stage, for she found it so hard to rise in Poland, where poverty among the people must keep their favourites poor. Having now got a little money, she determined to take her first pleasure-trip, and her first really long journey. She and her husband went to Vienna, which was, at that time, a long journey, for the rail only covered part of the way. In Vienna she saw managers and agents; to one of the agents she read a passage from "Marie Stuart." He told her that her style was good, but her pronunciation bad. But this, it seemed to her, was a fault to be conquered. She went home, determined to study for this wider field, this larger stage, where she might reap an adequate reward for her talents. She took some lessons for the pronunciation, and worked hard in the hope of perfecting it.

In 1863 the political movement, which had been growing for two years in Russian Poland, culminated into an insurrection. Although not general at once, and restricted mostly to the young generation, it soon took more serious proportions, and most of the population joined in it, driven by despair and by the cruel repression of the Russian officials. The fighting was, of course, limited to the Polish provinces under the dominion of the Tzar, but the Austrian and Prussian provinces of this unfortunate and divided nation sympathised most decidedly with the course taken by Russian Poland, and supplied the insurrection both with arms and men. Detachments were organised all over Galicia, and sent across the frontier to the seat of war. All the towns were full of insurgents, and on their last evening they would go the theatre, which they loved, because there they heard their own tongue, and the burning patriotic words of Polish authors. At this time the company always

produced Polish plays ; comedies by Fredro, the Molière of Polish literature ; dramas by Slowacki, who may be regarded as a Shakespeare in miniature. When the insurgents were coming to the theatre, the actors put on patriotic peasant plays, to rouse and stir them ; and after the acts they would come on and sing. Their aim was to encourage these young soldiers, who were going to offer their lives in the cause of their country ; but very often they were unable to sing because of the tears that would burst forth. One night, in the midst of such a scene as this, a boy of some fifteen years old rose in the theatre and cried: " Down with the curtain! Langiewicz has failed us—the foot of the Russian is on our necks! "

These were days when one would walk out in the morning in the streets of Warsaw, and come upon a body swinging from the gallows, hung there by the decree of the Russian military tribunal ; or upon a dead man lying in the

gutter, a knife thrust through his body, with a card attached to it bearing these ominous words —"So die all traitors." A terrible warning to the traitor whose skin as yet was whole; a ghastly, heart-sickening sight to those who longed for the day when the people might have peace in their own country. The land itself was rich and generous; nature had meant the peasants to be happy, and the nobles wealthy. But all this had been taken from them; death and despair lay on the land.

In the midst of this tyranny and bloodshed, when passions were aroused to the highest pitch, and secret societies were spreading all over the country, the players were prospering. They had now two companies: each evening they gave a German operetta and a Polish drama. Czerniowce belongs to Austria, and there was a large German population in the town. Madame Modjeska had now no singing to do, so that she was able to play in drama; but her desire

was to make a commencement in German. She determined to do this, and studied "bei Wasser und Brod." The bills were posted, announcing her appearance in her new character.

One day she was in the gardens, studying her part for the last rehearsal, when she saw some of the students who were passing through the streets pausing to read the play-bill. They gathered round it, talking about it very angrily. A new view of her attempt darted into Helena's mind as she looked at their angry faces. "They will think me a renegade!" she thought, "an artist who works only for money!" She went home in a fever, with this in her mind. The next day there was a Hungarian band playing in the gardens; it played Hungarian airs first, and then, to please the people, it played some of the Polish airs. These melodies have the power to draw tears from this sympathetic, country-loving people. They raised all the patriot in Helena; she began to scream and cry with

the excitement of the patriotic passion, and, throwing away her book, she exclaimed, "I will never play in German!" The play was withdrawn, for she absolutely refused to appear, although it was in the very last stage of preparation.

For eighteen months of her residence at Czerniowce, Madame Modjeska was not acting at all. She was very ill, and it was believed that she showed symptoms of consumption. She was ordered rest, and was compelled to take it. But she had no mental repose; trouble was all about her, in her own home and at every corner of the streets outside it. Although she was not allowed to act, she carried on her studies all the time; she exercised her voice every day, although this was forbidden because of her consumptive tendencies; she studied all her parts, especially Marie Stuart.

In 1865 Madame Modjeska lost her husband, and in the midst of the greatest trouble and

distress, was taken from Czerniowce by her mother and brothers. Felix Benda took an engagement at a theatre in Cracow, and the brothers left the travelling company and came to the city. Madame Modjeska, with her mother, went to live with the youngest brother, who was married. Her health was much impaired by the excitement and distress which she had suffered; nevertheless she was most anxious to make her own living, as she was now a burden on her brothers. Felix Benda succeeded in obtaining for her an engagement at the theatre where he was playing.

CHAPTER V.

THIS theatre at Cracow where Felix Benda was engaged had just entered upon a new lease of life, thanks to a national subscription and to a help from the ready hand of the Austrian Emperor, who is always a good friend to his Polish subjects. It was determined to make of the Cracow stage a kind of national dramatic institution intended to compete with the Imperial Warsaw Theatre, where the Russian authorities limited the pieces produced, according to their political ideas. Cracow was to have a stage as good, yet free. At the head of the management of this theatre was placed Count Skorupka, a Mæcenas of art and

literature. He was assisted by M. Stanislas Kozmian, one of the leading Polish political writers, and M. Jasinski, who had been the artistic manager of the Warsaw stage for more than thirty years.

When Madame Modjeska went to see M. Jasinski about her engagement, she told him that her line was the naïve business, singing parts, comedy of any kind. He gazed very seriously into her sad face, which bore the cruel marks of pain and distress, and looked as though smiles were not native to it; and at last he said:

"If you will come to me in my studio to-morrow, then we will talk it over."

The next day Madame Modjeska went, with her brother, to see Jasinski in his sanctum. The reception was a strange one, and sufficient to make an *ingénue* nervous. He looked at the young actress a long time without speaking; then, at last, he said:

"I want you to play Sara in 'Salomon,' a

new play by Szymanowski. We have to produce it, and I want you to take this tragic part."

"Oh, that is impossible!" she exclaimed.

Her desire had been to appear in a comic part of a singing page; such a new idea as this of playing Sara on her first appearance in Cracow was appalling.

"It is impossible," she said; "I have played Marie Stuart, and I do not think it was a success."

"Never mind that," he answered her; "learn the part."

She went home, much troubled because she did not think herself capable of tragedy yet; also because she had no dresses, and these she would have to provide herself. Nevertheless, in spite of these discouraging thoughts, she studied her new part with the greatest fervour. In two days she was word-perfect, and went to see her friend Jasinski. He had seen tragedy in her face, but, all the same, he was a severe critic.

She recited her part to him, and all the time he moved his head rhythmically, as though to the sound of music. This made Helena terribly nervous, and she hardly knew how she got through her performance.

When she had finished he said, "Yes, Madame; I think you sing very well."

"What do you mean?" cried Madame Modjeska. "What have I done that is wrong? I do not understand."

"I mean, that you have given us an admirable song."

"You are laughing at me," said Madame Modjeska, beginning to cry with distress. "Tell me what you mean!"

"That part," said Jasinski, "is to be spoken. It seems you cannot do it."

"Oh, do not take my part away from me!" cried Modjeska passionately. "You cannot do that—you will not do that! Let me keep my part! You must show me how to do it!"

"Very well," said he, "I will read it over to you."

He undertook to do this, without any hope that the young actress, who was still so ignorant of her art, would understand or remember the difference of delivery which he desired to show her. But as Modjeska listened to him her eyes were opened; she wondered how she could have been so blind and so foolish as it now appeared to her she had been. She saw, she understood, she seized with avidity upon the new conception. She began to realise what acting meant.

Indeed, it was during this period of her life that Madame Modjeska first began absolutely to live in her art. Her early enthusiasm developed into a real passion: she had no interests to distract her attention. She discovered that art is a motive for existence.

Fired by the fresh view of her work which Jasinski had given her, she went home and re-studied her part, this time with added fervour

and greater delight in her work. She saw the right path before her, and it was a pleasure to walk in it. When she appeared on the night, Jasinski heard her from the wings with amazement. She rendered her part as Jasinski had rendered it ; she had understood him, had grasped his method. This delighted her master; a master as severe, as generous, and as well-beloved as the Michonnet of Adrienne Lecouvreur.

"It is well done—very well, my child!" he said. "There are only a few words you must deliver differently, and then you will be perfect!"

She obtained great applause from the house, and the manager was delighted. "Now," he said, "you will play tragedy. But you must agree also to play comedy, because we have very few leading ladies."

So her next character was that of the singing page, in which she had desired to make her first appearance. This she did admirably, for she

was thoroughly at home in it ; and when the manager complimented her—"Give me comedy to play, then," she cried, "and I will keep to it."

"No," he answered, "that will never do, while you have that profile and outline of the head."

So she had to play both "lines of business," although she still felt herself unequal to tragedy, unprepared to make those great effects which instinct told her should be produced. But the work was glorious to her, and she endeavoured to approach her ideal standard.

While Madame Modjeska was thus testing her powers, the leading *tragédienne* was ill, and absent from the theatre. Now she returned to find a young actress put into her own line of business. This lady—whom we will call Madame Thespis—had been Modjeska's adoration when she was a young girl ; she would do anything for her, trim her dresses for the stage, and

wait upon her ; she had worshipped her as one of the stars of a glorious firmament. In this way they had been warm friends, and Modjeska looked forward with a timid excitement to the meeting as a comrade with this idol of a former time. Felix Benda heard one day that Madame Thespis intended to come to the theatre in the evening to see the new play, "Salomon." He went to his sister and told her she must play her very best, for the great tragic actress would be there to see her. Modjeska was quite excited at the thought, for it seemed to her that now she would have the kindest, most generous, yet most severe of critics ; one who was wiser than herself, who had more experience and had conquered the very difficulties which she was endeavouring to overcome. It made her nervous to act before such a critic as this. When Madame Thespis came behind the scenes, the young actress, who had not thought of herself as her old friend's rival, but only as one who was

following as bravely as possible on the right path, fell on the neck of the *tragédienne*, crying:

"I am so glad, so glad to see you!"

Madame Thespis made no response to this embrace; she drew back, and looking coldly at Madame Modjeska, said:

"Oh!—and so you are playing tragedy, are you?"

Their next meeting was in the green-room, before the play. Thespis was going to appear in one of her leading tragic parts, and Madame Modjeska was to play second to her.

"Now that you are here," Madame Modjeska said very humbly, "I shall play burlesque and give up tragedy altogether."

"You are quite right," replied Thespis very coldly, "you could never do it."

Modjeska looked at her. What did she mean? But she felt she could not ask her, though she was an old friend. She had made a very humble overture, with the half-conscious hope that her

words would be contradicted, that she would receive some encouragement. She looked at least for some friendliness, some comradeship. But the answer she got was a sting. It penetrated keenly.

"Perhaps you are right," she said, and turned away.

But the sting hurt more and more after the first prick of it. At the moment she only felt the unkindness. Afterwards, as its meaning sank into her mind, it roused and excited her. Thespis would have left the words unsaid had she been able to guess at the effect they would produce. She intended to discourage this embryo actress by her contempt. Her words were rendered the more cruel and cold, by the fact that underneath the contempt lay jealousy. This is a fierce passion; but it roused an even stronger one in Modjeska—ambition. The frenzy of ambition is like a fever; it burns the spirit. All that night Modjeska suffered

from it ; it was like a fire within her. But for the sting which her rival's tongue had administered, it would not have yet been roused to so great a height. She would very willingly have played second to her old friend, for her girlish memories inclined her to regard Thespis as someone greater and wiser than herself. But to be despised and sneered at by her was unendurable. All night long she was in this fever ; at eight in the morning she was dressed and leaning out of her window to feel the air. Its freshness encouraged and strengthened her ; she determined to do something to end her feverishness. She left the house and hurried through the streets to the theatre, where her good friend Jasinski lived. He was but just up, and demanded to know who called on him so early.

"It is I, it is I!" cried Modjeska. "Let me in, I must speak to you."

"Come in by all means," said Jasinski. "I

am just ready for breakfast: will you have a cup of tea with me?"

"Tell me," she burst out at once, "can I play drama—can I play tragedy? Or am I foolish, no good for anything but burlesque? Tell me the truth, because I want to know! I want to play tragedy! I must play it!"

"My dear child!" said Jasinski; "you can play tragedy if you will. But you refuse the parts—why do you do so? Yesterday I gave three tragic parts to Thespis. I would have given them to you if I thought you would have undertaken them."

"Oh! if you believe I can play them," cried Modjeska, "I will have them all—all! Give me the others—give them to me!" And she fell on her knees in her excitement, praying for work as some people have prayed for life.

"I am glad of this, my child!" said Jasinski; "very glad! Here are the parts which Thespis

would have had—they are for you now—take them!"

And he took up a great pile of plays and handed them to her. She looked at them in amazement and consternation. There were sixty-two parts!

"Is this for three years?" she asked, staring at them.

"Oh, I don't know," answered Jasinski gaily; "it doesn't matter for how long. Read them—study them—and then we shall be able to choose what we like from them."

Half frightened, but full of delight, Modjeska took the great bundle of papers in her arms and went away home, happy, excited, burning with enthusiasm. She walked on air, feeling as if all the world were hers; now she believed herself indeed a queen! Had she not her kingdom at last, in reality? No longer a burlesque actress, a dancer, a singer, merely to amuse! she was a *tragédienne*! She enjoyed then a perfect

moment of existence. She held a heaven of work in her arms: her eager mind pictured a glorious future in which this work would be accomplished. She wanted to scream, to cry out loud, and tell all the world how happy she was. On her way through the sunlit morning streets she passed the windows of the house in which Madame Thespis lived ; she saw they were closed, and all the blinds were drawn.

Madame was asleep! asleep, while the morning sun was high, and her rival, up and stirring, had stepped into her place. Little did Thespis guess, as she lay sleeping till the middle of the day, what was happening outside. She did not see the young actress, whom she affected to despise, pass under her windows with her arms filled with all the tragic parts which Thespis looked upon as her own by right.

Modjeska, looking up at the shut windows, laughed gleefully, and went on her way home. She had won. Only last night Thespis had

stung her, thinking to crush her; instead, she had made of her a serious, and, soon, a triumphant rival.

There was nothing now which interested Modjeska as did her work; nothing else pleased or amused her. She became perfectly absorbed in it. She used to go to church with the "Imitation of Christ" under one arm, and a volume of Shakespeare or Schiller under the other. She always had her books with her; for she loved them more than ever. People were accustomed to meeting her in the streets with her book in her hand.

Thespis, very naturally, never forgave her for taking her parts. She remained at the theatre, but her parts now were not so good; she no longer played the heroines. This was very disagreeable to her; and she endeavoured to make it equally disagreeable to her rival by a thousand malicious methods. Modjeska was continually made to suffer by her tongue; but she was too

proud to reply, and accepted her punishment in silence, although it often affected her sorely. Before long her good friend Jasinski left the theatre. He had only taught her two of her parts; after that he told her she would do better to follow out her own ideas and play in her own style, now that she had got upon the right path. She was glad of this, for she had felt a little imprisoned in following all his directions. She set herself with ardour to the task of working out her parts in her own way. The Princess Eboli in "Don Carlos" was her first important character; Thespis played the Queen. At the dress rehearsal Modjeska was so excited and nervous that she dropped her comb and girdle. This was a very delightful sight for Madame Thespis; but when night came she was disappointed. The young actress became cool at the great moment; she could not afford to be nervous then, and all her native courage rose within her. She was determined to succeed,

and her resolution gave her power. She did succeed ; she was perfect in her part : she was sufficiently cool to act well. Thespis, on the contrary, forgot her words.

The manager was delighted with Modjeska's success. But compliments or congratulations had little power to add to what she felt in herself. It was her first triumph in tragedy. She knew now that when she had attempted Marie Stuart, tragedy was an unknown art to her ; Sara, which had been her one other attempt, was a much slighter part. Now she felt that she had found her feet at last ; that she was fully in the life which she had always longed for.

The next tragic character which she undertook with success, was in a Polish play ; her part was that of a peasant girl who is deserted by her lover, and goes mad with grief. From this her next change was to Ophelia ; she had the delight, at last, of playing a Shakesperian character ; this

was in the spring of 1866. It was an event in her life, and the other characters which she took in translations from Sardou and Dumas père, were comparatively indifferent to her. She played in the "Merchant of Venice," in "Much Ado about Nothing," and in Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse." About this time she began to be mentioned in the Warsaw papers.

These were very happy days, in Cracow, for Madame Modjeska. She was supremely interested in her art, and it was a good time for the actors. The revolution was stifled, and the country was quiet, if not at peace. The women began to wear colours, and the people to go to the theatre. They had an excellent company, and she enjoyed her work among them very much. One of the actors, M. Rapacki, was an author as well; he was a student in his art, and would often go to look at historical pictures in order to study the expression of the faces. M. Ladnowski also was a man of talent. These

two, with M. Felix Benda and Madame Modjeska, formed a little committee of themselves. They went in very strongly for historical accuracy, and would meet for long talks upon their art and kindred subjects, passing delightful hours in this way. When "Hamlet" was put on, there was a great deal of trouble taken to consult with professors who understood costumes, and so get all details right.

A classical play, written in Polish, was put on at the theatre, which gave this little coterie plenty to think about and to do. Madame Modjeska was much excited about her part, for she knew nothing of Greek literature or art. She had only followed her own girlish tastes in reading, and for the stage she had needed little study as yet, playing only burlesque and light comedy. But she was very anxious to know something of her subject, now that she had a classical part. She went to the library of the University to read about Greek art, and found a

very kind friend in the librarian, Dr. Charles Estreicher, a member of the Academy, who showed her what books would be useful to her, and helped her as much as possible. In this way she learned a great deal, for she acquired a real love for the subject, which was then all quite new to her. She had to arrange her own drapery, and to do this she went to the studio of a friend, a sculptor, who helped her to arrange it from the statues of Polyhymnia and Clio. At that time, crinolettes being in fashion, actresses wore them under their Greek dresses; and when Madame Modjeska appeared in her classic drapery, the others stared at her and said, "It looks very shabby!" But she was prepared, in her artistic enthusiasm, to bear her comrades' sarcasms, and to give, in the cause of correctness, any amount of study and tedious practice; no detail of costume, pose, gesture, or enunciation was too trivial for her careful consideration, but she used to go over her parts again and again,

analysing them, experimenting and working them up as a painter works up a growing picture, till all its qualities are in harmony. The successes we are to read of in future chapters were only a fair reward for the intense and unremitting toil of those early days.

CHAPTER VI.

In June 1866, the company was sent from the Cracow theatre to Posen, the capital of Prussian Poland. The journey had its dangers, for this was at the time of the war between Prussia and Austria. Madame Opid went with her daughter; indeed, she was a devoted mother, and accompanied her everywhere. The company arrived safely, and played before large houses, for Posen was full of farmers and landowners who came into the town upon business. One night one of the actresses fell ill, and as the kind of audience which was expected was one that would not put up with a change in the performance, Madame

Modjeska had to take her part with only two hours' study. When she was on the stage, she happened to look at one of the boxes, and met so very earnest a gaze that she forgot her quickly learned words. Turning to the actor who was on the stage with her, she said in a low voice, "Who is that gentleman in the box?"

"I don't know," he answered, and went on with his part, so that she had to recall herself.

Afterwards, in the green-room someone came to her, and said there was a young gentleman at the stage door who wished to be introduced to her.

"What is his name?" she asked.

"M. Chlapowski."

"Oh, that is a pretty name!" she said. "Bring him in."

He was brought in, and an acquaintance was commenced which soon ripened into something serious.

Charles Bodzenta Chlapowski is descended

from a noble Polish family which, according to an old tradition, claims a French origin at a very remote period. The Chlapowski family is one of the leading ones in the province of Posen, and very highly respected all over the country, having produced, especially in the last generation, a great number of remarkable men. The Chlapowskis are known for their patriotic services and their strong attachment to the Catholic Church. Count Chlapowski, an uncle of M. Charles Chlapowski, was one of the great Napoleon's favourite generals, and is a distinguished figure in the Polish history of the present century. He was attached to the person of Napoleon I. as a page, later on as an *officier d'ordonnance;* he became a colonel at twenty-three years of age, and was a great favourite with the French Emperor, who foresaw in him military abilities of the first rank. Nevertheless, Chlapowski, after the campaign against Russia, left the French service as soon as Napoleon had

given up the project of re-establishing the independence of Poland. General Chlapowski was afterwards one of the leaders in the Polish insurrection of 1830-31 against Russia. His alliance with the Grand Duke Constantine, the brother of the Czar and Viceroy of Poland, whose wife's sister, the Princess Lowicz, he had married, might naturally have induced him to take part with the Russian Government. But his patriotic spirit made him cast in his lot with that of his countrymen, to the disadvantage of his own personal interests. General Chlapowski's short campaign in Lithuania, where he had a separate command, ranks as one of the finest in the history of the war of 1830–31. When he retired into private life, after several years of exile and imprisonment, the General was considered by his countrymen as a noble example of a good Polish citizen. He was a member of the Prussian House of Lords, as was also his brother, the father of Charles Chlapowski.

Several of M. Charles Chlapowski's other connections, both cousins and brothers, are now members of the Prussian House of Commons and of the German Parliament, in both of which they belong to the Polish club and play a prominent part as the leaders of the National Catholic party.

M. Charles Chlapowski himself, at this time when he penetrated to the green-room of the Posen theatre, to see the actress whom he so much admired, was a political writer and dramatic critic. He was an ardent politician and a warm patriot. In the last insurrection of 1863 he had belonged to the detachment of the Dictator Langiewicz, and was for some time attached to his personal staff. M. Chlapowski was wounded several times in this revolution, and suffered also twenty months' imprisonment in a Prussian prison under an accusation of high treason. The war having now ceased, M. Chlapowski had come to Posen, where he became a

member of the editorial staff of the leading paper. When the Cracow company came to that town, it was his lot to write dramatic criticisms, in which branch of journalism he had acquired some experience in former years in Paris. He wrote some severe articles upon Madame Modjeska; doubtless they were just, for at Posen she suffered in her acting; having to play a great many parts, she had not time to study them all. It was almost impossible, for a fresh play was put on every night.

Notwithstanding his position as a dramatic critic, Monsieur Chlapowski came very often to see Madame Modjeska; both were full of artistic enthusiasm, and he led her into fresh fields of enjoyment; he introduced her to French literature, of which as yet she had known nothing. He brought her Musset, whom she read with delight; and in the mornings they would meet in the gardens and he read aloud to her. These were very happy days; full of new emotions,

and that delicious mingling of love and art which makes life very beautiful.

It was here, when her feelings so perfectly favoured a happy conception of the most exquisite of love-stories, that Modjeska first read "Romeo and Juliet." She determined that it should be performed on the night of her benefit, when she had a right to choose the play. Her cousin played the lover; and going out full of her idea, she met him in the street.

"I have read it! I have read it!" she cried, all glowing with excitement.

"What?" he asked in surprise.

"'Romeo and Juliet'—the balcony scene."

"Oh, I read that some time ago," he answered.

"But how did you get it?" she asked. "I have only just had it. We must play it on my benefit night!"

The favourite plays of Shakespeare were translated for acting and published in separate form. Madame Modjeska had never seen a

volume of his works collected, so that each play she got was an excitement of itself. But this discovery of the wonderful love-scene, in her present mood, was a never-to-be-forgotten delight. Her cousin readily agreed to study Romeo, although already they all had abundance of work.

The manager laughed at them and prophesied a total failure, but he consented to the experiment so long as they provided their dresses and expected no new scenery. This they agreed to; all difficulties must be overcome that stood in the way of the impersonation of the immortal lovers. At six o'clock in the morning they were out in the fields, rehearsing in the open air. In the evening, after the theatre, a number of the actors often walked out together into the country, which is very beautiful about Posen. Modjeska would go, and her mother ; it was the little holiday-time of the day. When they rested in a quiet place under the trees, the actors

sometimes had a charming impromptu performance among themselves. One would recite, another sing, in the still air of the night. Then it was that Romeo and Juliet had their finest rehearsals. Drawing a little aside from their audience, in the lonely silence of the sleeping country, they would go through the balcony scene, interrupted only by the songs of the nightingales. This study was an unwearying delight to them, and they persevered in it, until, by degrees, they obtained the subdued tone of the scene. Their listeners, under the spell of the still hours, recognised that an impassioned murmur, without any jar or discord of the voices, was in harmony with the nature about them ; the actors tuned their voices to the night, breathing with the softness of the summer air among the oaks and chestnuts, taking their note from the liquid love-song of the nightingale, and passing it from one to the other without any rough or abrupt contrast.

The days were now a busy, happy dream for the enthusiastic actress—with a new love in her life, and this magical picture of love new in her mind. Existence was an ecstasy, a continual delight.

It seemed no great hardship to so ardent a Romeo and Juliet to have to put up with old scenery. Spectacular effects did not appear to them to be necessary; they thought only of their parts. They adopted the Vienna arrangement of the play, making no change of scenery from the parting with Romeo to the potion scene. A prison was made to do duty for the tomb. Madame Modjeska made her dresses with her own hands: for the first she had a blue silk, looped up at the side, and with long Juliet sleeves ; for the second dress, a white *cachemire.*

The balcony scene held the house captive and in a dead silence. The lovers seemed to whisper, yet every word was heard. It was a murmured dream of passion; there was no staginess, no

ranting, nothing to disturb the loveliness of the scene. The Juliet was young, charming, a true Juliet herself, for she was in love for the first time. It is only at long intervals, and by the rarest good fortune, that such a Juliet exists. A translation is impossible without loss of beauty; but the colour of the scene cannot be lost. The audience heard it in their own tongue, given by actors who had imbibed the very spirit of the poet. It held them spell-bound.

Some of the friends of Madame Thespis sent a boy into the gallery to hiss Juliet and endeavour to turn the tide of popular favour. Modjeska had never been hissed, though her friends of the gallery at Lemberg had threatened it. When she heard her first hiss on such a night as this, she raised her eyes to the direction from whence it came, and smiled. The audience did not want to be disturbed, and they soon reduced the boy to silence by threatening to turn him out, or to give him up to the police.

It was very hot weather, and the comedian who played Peter had been taking some beer, or some kind of refreshment; at all events, he fell asleep in the wings while waiting for his cue to go on. He had got into a corner where they could not see him, and as the moment approached, he was hunted for everywhere in vain. In despair, when the cue came, they gave the fan to a boy, and sent him on with the Nurse. Peter slept on, until the Nurse, on the stage, shouted out, "Peter, Peter! My fan, Peter!" when up he started, called out "Here I am!" and walked straight on. There were now two Peters before the audience; but as the right Peter was a very favourite comedian, the absurd incident was greeted with immense applause.

Altogether, the piece was a great success; and after that Juliet was Madame Modjeska's favourite part, although never again has she had another Romeo who would study it as this, her first one, did. Never could exactly the same

conditions exist. But if a woman does, for one or two performances, achieve a positive artistic triumph in such a part as Juliet, she may be well content.

Madame Modjeska was now throwing off the affectation of manner common to young beginners. The first impulse which she received towards naturalistic acting was from reading the German critic who said of Talma, "I wondered that I did not wonder." She had always had an idea that it would seem right to be perfectly natural, but she felt sure, at the same time, that there must be something in that art which was practised by the others. She thought it necessary to affect an artificial walk, as they did, and to pose. She had acquired a habit of carrying her head in a certain manner, and of looking very intense. Actors then much favoured the trick of an abrupt change of voice without any transition. This, and many other very simple stage tricks, she had learned from those about her.

But the German criticism which she read confirmed her in her idea that these tricks were not artistic ; that there was a higher range of acting in which a subdued manner, perfectly reproducing that of natural life, might produce more startling effects than any tricks of voice or gesture. Her ambition was to appear natural, yet to keep her characters idealistic.

In September the company went to a bathing-place in the Carpathian Mountains, in Galicia. Modjeska was very tired with the travelling, and the number of parts which she had been playing. However, she appeared here with the rest. At home they had a sufficiently merry time while in this place, for they were all living in one house. Madame Modjeska, together with her mother and niece, had rooms upstairs. Below them was a room occupied by five of the actors. Rapacki and his family had rooms there also. In fact, there was only one party, consisting of a mother and daughter, living in the house, that did not belong

to the theatre, and very soon these ladies were driven away by the noise. One old actor could not sleep well, and at five he got up and began to walk about, disturbing the house until the others were roused. Another of the troupe was great in his adoration of the culinary art, and was always going about in the morning, spoon in hand, looking after the cookery. All day long, in the different rooms, the various members of the company were reciting, rehearsing, singing, or practising something. After the theatre they played and sang for amusement, or had a dance in the hall; and then set to work studying their parts aloud until two o'clock in the morning. Small wonder that the two ladies were driven away, sleepless.

Being tired out and in want of a holiday, Madame Modjeska determined to take a fortnight from her work and visit Paris with some friends who were going there. In Paris she found another world of delight and interest. The city

dazzled her; the pictures charmed her. Every night she went to the theatre. The first play she saw was one of Musset's; then she saw Madame Favart. Then she saw Coquelin, with whom she was perfectly charmed at first sight; she thought she had never seen anyone so delightful. Possibly young people are more conceited, and therefore less appreciative; at all events, Modjeska found herself infinitely more enthusiastic about the French stage than she had been about the German, when she visited Vienna.

In Paris she went to the Théâtre Français, Vaudeville, Odéon, Gymnase, and the two Operas. She saw Mademoiselle Delaporte, then playing *ingénue* business delightfully; she saw Bressant and Got. When she saw Got she said to herself, "This is the first time in my life that I have seen real art." Every movement of this great actor became photographed on her brain; and she often referred to them as a standard

when she was studying her parts afterwards. When she returned to Cracow, the impression of this subdued and reserved style of art showed itself in her acting; at first, injuriously, for it made her appear constrained.

The quiet, distinguished manners of Got and Bressant upon the stage had shown her that an actor has no need of gymnastics in order to be effective. These great *artistes* were indifferent to scenery or accessories ; they reposed all confidence in their own strength. Madame Modjeska was so much impressed by this that when she returned to her own stage she adopted an unnaturally quiet manner ; but by degrees this became easy and unconstrained. Monsieur Chlapowski helped her very much in forming her ideas upon dramatic art : he brought her books to read, he read to her, and opened to her mind new vistas of literature. They were engaged, but the marriage was indefinitely postponed. To Madame Modjeska this was a most

delightful period. She was beginning to understand her art as she had never understood it before; she was rapidly improving, and, consequently, she obtained better parts. She gave up burlesque altogether. To her it seemed that now she had awakened from a dream and found real life more charming than she could have imagined it. She had no troubles to disturb her ecstasy; she thought of nothing but art and love. She lived with her mother in some rooms where the balcony at the windows looked upon an avenue of chestnuts and oaks; here she sat in the afternoons, absorbed in thinking of her parts, and dreaming of what she yet might do. Sometimes an idea for some new effect would strike her, and she would become suddenly animated; very often when among her friends or at parties, she would answer at random when addressed; she was abstracted in one of her impersonations. Even at church they followed her, and some artistic conception

would enter her mind; she would rush home, full of it, to try it and fix it in her memory.

About this time a portrait of Madame Modjeska appeared in *L'Artiste*, accompanied by a long criticism on her. This attracted the attention of Dumas fils, and he heard of her rising reputation also from Polish visitors to Paris. He wrote to her, urging her to come there and make an appearance upon the French stage, sending her, at the same time, a copy of "La Dame aux Camélias." It was a very great temptation to receive such an invitation as this; and to a rising actress in Poland an opening upon a foreign stage was the thing above all others to be desired. But, as she threw away her opportunity of playing in German, from a sentiment of enthusiastic patriotism, so now Modjeska wasted a chance of going upon the French stage, from motives which probably few actresses would have entertained. At the first flush the idea seemed delightful; but second thoughts were not so

bright. She remembered many things which made the theatrical profession, in France, the most difficult in the world for a woman. Dress, among French actresses, is an art, and a very expensive one; to appear upon a Parisian stage it is positively necessary to dress beautifully. If the salaries were proportionately high, there would be no hardship in this; but, on the contrary, they are very small—cruelly small. It is impossible for a French actress to keep herself and dress herself upon the salary which she earns in her profession; she must have an income from some other source. Madame Modjeska had her family to provide for as well as herself; and she felt no desire to sacrifice the affections of her friends and her relations, as she must have done had she entered upon the usual career of a French actress. Her home, the love of her mother and of her child, were as much to her as her art; and she knew not whether it would be possible to preserve the domestic

happiness which she now possessed, if she once entered upon the perilous life of the stage in Paris. So she determined to resist the temptation, and to remain where she was at least able to take care of herself, and of those who depended on her.

In 1868, the stage manager from Warsaw, who long ago had seen her and prophesied that she would succeed as a professional, came with a proposal to her to go as a leading lady to the Warsaw theatre. She did not at once decide what to do. She and her mother, and some friends, had been planning an expedition to the Carpathian Mountains for a holiday; the manager was persuaded to go with them, and wait a little while for his answer. They had delightful days, camping out in the mountains; a charming excursion, pleasantly spiced with a certain amount of danger—at night they could hear the bears roaring; they were followed by wolves; [illegible]in Hungary were attacked by robbers.

There was much talking of poetry and art, and everything appeared delightful and romantic.

On their return to Cracow, Madame Modjeska's plans were formed decisively. She accepted the offer to go to Warsaw, to play there, and to arrange a contract with the manager of the theatre. She agreed to delay her marriage no longer. In three weeks from this time she was married; and the very next day she started, with her husband, for Warsaw.

By her marriage she became a member of the Polish aristocracy, and of one of its most exclusive families. A few actresses have married into noble Polish families, but society has not acknowledged them. Madame Modjeska was the first one who was received by her husband's relations with open arms, and, in consequence of this, accepted by Polish society. Her personal merits and great genius gained her that position which she now holds among the *grandes dames* of Poland; for, had she been any other than herself she

would have been kept outside the charmed circle, notwithstanding her marriage. As it is, Madame Chlapowska is received with honour by the society of which she has become a member. In the salons of her own country she is called Madame Chlapowska, but for her public career she decided to keep the name which she had already made famous; thus Modrzejewska (Modjeska) became her *nom de theâtre.*

CHAPTER VII.

In one of the Warsaw journals, before the arrival of Madame Modjeska in that city, appeared an article beginning much after this fashion:

"We hear that a new star is about to appear upon our stage. Now-a-days, every school-girl and every waiting-maid thinks that she can act. But it is not probable that we shall be imposed upon by such delusions. We hope that the newcomer will not be accepted at her own valuation; and, indeed, we have full trust that the public will receive her as she deserves."

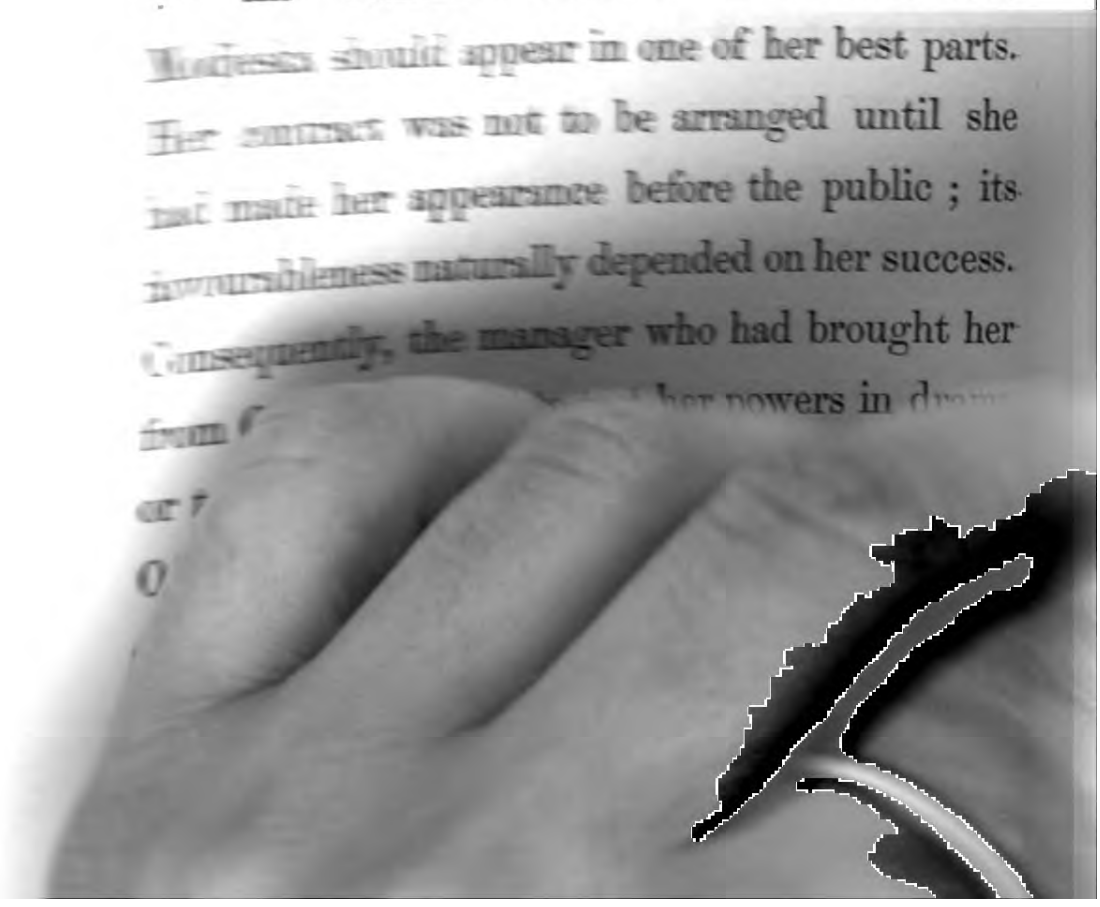
The article was written by the husband of one of the two leading ladies of the theatre. These

[illegible] was quite [illegible] a clique, [illegible] face to any [illegible] the company. [illegible] a newspaper [illegible] a great influence in [illegible] made up her mind [illegible] should not enter it, she [illegible] very cleverly.

[illegible] or "artistic leader," which [illegible] translation of the Polish term [illegible] official, was anxious that Modjeska should appear in one of her best parts. Her contract was not to be arranged until she had made her appearance before the public; its favourableness naturally depended on her success. Consequently, the manager who had brought her from [illegible] her powers in dram[illegible]

or [illegible]

O[illegible]



whole company bristling with objections. The thing was not to be done; they could not be ready to play with her in a tragedy. They avowed themselves prepared, however, to play with her in a burlesque. The manager had to give in; he could not do battle with the whole troupe. A burlesque was put in preparation. Madame Modjeska found she had a charming, merry, laughing part, and she threw herself into the spirit of it. At rehearsal the actors saw at once that she would make a success in this, and they looked at each other in consternation. But a plan was soon concerted.

The same day one of the actors fell ill. Without him it was impossible to put on the burlesque. Something else had to be arranged at once, and a play of Dumas fils was chosen which could be played without this sick member of the company. They had no suspicion that Modjeska knew anything of the play; but she was well aware that her part contained a very lovely, sad situ-

ation, and she accepted the change without any objection. It was a better part for her to appear in, and she studied it with delight. When the play was rehearsed, she gave her speeches well, and acted as if before the public, for she thought, naturally enough, that her business was to show what she could do. When they were going through the sad scene, one of the actors remarked, "She is doing this beautifully!"

This time one of the ladies fell ill. She was indispensable for that play; it could not be put on without her. Again a change must be made.

Modjeska realised now that she was in a camp of enemies. It began to be exciting. But she had no idea what to do. Fortunately there were one or two of the actors who were not in the clique, and who, seeing the position of the new actress, thought it but fair to befriend her. At the next consultation the little coterie were all whispering together as to what was to be done, and Modjeska stood aside, wondering what

the next proposal would be, when one of her friends detached himself from the group and came to her.

"They think you are not strong enough for tragedy, and will fail in it," he said. "Take my advice: if they propose 'Adrienne Lecouvreur' to you, let them think you cannot do it. Don't act or speak out at rehearsal; then they will think you cannot do it."

She took this advice, and agreed with hesitation to play "Adrienne Lecouvreur" when it was suggested. It was put in rehearsal, and she mumbled her words and stood about like a stick.

"This is all right," said the others, and went on with the rehearsal in great good-humour. Thus it was that Madame Modjeska first appeared in Warsaw in "Adrienne Lecouvreur"!

On the night there was much excitement. The clique fancied itself triumphant. But when it came to the scene in the Princess's drawing-room, when Adrienne first rises into tragedy, the

faces of the others who were round her on the stage fell considerably. She could hear them whispering on every side: "She has voice! She has voice! She is strong enough, after all!"

In the last act they recognised that the game was lost for which they had played. Madame Modjeska had outwitted them, and won. Afterwards, when she became one of themselves, these people were all very kind to her, very good-natured. They had only tried to keep her out, and when she showed that she was able to come in, they cherished no personal animosity—except the journalist, whose wife, until her advent, had been the leading lady. He never could forgive her for her intrusion.

As to the public, its decision was made after the recitation of Lafontaine's fable in the second act. During the commencement of the act there was great hesitation, although the audience was favourably impressed by the modest entrance of the new actress, her graceful movements and

charming appearance. The house listened with great attention, and burst into applause after Madame Modjeska had given the delightful story of the two pigeons, with the tenderness and delicacy which are all her own. She was called several times after her first exit, and when at last she was allowed to go behind the wings, she fell on her knees and exclaimed: "Thank God, I am safe!"

The enthusiasm of the audience increased with each act, and at the end displayed itself in an ovation such as the Warsaw stage had never seen before.

Madame Modjeska played "Adrienne Lecouvreur," then, in Polish, in just the same manner as she has since played it in English in London. She has not altered her treatment of it, although she has seen Madame Ristori, Madame Wolte, and Madame Bernhardt in it.

This short engagement in Warsaw was one of the most eventful periods in Madame Modjeska's

life, and her appearance there was a notable incident in the history of the Polish stage. Immediately after the tremendous success of the first night, all the reserved seats were sold in two or three hours, for the whole series of her performances. Many were bought by speculators, who afterwards sold them at enormous prices. The gallery and pit spectators, who are not allowed to secure their seats beforehand, but are compelled to submit to the fatiguing *queue* system, filled the adjacent streets for hours on every occasion when she appeared, in such numbers as to hinder the regular traffic.

Thus Madame Modjeska took at once that leading position upon the stage in Warsaw which she has held ever since. In the week after the first night of her engagement a thousand cards were left at her door. Invitations followed in overwhelming numbers, and she found herself the rage in Warsaw, as since then she has been in other cities.

After that first appearance, the manager of the theatre came to Madame Modjeska and proposed to make a contract with her for her whole life. This required some consideration, but after taking a little time to think about it, Madame Modjeska agreed to sign the contract after some of her own conditions were inserted. One of these was that the management should give her six new parts a year, for she was anxious to work, and she found the theatre excessively conservative. They would run the same play for year after year, so that the actors got no experience, and had no chance of acquiring versatility. Now they have gone to the other extreme in Warsaw, and like to change the play every six weeks. The contract was only for nine performances a month ; every performance beyond that the actress was to be paid for separately. She was given four months holiday in the year, during which she might go away to the mountains for amusement, or she might

engage herself to play in the provinces. Another condition which she made was for a benefit every year, because on her benefit night she had the right to choose the play. The contract commenced from 1869.

During this trial visit to Warsaw, Madame Modjeska played twelve parts in the twenty nights for which she had agreed to appear. After the memorable production of "Adrienne Lecouvreur," she appeared in other translated French dramas, and in some Polish plays. She had no great difficulty in arranging what plays were to be performed, now that the struggle of the first night was over.

At the end of these performances, Madame Modjeska returned to her house in Cracow, and to the theatre there. But she only played for about two months, for the manager was so very angry with her for having contracted with the Warsaw theatre, that he would not engage her any more. The contract did not commence until

the following year, so that she had now nothing to do for some time.

M. Chlapowski was at this time the chief manager of a political paper in Cracow, and was intimately connected with the movements of his political party at the time. Madame Modjeska having no theatrical work, put her art aside for the moment, and allowed herself to enter the current of politics. She tried to gather the prominent men about her, and very soon had a political and literary salon. She entered into the interests of the life, attended lectures, and proved herself to have so good a memory for all that was said, that she became a kind of reporter for the newspaper which was the organ of her husband's party. She was quite contented in this complete interruption to her dramatic career, having the Warsaw engagement before her ; and found her present serious life most interesting. The companionship which it brought her was most charming also. She soon

found what delightful positions there are in the world for a clever woman from which the life of an actress excludes her. Full of intelligence, wit, and sympathy, Madame Modjeska was admirably fitted to hold a salon in some political and literary centre; but in this brief interval was her only chance of showing that she possessed the peculiar capacities for such a position. In her drawing-rooms at Cracow there was the greatest mixture: prominent radicals and aristocrats, scientific men, poets and artists. Some of the older poets were very enthusiastic about the young actress-politician. Liebelt's visit to her will indicate the kind of esteem in which Madame Modjeska's salon was held. M. Liebelt was the greatest philosopher and statician of Poland. He is to the Poles much what Ruskin has been to the English. His home was in Prussian Poland; but while Madame Modjeska was holding her salon in Cracow he came to visit Galicia. He was enter-

tained in Cracow, by the members of the Academy, at a great dinner. After it was over, he said, "Come now; the best thing we can do is to go and call on Madame Modjeska."

So on that evening her reception was made larger by a party of very distinguished visitors.

On one occasion, when a new political party was made up, one reason given for choosing M. Chlapowski for the editor of its organ was that his wife's salon had so much influence. There the Liberals met, still clinging to the remnant of the secret national government. Modjeska devoted herself to the task of keeping their enemies out of the way, and the innocent part of the company amused, in order that the conspirators should have opportunities of discussion. She found herself soon so absorbed in all this, as to be quite another woman. She forgot the stage, did not even study for it. For the moment she was absolutely in the whirl, body and soul, that surrounds the wife of a

political man. It was this period of her life which earned for her the name, which has been given her by some romantic journalists of her own country, of the Polish Jeanne d'Arc. When she went with her husband to Warsaw, they were watched by the police as suspected conspirators.

CHAPTER VIII.

With the commencement of the Warsaw engagement, politics were put aside. M. Chlapowski had to choose between his own career and that of his wife. It was impossible for both to be followed. He thought that many men might fill his position, but that his wife's dramatic career showed promise of a unique character. He had entirely given up writing dramatic criticisms since his acquaintance with Madame Modjeska, as it appeared to him unfair to judge others, influenced as he must be by his admiration for her. In Warsaw, therefore, he had no further connection with the press, but

entered for the time being upon a business career.

The Warsaw theatres are very large, but principally given up to the boxes of the nobility, and the performances are arranged to please the taste of the Russian authorities, who are very fond of scenic effects and ballets. The manager of the theatre is always a general in the service of the Russian Government, and is called the President. The actual working of the theatrical business is done by an assistant manager, but the President alone has the power to put on or change a play, or to exercise any final authority. He has some six hundred persons under his control, including the *corps de ballet.*

The President of the Imperial Theatre was M. Muchanow, a man of great intelligence. His wife, Madame Kalerdgi, had been a celebrated beauty. She was a Princess Nesselrode, a *grande dame Russe.* Napoleon had been one of her many admirers, and had wished to marry her. Madame

Kalerdgi was very musical, and numbered Chopin among her friends ; she was also a great friend of Alfred de Musset, of Liszt, and of Wagner ; the latter dedicated several works to her. She held a charming salon, and every celebrity who passed through Warsaw went to her house, where all who had talent, all who loved art and music, were entertained. The Rubensteins often went there, also Joachim, Tansig, Bulow, Wilhelm, and all the artists of rank. Madame Kalerdgi possessed a most refined nature ; she was full of *esprit.* When she applauded at the theatre the actors knew that they had done well. She was of the greatest assistance to Madame Modjeska in her artistic work. She helped her both by her conversation, and also by her influence at the theatre. Neither the President nor his wife thought Madame Modjeska too small or too thin for tragedy.

Modjeska was now very anxious to produce a Shakesperian play properly. When she went to

Warsaw, the only form in which they knew Shakespeare was in translations from the French. They had put "Hamlet" on the stage, translated from French Alexandrines into Polish Alexandrines, and with alterations in the play made by the French translator. Madame Modjeska proposed to give Shakespeare translated from the original English into good Polish. The President agreed to this innovation, and Madame Modjeska arranged to play Juliet on her first benefit night. When she went to the assistant manager about it, he exclaimed: "Oh, my dear Madame, it is impossible; it will not succeed. Plays that are *adapted from operas* never answer, I assure you!"

However, the experiment was made, notwithstanding the manager's unique objection. "Romeo and Juliet" was put on, but with a wretched cast, and no scenery. The Romeo was an amateur, who was chosen because he [illegible] more appreciation of the part than the

actors of the theatre. They were thoroughly accustomed to the spirit of French drama, and had no idea of the intensity of this Shakespearian lover. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the play was well received, and was kept on the bills every now and then until '76.

The dramatic company was an excellent one, worthy to rank with that of the Comédie Française in Paris, and of the Burg Theatre in Vienna. Among its members were Zolkowski, Krolikovski, Swieszewski, Madame Bakalovicz, and many other excellent artists. Through Madame Modjeska's influence new actors were engaged for the Warsaw stage; her old companion Rapacki came from Cracow, and Mesdemoiselles Popiel and Deryng from Lemberg. Felix Benda took two short engagements in Warsaw, and would have become a permanent member of the company but for his premature death. Madame Modjeska did not limit her influence to the introduction of new blood into

the company. She employed all the means in her power to raise and to enlarge the *répertoire* of the theatre, both by translations of foreign plays, and by the production of modern Polish pieces. It was to her that the author or translator came, if he wanted to see his work quickly put upon the stage. When her comrades wanted to obtain an increase of salary or any improvement in their position, it was to her they applied. In fact, Madame Modjeska became, in Warsaw, as she had been in Cracow, the life and soul of the theatre. All the time she was there, she lived in a state of chronic warfare with the Russian Censor. She gave him more trouble than anyone else, because she exercised the right she had bargained for—of playing fresh parts. Every year the Censor had six new plays to read for her. As a rule he would refuse to allow three of these to be played. He refused to allow "Hamlet" to be produced in a proper translation, because the king is murdered in it.

In this case Madame Modjeska overcame his objections by representing to him that this would have no effect upon the people, as it was merely a family murder.

One play which she wanted to put on had a Polish king in it. The Censor would not allow it, unless the king were turned into a prince, the idea being that such a thing as a Polish king was impossible and absurd. So the king was turned into a prince in the play-bills, but the actors gave him his royal title on the stage. A Polish crown was not permitted to be carried on to the stage; it had to be replaced with a wreath of laurel. Obscure allusions to the country and its condition were continually suspected in the plays. A passage of any enthusiasm addressed by a man to the woman he loved, they would analyse in order to find hidden references to the country. On one occasion they objected to such a passage.

"But," said Madame Modjeska, "he speaks of

her beautiful eyes. Has the country beautiful eyes?"

She was constantly supposed to be rousing the people or affecting them by her impersonations. But her aims were not political: what she desired was to elevate the stage, and improve the Polish drama. She read the accounts of Mr. Irving's appearance in Hamlet, and could not sleep at night for thinking of it. She longed to come to London, only to see a Shakespearian play properly put upon the stage. But she knew no English, so that this was only a dream. She began, after the idea had entered her head, to take some lessons in English; but her teacher was so bad that when, afterwards, she attempted to use the little she had learned, no one could understand her pronunciation. The only English book she had was Tennyson's "Queen Mary," which was too much for her; she could not discover its meaning.

"Hamlet," translated from the English, was a

great success in Warsaw. The people in the streets used to follow Madame Modjeska about and call her Ophelia ; they were quite Shakespeare mad.

Everybody talked of her.

In the country houses where people were staying for months together, and thus saw nothing of the new star of Warsaw, they continually heard of her in letters, and from fresh visitors. When first these arrived, if they came from the town, they always said contemptuously :

" Ah, you have not seen Modrzejewska ! "

The Poles are extraordinarily hospitable, they entertain without grudge. At every table in the large houses some extra places are laid ready for unexpected guests—as they say, " for the traveller that comes over the sea." It is possible, in Poland, to go uninvited to visit your friend, taking your children, your servants and horses, and to stay five or six weeks without receiving any hint to go. The Poles are fond of

gaiety, of amusement, of society; they love pleasure in all its bright and charming forms. The country houses are constantly full of visitors, and in the winter there is often the "Kulig," a gathering which increases as it goes from house to house. It is taken from a peasant custom, and the nobles, when they get up a "Kulig," wear the peasant costumes, very beautifully made. They go over the snow in sledges from house to house, dancing for two or three days at one, and then going on to another, taking the people of the house which they leave, with them. At last there are perhaps twenty sledges all full of people, dressed in bright colours and singing the songs of the "Kulig." At every house they dance the characteristic dances of the occasion: the *Krakomiak*, the *Mazur*, and the *Oberek*. The first is a very pretty and peculiar dance, in which the partners continually turn away from each other, and then come face to face; the *Mazur* is something like the quadrille, though it

is by no means the same ; the *Oberek* resembles a waltz danced the reverse way, and with a very pretty and characteristic figure, in which the man kneels on one knee and kisses his partner's hand. These are all most charming and pretty, and the Poles dance with enthusiasm as well as grace. They have many national customs and ceremonies which are occasions for dancing and pleasure. Then, in the autumn and winter, there is boar-hunting. In this way, with these various amusements, the time passes in the country houses, and visitors will stay six weeks, or perhaps six months. When Madame Modjeska was playing in Warsaw, one of her now intimate friends first heard her name while staying at a country house on a long visit. Continually letters came containing descriptions of the new actress, and every fresh visitor talked incessantly of her. Those who had been living in the country and had not seen her, grew quite weary of the name ; at last they put up a paper bearing

this inscription: "It is forbidden to speak of Modrzejewska!"

When Mademoiselle Wolska, who thus first made acquaintance with the name of Modjeska, returned to Warsaw, she persuaded her father to go with her to see the great actress of whom everyone talked, for she found the name of Modrzejewska on every tongue, and it was impossible to go into society without having something to say about her.

M. Wolski was disinclined to go, for he had seen Rachel in New York, and he did not believe that there could be any actress worth seeing, after her. The play was "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and like the Warsaw public M. Wolski was won over by the beautiful recitation of the fable.

"If Madame Modrzejewska would go to America," he said, "she would have an immense success there."

His daughter laughed at the idea. "How

is it possible," she said, "for her to go and play in America in the Polish language?"

It seemed impossible, indeed, for the favourite of Warsaw to become a star in America; yet M. Wolski has seen his prophecy fulfilled.

In the autumn of 1870 Madame Modjeska fell seriously ill. She had been suffering for some time, and had become subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. Doubtless the incessant activity of her life had something to do with the state she fell into. Often she would go to two or three receptions at night and return home so late—or rather so early—the next day, that there was no time to do anything but change her dress before rehearsal. Her life was all excitement, and it tried her beyond her strength. With her usual determination, she persevered with her work and struggled against her illness. One night when she was playing the part of Amelia in Schiller's "Robbers," where she has to fall down dead

at the end of the last act, she remained upon the ground like one really dead. She had no strength left to raise herself. M. Chlapowski, with the help of a friend, got her to her carriage, and she was taken home, just as she was, in her stage dress. She was laid upon her bed, where she remained for six weeks, for it was an attack of typhus fever which had at last completely prostrated her. For six months this illness kept her away from the theatre. While she lay hovering between life and death, hundreds of people came daily to her door to inquire after her, the papers gave an account every day of her state, and there was the greatest anxiety felt in the town and all over the country. Oddly enough, at this very time, another Madame Modrzejewska died in Warsaw, and when the event was announced, everyone supposed the great actress was dead. The news spread like wild-fire, and in an hour all the streets leading to the house were crowded with

people, and the theatre was besieged by anxious inquirers as to the truth of the report.

When at last Madame Modjeska appeared again, after the absence caused by her illness, her return was made the occasion of a general fête, and it would be difficult to describe in words the enthusiasm with which she was greeted.

During her stay in Warsaw, Madame Modjeska improved very much in her art. She had an immense *répertoire*, and played in parts of very different character, appearing sometimes in high-class comedy, sometimes in strong tragedy. In tragedy her most successful parts were Ophelia, Juliet, Desdemona, Queen Anne in "Richard III.," Louisa Miller, Marie Stuart, the Princess Eboli of Schiller, Marion Delorme, the Thisbé of Victor Hugo, and the Mazeppa of Slowacki. In comedy her favourite characters were Beatrice in "Much Ado about Nothing," and Donna Diana in an old play of that name, translated from the Spanish ; she played most

of the modern French and Polish *répertoire.* She appeared also in almost all the leading female parts in the plays of Legouvé, Dumas father and son, Augier, Alfred de Musset, Feuillet and Sardou. Her Dalila, Mademoiselle de Belleisle, Princess George, &c., were quite equal to her Adrienne Lecouvreur in delicacy and emotional power.

It was, however, in a new Polish play called "The Innocents," a piece of great philosophical depth, that her powers first showed themselves fully. It seemed as if in studying this she had really mastered all the finish of her art, and her talent assumed quite a new character. She gave, in this play, an admirable psychological study, perfect in all its details.

To reach a standard of excellence in so many characters means a great deal of hard work. In this respect Madame Modjeska has never spared herself; she possesses an extraordinary industry. At this time she worked very hard;

and her life was not only active at the theatre and in her profession, but was much absorbed by the requirements of society, for she went out, and received incessantly. Her house had again become a centre, where the prominent people of Warsaw met, and where everyone of note was to be seen. Literary men and artists crowded about her, and once more she had a charming and brilliant salon. Such a position as this which she now held in Warsaw was certainly very pleasant, but it had also its natural drawbacks. The great influence which she exercised, both in theatrical circles and in society, could not continue without creating some considerable amount of envy. In Warsaw public life is limited to its minimum by the Government, and, consequently, theatrical matters occupy a very important position. Envy is full of invention, and those who are jealous find many ways of hurting the person favoured by the

public. Naturally enough, there were grumblings against the quasi-dictatorship of Madame Modjeska, and against the innovations and changes which she introduced. These feelings found expression in certain journals, and Madame Modjeska, conscious that she was working for the general good, and being possibly too sensitive to slight attacks, took them very much to heart and felt them very deeply. She suffered a great loss at this time in the death of Madame Kalerdgi, who had been to her so invaluable a friend. Not long afterwards, her brother, Felix Benda, died, and this was the greatest possible affliction, for he was always the best and dearest of friends. On the very evening of the day he died she had to play ; she implored them to let her off, but the President was away, and in his absence no one had a right to change the bills. She dreaded the performance, for—strange coincidence!—she had a scene upon the stage in

which she had to weep over a dead brother's body. When she went on, her voice trembled so much that she could hardly speak ; and she could only just control her agitation. She heard afterwards, that this was understood to be because her reception was not so good as she had expected. This was one of her first experiences of how careless the public is in its judgments of its favourites ; before long she was to learn a yet more cruel lesson. Troubles are fond of company ; when one comes, more inevitably follow. Monsieur Chlapowski lost his brother also about this time ; and there were other domestic troubles which made Poland no longer seem like a home. Madame Modjeska did not recover her strength or spirits ; she was still out of health, and thus felt every trouble very keenly. The doctors advised her to have change ; to go on a long sea-voyage. She had begun to long for another country, and her husband to wish that she should leave

the stage and live a less exciting life, when something occurred which made them finally decide that she should do so. M. Chlapowski was away when it happened, looking after the property of his brother, from whom he had a small inheritance.

An author, who had written a play, wished to read it to Madame Modjeska in order that she might take an interest in its production. She asked him to come to dinner and to read it afterwards. Feeling weary and content, she ensconced herself in an easy-chair, to listen in comfort ; but unfortunately she fell asleep, and had a delightful rest, not waking up until the reading was well into the third act.

"Ah!" said the author, "you have had a nice nap!"

"No, no!" exclaimed Madame Modjeska, in consternation. "I have heard it all!"

"Indeed you have not, Madame!" said the indignant author, "you have slept very well!"

He said no more, but went away with his heart full of anger and revenge. The play was put on, another actress playing the heroine. The character was that of a frivolous, faithless, wicked woman ; and her husband, in the play, was deceived, and very jealous of her. The author gave the actress the idea of what he wanted done, which was to personate her rival in this unpleasant character ; but the lady had not the courage to imitate Modjeska, who she knew would be in the President's box. But Monsieur Chlapowski was away, and the actor who played the husband, knowing this, consented to make himself up to represent him. Monsieur Chlapowski was sufficiently known in Warsaw for his ways, his familiar expressions of speech, and all the little details which make up the manner of a person, to be very well recognised by the public. The likeness was evident, and the intention of the impersonation was quickly

understood. The audience was divided between amusement and disgust. Some of the people in the boxes left the theatre because they would not countenance the insult; and many in the body of the house followed their example. Madame Modjeska sat in her box crying bitterly, when she heard the vile insinuations, and at last fainted away.

The next day the President spoke to the actor, and told him that he must alter his style and appearance, so that he should no longer resemble Monsieur Chlapowski. But the thing could not be undone. Madame Modjeska longed to go to another country, among different people. She said, "Let us go away. I have lived in my art—I have tried to raise the stage, and to give the best to the public, and all they do is to throw dirt at me!" In her state of health, and with a sense of loneliness upon her, from the loss of her brother, the insult appeared unbearable. Monsieur Chla-

powski was now really anxious for her to leave the stage altogether. He thought her too sensitive for the life; a little unkindness disturbed her so deeply. She was still weak after her illness, unable to recover from the loss of her brother and friend, and really too nervous for the exciting life of the stage. At this time they felt free to leave Warsaw, and for Madame Modjeska to give up her profession, at all events for a time, as Monsieur Chlapowski proposed to buy a farm with the money he had inherited.

One day when they were discussing the idea, they got out a map to see what country they would like to go to. They had nothing to guide them, no choice or taste in the matter. A friend who was with them said that California was a nice place.

"Let us go there, then!" exclaimed Madame Modjeska.

She persuaded her friend the President to

grant her two years leave of absence, which he did verbally. So there was nothing to hinder them from starting at once, except that they did not know exactly where to go, and did not speak the language of America. They tried to find a place to go to, by the assistance of friends ; but this only led to disappointment and trouble. At last they determined to sail and find a home for themselves.

She took her farewell of the public in a last performance ; and the people, realising that they were going to lose her, called her so often that her strength gave way and she could not stand. A chair was brought her on the stage, and when the curtain was raised she bowed to the audience, who were wild with enthusiasm. It seemed to her that they treated her as a spoiled child is treated—they were ready to slander her and speak ill of her ; but when they found she was really going away, they overwhelmed her with caresses. The spirit of

coquetry rose within her—she thought: "When I am gone altogether, you will want me back."

"How will you live without all this?" asked the President and her friends, who thought the farm a wild, poetic dream which would soon fade away when tested by reality.

"Oh," she said, "very likely I shall learn English and play on the American stage."

They laughed her to scorn. What an absurd idea! They treated the suggestion, which she threw out in mere defiance, as the most ridiculous thing in the world. It was not only ridiculous, but impossible! Afterwards, when she was making the attempt in terrible earnest, she remembered this laughter, and it helped to spur her on.

As yet she hardly realised that she was going so far from home. She was bound to return to the Imperial Theatre, and she supposed that when the farm was well-established and her health thoroughly restored, she would come

back to Warsaw. She had never seen the sea, and knew nothing of what she was going to. She left Warsaw amid the tears of the people, who crowded the street to see her go, and cried, "Come back, come back!" They loved her, after all, for she was one of themselves, a pure Pole.

The train in which she left the town was all decorated by the people, and the car she occupied was like an orangery, so covered with leaves and flowers that it was impossible to recognise it as an ordinary railway carriage.

Before leaving the country altogether, Modjeska went to play a short engagement of two or three weeks in Lemberg. She was a great favourite there, and all the leave-taking was repeated in the theatre and streets of this town.

The travellers went to Bremen, and from there started for New York. The sea-voyage took thirteen days, and it gave new strength,

new hope and new thoughts, to the tired actress. She felt as if a fresh life were opening out to her, with recovered health and the charm of strange surroundings. A total change of climate, country, and occupations, will sometimes bring back one's early youth, recreating mind and body alike.

CHAPTER IX.

ARRIVED in New York, the first person whom the Polish actress encountered was a countryman—a Polish Jew selling matches. The sound of her own language was pleasant even from him! Fortunately for her, they met, soon afterwards, some Polish friends. Thus they had some companions with whom they could go and see the sights of New York. But New York at this season was much too hot to be agreeable, so at the end of August they started again upon their journey. This voyage proved to be an adventurous one. They embarked in the steamer *Colon*, and after four days at sea there

was an accident. The captain was reading prayers, when suddenly there came a terrible noise, a fearful sound as if hundreds of plates were being broken. Steam came into the saloon and soon filled it—everyone became terrified to the last degree. Madame Modjeska ran to her cabin, put on a life-belt, and snatched her little travelling-bag, in which she had some jewellery and lace. The scene on deck was one of utter bewilderment. M. Chlapowski implored his wife to throw her little bag of valuables overboard. He thought they would burden her and perhaps cost her her life if she had to trust herself to the water; but she, wisely, would not part with them while it was possible to keep them. One of the passengers, a very fashionable young man, came on deck with his life-preserver on—and then suddenly turned to rush down to his cabin again. Of course those who noticed him supposed he had gone for some valuables. When he returned, he was carrying a small

looking-glass and a comb! Another man was hugging a bottle of whiskey—his treasure that he would not part with. However, the vessel did not sink. It was a steam-pipe which had burst, and the only lives lost were those of two men who were scalded in the boiling steam. There was a funeral for these poor sailors, and then the boat was tugged back to New York by a little English steamer.

The next start was made in a dirty little vessel, which, however, carried them safely to Panama, where they changed again. Madame Modjeska was delighted with all she saw in Panama—everything was so new, so beautiful in her eyes. The picturesque people charmed her. The voyage on the Pacific was even more enjoyable ; the air was life-giving, and everything about her was so bright and so fresh that she forgot her old excitement; her work upon the stage appeared like a thing of the past, gone for ever. She found enough to fill her mind in observing

the sea and the sky, the beautiful birds and the many sights of the ocean. She fancied that now she would always be happy, living in nature and having no more anxieties or sorrows than the birds or the creatures of the woods. It was a lovely, a glorious passage; one of those charming experiences which seldom come more than once in a life-time. The rest, the beautiful air, the mental repose of watching from day to day the charms and the changes of nature, worked a wonderful cure. Madame Modjeska arrived at San Francisco strong and well. Her weariness had passed away.

John McCullough had his theatre in San Francisco at this time, and Edwin Booth was playing with him. Some friends of Madame Modjeska's brought Mr. McCullough to see her at her hotel. She spoke to him in German and a friend acted as interpreter, rendering her conversation into English, and Mr. McCullough's into German. Mr. McCullough asked her

whether she would play Ophelia in Polish with Booth. This was talked of, but never done. Madame Modjeska first saw Mr. Booth in the streets—she caught sight of his face, and turned to look after him, saying to her companion: "That must be an actor — that must be Booth!"

Afterwards she saw him play Mark Antony to McCullough's Julius Cæsar; and saw him in the "Merchant of Venice." This was the first time she had seen Shakespeare played by an English-speaking actor, and it delighted her beyond measure. It was so much more natural and easy than any representation of Shakespeare which she had seen in German or Polish. Although she did not understand English, she appreciated Booth's acting immensely; she thought him magnificent in Mark Antony. She saw Florence also, during this short stay of three weeks in San Francisco, where she found the climate delicious and life altogether very enjoy-

able. In the meantime some friends went into the country to look for a farm, and when they had succeeded in hiring one, Monsieur Chlapowski and Madame Modjeska left San Francisco for their new home, where the great experiment of a simple life was to be tried.

CHAPTER X.

ANYONE who has read "Brook Farm" will have some idea of what the new experiment was like. It was made by people brought up in cities, accustomed certainly to industry, but to the industry of civilisation. To the town-bred man, the country is not natural, but very strange. Some special training is necessary in order to arrive at success in any pursuit, as we all find out sooner or later; and farming is no more possible without experience, than acting, or writing on politics. The mysteries of the sky and the soil, of earth and her products, cannot be guessed at. Those who enter into the knowledge of them

must serve a noviciate. This is a fact little appreciated by beginners.

Monsieur Chlapowski's cousin and his wife were of the party; and there was another friend, who understood farming theoretically. Then there was a Polish maid-servant, fresh from a convent and new to the world altogether.

They found their farm stocked; there were horses and cows and poultry. Yet, strange to say, for some time milk was bought for the household, and the cows led a merely ornamental existence, for the simple reason that no one knew how to milk them. The difficulty had to be overcome, at last, by getting an Indian man-servant who was capable of milking the cows. In other matters these new farmers were not much wiser, though they were very industrious. They would have no one to help them because, as they said, they intended to be farmers and do their own work. They were full of the enthusiasm of their new mode of life, and talked

of how they had left civilisation and all its weaknesses and follies behind them. They were going to be simple, living in nature, working with their own hands, and reaping the reward of health and content. But, of course, commencing in this way in ignorance of their new profession, they did a great deal of work without producing any substantial results. The gentlemen rode about the fields in the morning, looking after the land; at home Madame Modjeska battled with the dust, which was for ever making forcible entrance into the house. It was unbearable to her that the house should always be dusty and dirty, and she was up, broom in hand, at half-past six in the morning. Her cousin watered the flowers in the garden, for it was a dry season. But in the meantime, the neighbours, finding that there were only women in the house in the mornings, drove their cows up to the farm to eat the barley put out for the cattle belonging to it. Then the poultry had no proper house,

and the hens laid their eggs in nests of their own choosing, about the garden; this would not have mattered much, except that the quickest egg-finder was the house-dog, who had developed a wicked taste for this kind of food, and went round first in the morning, making his breakfast. All the details of managing these animals that should be so profitable on a farm had to be learned by dire and bitter experience. Even killing the poultry for food was not found to be an easy task; when a turkey was wanted for Christmas, it took three gentlemen to kill it. When the pigs were salted, the brine was made so strong that the bacon would do to feed no one but the pigs themselves. These things, however, are learned by a little experience; but it takes a great deal of experience and a good deal of capital, to do battle with drought. As ill-luck would have it, the season was a dry one, and this was ruinous; nevertheless, these enthusiastic farmers lived in hope: it must rain some

day. Then, too, they expected a great profit from their oranges; unfortunately their trees were all quite young, too small to bear. But still, that orange harvest was something to look forward to. Only, in the meantime, the farm was sucking up money instead of rain. Madame Modjeska, seeing this, became very anxious and unhappy. She was home-sick, too ; for the life was all strange. And, by degrees, a longing for her old work was returning upon her.

But the pleasures and pains of this time were about equally balanced. Sometimes she would ride off alone, and give way to a mood of intense home-sickness and unhappiness. Sometimes the little society had charming evenings, after the day's work was done. There was a poet among their number who read aloud his productions to them when he had written anything new. Then they had with them all Monsieur Chlapowski's library, and a piano, so that books and music made their leisure pleasant. Now and then

Madame Modjeska recited to the small audience of the little circle in which she lived. This was at night, after the glorious sunsets which make the skies of California a daily wonder. But in the morning Madame Modjeska was sweeping again, or looking after the washing of the linen; for the servants had as much as they could do, and to give the linen to the Chinamen to wash cost a great deal. So she presided over the wash-tub, wearing a fanciful short black dress with a red stripe round the skirt, and white puffed sleeves on her shoulders. It was all a comedy, in which she played the lead. On the stage it might have made money; but enacted in real life, and without an audience, it was not profitable. The neighbours were most kind, and did all that could be done to help these strays from civilisation; but they could not give them experience. Madame Modjeska began to see that matters were going from bad to worse: the rain did not come; the oranges were still far

away in the future. It seemed to her that her sweeping was very useless—there was always dust just the same. She became miserable and afraid. When, at the end of three months, the little community proposed to leave this hired farm and sink more money in buying one, she determined to have no part in the venture. She felt a premonition that the result would be a total disappearance of the capital, and a continued absence of rain and of oranges. Then, too, her rest from dramatic work was beginning to have an effect upon her. The old spirit of longing was arising within her. She began to think, "I cannot live like this—I must go back to the stage, and move people's hearts again!" She had recovered her strength, and her inspiration grew with it. The idea seized upon her of learning English, and returning to her old profession in this new country. She could not speak the language at all yet, notwithstanding the lessons which she had had in Warsaw. For

one thing, on the farm they heard more Spanish spoken than anything else, and learned that language first. Her lessons in English had been very bad, and had done her more harm than good. She had read an English book, with the aid of a dictionary, Ouida's "Under Two Flags!" This feat took three months; she began the novel in Warsaw and finished it at the farm. Encouraged by this triumph of perseverance, she determined to study the language in good earnest. She told Mr. Chlapowski that she had not the faith of the others in the coming harvest of oranges, and that she had determined to go to San Francisco, and prepare herself for the English stage. So she gave the enthusiasts her blessing, and M. Chlapowski took her to San Francisco, where he left her with some friends. These friends, Monsieur and Madame Bielawska, were very kind to her, and she remained as their guest. M. Chlapowski rejoined the farming community, who still looked

forward to reaping immense sums by their industry, and were for ever expecting oranges. But luck was against them, it would not rain.

This was in February 1877. Madame Modjeska began to study the language now in good earnest. She commenced regular exercises, and when she was not working at her books, she was endeavouring to talk to her friend, Madame Bielawska, who was an Englishwoman. She had no opportunity to do anything but study, for she could not speak, and she had no money to go away. To go home to Warsaw was an impossibility. She could not escape from the position she was in, so that she had no chance but to cling to her idea of working for the English stage. After she had been staying with Madame Bielawska some time, and could speak a little, Monsieur Chlapowski came to San Francisco again, and took a small flat for her to live in. He brought her boy with him and left him to be her companion. He stayed a few days,

and then again went back to the country. The farm was a serious loss now—partly by lack of rain, partly because it had been managed, so far as it was managed, on the theoretic principles of Polish farming. M. Chlapowski had wished to learn from the Californian farmers; but his partners in misfortune believed in the theories they had imbibed at home. The result was failure; and M. Chlapowski had now determined on a new venture. He and one of his friends took a bee-ranch, and started for it, leaving the others in charge of the farm. This, of course, meant further expenditure. The land had to be paid for; then they had to take the hives for the bees, and a house for themselves. This last was one of the little wooden buildings common in California, which can be taken to pieces and carried on a cart. When erected, it had just room enough in it to shelter the two and their dog.

But this new undertaking met with no more

luck than the others. There was a strain of misfortune running through these ventures which, treated by Bret Harte, would be very funny. But to the sufferers there was more of tragedy than comedy, at the time, in their ill-luck.

Rain refused to fall; and one fine day the bee-hives were empty. The bees had swarmed up to some land farther north where it was not so dry.

While this was happening, Madame Modjeska was working steadily on in San Francisco with her teacher and friend, Miss Joanna Tuholska, an American of Polish origin.

CHAPTER XI.

To most people, acting in a foreign language appears a wonderful feat. Even to a clever linguist the idea of imparting impressions and appearing perfectly natural in a language not learned in one's infancy would seem alarming. Yet on the possibility of doing this depended Madame Modjeska's future. Sometimes it looked like a very dark and hopeless chance to her. At home, when she first thought of attempting it, to learn English did not appear difficult. She could speak German and French, why not the language of America and England? But when she was in America, and heard this

language, which sounded to her like the twittering of birds, it appeared an impossibility for a foreigner to study it. Nevertheless she would not be discouraged. She saw no other prospect: her pride would not have allowed her to return to Warsaw, even if she had had the means, for she had talked there of learning English and acting in it, and the others had laughed at her for entertaining such a wild dream for a moment. It would have had a disagreeable flavour of failure if she had gone home and confessed that though compelled to return to her old work, she could not study a language sufficiently to go upon the foreign stage. Another and more serious obstacle presented itself. It is a long journey from San Francisco to Warsaw, and she had not the means to undertake it, so that she must either submit to fall with the fortunes of the unlucky farmers, and be a burden on those already over-burdened, or she must make the great plunge, and go upon the English stage.

She had received verbal leave from the President of the Warsaw theatre for two years; but while she was working in San Francisco at her studies, came a letter requiring her to write every three months asking for prolongation of leave. She was alarmed by this; she saw that escape was not so easy, and that she might be compelled to pay the fine. But she could not return to her post without borrowing money from her own country; and in preference to this she determined to work, in order to earn what she wanted, and to attain a position in which she would be able to pay the fine.

She very often walked alone upon the sea-shore; and she had selected a favourite spot which she often visited. She determined, if she should fail, that here, where the sea was so beautiful, she would end the struggle. Better be food for the fishes than a burden to those who loved her. It was impossible but that she should feel very sad and despairing sometimes, away from her

home and her country, her husband following a forlorn hope, and she herself preparing for such a doubtful venture. She often wondered whether her style would suit the American taste; she could only hope as to this. When she was very unhappy she would go to the convents for comfort. The kind nuns of Notre Dame spoke to her in French, and consoled her. She went to the theatre sometimes; it was at this period that she saw Coghlan, playing Iago, Claude Melnotte, and Hamlet. She admired him immensely in these characters, especially in Iago; and has never been able to understand why he should have restricted himself to modern comedy, instead of showing his power in the higher walk of the classical drama. She considers that, if he had devoted himself to this line, he would have surpassed every other English-speaking actor.

One of her cures for unhappiness was a visit to a hospital or prison; this gave her courage, for she saw people more wretched than herself

who yet lived on, and had hope. The churches she went to constantly; she knew them all. Though she spoke little English yet, she went about the city a great deal with her son, endeavouring to understand America and the ways of Americans. She experienced many new and strange sensations; as, for instance, the moment of amazement when she first saw a house move away entire, before her eyes, from one street to another; the first time she saw a church with a board on it, "To Let," and the other queer details of life in San Francisco. She went to look at the Chinese quarter, and study the people about the tea-houses from a distance. Life was so novel to her here that it appeared to her as if she lived more in a month than in a year at home.

All day long she worked at this difficult language; and now she had a teacher who was of the utmost assistance to her, Miss Joanna Tuholska. This friend devoted herself to her;

spent all day, and even the evening, with her; walked out with her, and helped her to study her parts. She would only talk English; and as these two had many feelings, interests, and enthusiasms in common, Madame Modjeska, in her desire to express herself, became by degrees more fluent. Still she could not relate a story or anecdote to her friend. That amount of ease had yet to come.

As soon as she commenced to learn the language, she had begun to study the second act of "Adrienne Lecouvreur" in English. Now she knew the entire part; and sometimes, down upon the sea-shore, in some lonely spot, she would go through it all, her friend Miss Tuholska giving her her cues. She learned Cleopatra at this time also, and enjoyed the reciting of this great part (which she has never played in English) more than any other. After this she studied Juliet in English; and all the time she was exercising her voice, making

it stronger; for naturally it was high and rather weak. She would sit by the shore, reciting aloud for hours, attuning her voice to the low sound of the sea. Miss Tuholska persevered with wonderful patience; correcting all that her pupil had learned wrongly from her old teacher in Warsaw, and endeavouring to give her a good pronunciation. For she was most anxious to see her friend succeed in her venture.

At last Madame Modjeska thought she was ready for the trial; and taking her courage in both hands, wrote to Mr. McCullough, asking him whether he would give her a night to make her appearance.

He was away and did not get the letter. Then she wrote to Mr. Burton Hill, his partner and secretary, asking him to come and see her. Mr. Hill came, and was extremely polite; called her Madame la Comtesse, and treated her as he might treat a distinguished lady who

desired his acquaintance; but he said nothing decided in reply to her proposal. She waited for a little while, hoping for a letter from him; but none came. She felt now that the knife was at her throat; she had no money, she was fighting hand to hand with fortune. Determined to win in the battle, she went to see Mr. Burton Hill, with her kind friend Miss Tuholska.

Mr. Hill was again very polite, but, after the usual custom of managers, he was busy. His idea of Madame Modjeska was that she was a countess, who had a fancy for acting; he did not regard her as an actress. This hurt her pride very much. She had been a professional for so many years, and had been the desired of managers in her own country for so long, that it seemed very strange to have to convince a manager that she was not an amateur, a mere raw outsider, desiring to make a rash experiment on his stage.

To wait on a manager in this way was a new experience to her; and when she was put off again, because Mr. Hill was busy, she went away bitterly humiliated. Her pride suffered as in all her struggles with fortune it had never suffered before. She had one consolation—she had not told M. Chlapowski that she had begun to make her attempt, so he knew nothing of the tortures of wounded pride which she was undergoing. No one who has not asked for an engagement—begged for an opportunity to exhibit untried talents—can imagine what a proud woman suffers in such a position. The rebuffs she receives, the delays, the sneers sometimes, are like blows on the face; and for a long while the remembrance of them cuts like a knife. The indifference of managers, their rooted aversion for anyone whom they regard as an outsider, the difficulty of getting them even to look at a criticism or a recommendation—these are hard to struggle against; but Madame

Modjeska was determined that Mr. Hill should be made to know that it was an actress, not an amateur, who was applying to him. She went again, and this time went early, before the time he had fixed ; she had to wait till he was disengaged. Then he wanted to go out, but she would not let him go.

"Here I am, Mr. Hill," she said, "and this is the hour you appointed. You don't think I am an actress ; but I am, and I am determined to act in English. Will you hear me in one of my parts, and then perhaps you will give me a date? I offer to let you hear me, which is both humiliating and funny to me, because I am accustomed to be known."

"May I be remorseless," he asked, "in saying what I think?"

"Certainly," said Madame Modjeska, who was beginning to feel her spirit roused by his manner. "Only you must be quiet and not interrupt me."

"Very well," he answered. "We will go into the concert-room."

Madame Modjeska went through the last act of "Adrienne Lecouvreur" with her friend Miss Tuholska, who gave the speeches of Michonnet and Maurice de Saxe. She represented the character better than she had ever done it before, in English; her spirit was stung and roused.

When she had finished, Mr. Burton Hill said: "We will give you a week." She had only asked for one night.

The first step was accomplished. She had convinced a manager it was worth while to give her a trial; now she had to win the public.

She had very little fear about her first appearance. Afterwards, when she had much more command over the language, she suffered from a far greater nervousness. It seemed to her as if some invincible, supernatural power had made her leave Poland, and had led her to this

American city. She had followed a vague idea as much as anything; an idea, half-formed, had been with her all the time, that some future, greater than she could have in Warsaw, awaited her in America. The same power which had pushed her away from home, had led her through many troubles, to this moment; and it now supported her through it. Extreme nervousness, while yet she was not perfectly familiar with the language she spoke, might have ruined her. But she was not frightened; her part was well fixed in her memory, and as she had so often acted it in Polish, her tears, her laughter, her expressions came with the ease of practice.

At the Imperial Theatre, as is the custom in Government theatres, the costumes were all given, and were the property of the Government. Thus Madame Modjeska had left all hers behind, and now she had the difficulty to face of providing new ones; she could not expect Mr. Burton Hill to give her dresses for a week's

performances, suitable for "Adrienne Lecouvreur."

But, fortunately for her, she had kind friends who believed in her talent, and who helped her over this apparently insurmountable difficulty. Monsieur and Madame Bielawska, and Captain Korwin Piotrowski, were all the best of friends to her; they helped her when she was really in need of help. With their assistance she was enabled to get her dresses; and now she was quite ready to make her first appearance before an English-speaking audience.

This was in August 1877; she had been studying English, and preparing herself, for six months.

Unheralded, unadvertised, with no one to talk of her, no agent to announce, none of the usual trumpeting, Madame Modjeska made her first appearance at the California Theatre. No one knew anything about her; but the very next day it was announced in the papers that a greater

star than Adelaide Neilson had arisen suddenly in the city. Her style, her distinction of manner, her artistic power, were a revelation to San Franciscan playgoers. Most who read the simple announcement of her appearance had supposed her, unknown as she was to them, to be nothing but an amateur; and it seemed ridiculous that she should take the great part of Rachel and of Sara Bernhardt. They expected to see a lady; they found not only a lady but an artist of experience. Her first entrance produced a change of feeling in the audience. When she spoke, the imperfection of her English was noticeable, but before the last act was over, the audience forgot that the consonants and vowels were not given their right value, was regardless when now and then a sentence became indistinguishable; all were absorbed in the fact that a new and great emotional actress was before them. It was like a discovery: it caused the most intense excitement; and when the curtain fell on

the last act, Madame Modjeska felt that she had won the San Franciscan public. Everyone knows that the first four acts of "Adrienne Lecouvreur" are dull; and Madame Modjeska had been unable to brighten them, struggling as she was with a foreign tongue. But she succeeded, even before the great *tour de force* at the end, in electrifying her audience by her apparently spontaneous emotions. The house was only two thirds full, for the public had not known what to expect. It had been made weary too often by the efforts of novices. But on the next night the house was full to overflowing. San Franciscans had been suffering from a surfeit of society plays and sensational realisms; and suddenly discovering an artist in their midst, they flocked to see her. The papers pronounced this to be the most "confirmed dramatic triumph that had ever occurred in the city."

San Francisco has a great faith in its own

dramatic judgment. There is a saying that no one ever succeeds there to fail elsewhere; while those who come with a ready-made fame are not always received with favour. Audiences that had been indifferent to Adelaide Neilson declared at once for Madame Modjeska.

This triumph was a great excitement for the actress, and when, on the second performance, an American actress (the star whose engagement at the theatre commenced the following week) sent her a wreath of laurel, Madame Modjeska went round to her box, and sobbed like a child in the arms of her fellow-artist. The American actress offered to give up the first week of her engagement to the new star; and Mr. Burton Hill made this proposal formally to Madame Modjeska, who accepted the compliment from her and agreed to appear for another week. On the Saturday of the first week John McCullough (who was extremely kind to Madame Modjeska) took his benefit, and played Hamlet; Madame

Modjeska playing Ophelia in English, except the mad scene, which she gave in Polish because she had not time to study it in the original. The effect must have been odd, and such an arrangement can never be artistic; yet some who were present found that mad scene, rendered in Polish, a marvel not easily forgotten.

In the second week Madame Modjeska appeared in Juliet; but in this part she had to struggle against great and overpowering difficulties. Probably no foreigner can ever deliver Shakespeare to the satisfaction of an English-speaking audience. Madame Modjeska's acting of Juliet was admirable; she represented the innocent, passionate girl without artificiality or affectation. Her balcony scene delighted her audience; in this scene especially she has always shown a wonderful gift for charming poses. But she was unable to cope with the difficulty of delivery in the potion scene; and indeed, throughout, though her refined appreciation of the

character was admirable, yet Shakespearian verse sounded strange from her lips. The accent which was pretty and pleasant in Adrienne, pardonable in Ophelia, was inexcusable in the passionate utterances of Juliet.

But the Californians, a week after they had first heard her name, dared to prophesy that in a year it would be "more widely familiar than the fame of Sara Bernhardt, and would emulate the green memory of Rachel!"

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER the fortnight in San Francisco, Madame Modjeska went on a short tour of two weeks. The theatrical tours in California are but brief, as it only pays to go to one or two places. She played to the miners, and found that they form a rough but very sympathetic audience. One of the mines she descended, with her son; the journey took them nineteen hundred feet below the earth. Women very seldom visit a mine of this depth; but Madame Modjeska thought if her boy was going—to whom she was devoted—that in case any accident should happen to him, she might as well suffer from it also. So she

did not fear the danger, and found the expedition very interesting. Travelling in this new country continually brought her fresh sensations. One of the strangest which she experienced was in the great plains by Virginia city, where there is no life. She drove out to visit this extraordinary barrenness, and leaving the carriage, walked on into the silence. For half an hour she sat still in the midst of this lifeless plain where there are no birds, no trees, where no creature lives; there was no sound for her to hear except the drawing of her own breath. The silence fascinated her, yet it was terrible. This great country where there were so many wonderful things to see and to feel — things which in her former life she had never imagined —stimulated her and made her realise that she had begun a new existence.

She went back to San Francisco for another week, and played the "Dame aux Camélias." In this she charmed the Californians; Camille had

been hackneyed on their stage; but it was a new character in Madame Modjeska's hands. When played by a poor or a meretricious actress, it is painful and not agreeable; in the hands of an artist who has the instincts and refinements of a lady, it is what Dumas meant it to be — a marvellous study of a warm, pure, womanly nature, first misled, then cruelly used by circumstances.

Madame Modjeska appeared with confidence now before her Californian audience. They were no longer strange to her, they had pronounced upon her.

At first she had been much terrified on hearing the gallery audience whistling as the curtain went down; for in Poland when an actress is whistled at, her reputation is done for. If the whistling is very loud, she generally gives up her career. To Madame Modjeska's great relief and astonishment, she learned that these whistlings meant applause in San Francisco.

The "Dame aux Camélias" was the first part which Madame Modjeska played in English that she had not already played in Polish.

Mr. Harry Sergent, who described himself as "the best known theatrical manager in the world," now contracted with Madame Modjeska for two years. Her engagements were to be in any country which might appear most suitable.

He took her straight down to New York, where she opened at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, in "Adrienne Lecouvreur."

Whether the cause was the want of advertising, or whether it was Madame Modjeska's imperfect English, "Adrienne" was not a success then in New York, though it was well noticed by the papers. The critics were unanimous in their approval of the actress, and the audience rose to enthusiasm at certain points of the play. One evening a lady in one of the boxes fainted away during the death scene, overcome by its reality. But the adaptation of the play was a

bad one; the language was poor; and the audience thought the old translation better. Then, too, finding that it was impossible for Madame Modjeska to study her part afresh in time, Mr. Boucicault took great pains to make it easier for her by alterations. The result was somewhat of a "hash," and the public did not like it. By degrees, however, Modjeska herself attracted play-goers, and the house improved. After a fortnight of somewhat poor "business," the "Dame aux Camélias" was put on, and at the first performance New York showed its entire approval. After that the Fifth Avenue Theatre was found to have but one fault—it was too small. Once more she had won her public, by her own efforts.

In the "Dame aux Camélias," one of Madame Modjeska's most charming and refined touches is her farewell to Armand, when her voice wavers between real tears and forced laughter, as she says: "I take leave of you as it were for

ever! Adieu! Adieu!" This is so real a piece of acting, that when she comes off, the tears are running down her face, and it is difficult to believe for a moment that she is not in herself suffering from a spasm of anguish. At the Fifth Avenue Theatre she was recalled three times after this scene, and greeted at last with what the Americans call a "round shout." Forgetting the conventionalities of the stage for a moment, she clasped her hands, and raised them with a gesture almost childish, which the audience well understood to express her thankfulness. It was a boisterous demonstration for a New York house, and Madame Modjeska having already tested the temper of her audiences, appreciated the applause she had won. In San Francisco, when they wished to show their delight in their new star, the theatre became a scene of wild enthusiasm and confusion: the boys in the gallery showering their hats on to the stage; men and women standing on chairs, and

each trying to shout louder than the other. But New York professes good manners, and a "brilliant audience," as the newspapers call it, is there a very quiet one. Yet, on this occasion, as a lady who was present described it in a letter to a friend, the audience at the Fifth Avenue Theatre absolutely "screamed with delight."

When Madame Modjeska became known and appreciated in New York, she was welcomed with warmth by society. She received attentions and numerous invitations from ladies of position. Mr. R. Gilder, of the "Century Magazine," and his family, were among her best friends in that city.

The manager and Mr. Boucicault wanted Modjeska to stay and play a hundred nights, but Mr. Sergent had made arrangements for her, and she was due at Philadelphia. From this time she was well advertised, for Mr. Harry Sergent is addicted to advertising. The towns were placarded with large pictures of the actress

holding an open parasol behind her. Newspaper interviewers circulated the most wonderful stories, which grew in size and strangeness with her progress through the States. America was given to understand that the new actress was a countess of enormous wealth, who gave herself up to a dramatic career merely for the love of her art and for amusement; that her history was most romantic, her beauty extraordinary, and that she wore wonderful diamonds given her by the Emperor of Russia. All this was very delightful, and filled the newspaper columns; but it seemed passing strange that everyone was ready to believe what was not true, and that she should have so much trouble to make them believe the truth, — that, indeed, she was simply an actress, living in and for her art, and by it. The story of the diamonds always annoyed her, because she has never played for the Emperor of Russia. Twice she has been telegraphed for to play to him, but she would not go.

"What!" she said, "play to him! He might give me a present. I could not bear that. He robs my people, and sends them to Siberia; and then will give diamonds to a Polish actress if she amuses him! I could not bear it."

When she was in Warsaw she always remained in bed during his visits to the city, and sent to the theatre that she was ill, and if inquiries were made about her she got the doctors to say she was unable to play. Nothing would induce her to appear before the late Emperor, who had been so severe to the Polish people. When he comes to the theatre, the Emperor always goes behind the scenes, and she could not endure the idea of coming face to face with the man who had condemned so many of her countrymen to death or exile.

Republican and patriotic to the core, she saw no glory in being praised by the tyrant of her country. But America, that curious land of contradictions, loves a title, and delights

in the thought of diamonds given by an emperor. Madame Modjeska's nationality, name, and position afforded a rare opportunity for the romancing of the American advertiser and interviewer.

Advertising is, after all, not the only way of getting known. It is a great question whether it is a good one. Unannounced, Madame Modjeska had filled theatres in San Francisco and New York simply by showing what she could do. The dramatic criticisms and the talk among playgoers soon made her sufficiently well known. In Philadelphia she was advertised in the true modern American style, and announced in the most pompous manner.

A gentleman who was staying in the same hotel as she was, met her one day as she was crossing the hall, arm-in-arm with her son. He recognised her, and looked at her in surprise. The pretentious advertising of the new actress

had so disgusted him, that he had determined not to go and see her. Now, meeting her by chance, he saw a quiet lady, dressed modestly, and exhibiting none of the airs of the actress who thinks herself too good for anything but to be looked at. She was not at all what he expected ; and that night he went to the theatre to see her. He became one of her most enthusiastic admirers, and afterwards, when he made her acquaintance, he told her why he had so long delayed seeing her, and how at last he had been induced to go. Her charming absence of ostentation has won her many friends. As a rough critic once said of her, " She goes round like she was a stranger in town, instead of a woman who owned it." As this same observer of human nature (a native of Virginia city) went on to remark, " Too many frills spiles a woman. You don't see Modjeska puttin' on any frills. And why? Cause she 's a lady from the ground up. That 's

what 's the matter. Look at her acting! Why, it just walks into a man's soul without knockin', and takes possession of the whole ground-floor. First time I see her fall down by the fireplace it paralysed me. Blast me, if I felt so since my old mother died!"

None of Modjeska's parts affect her so much, both behind the scenes as well as on the stage, as the Lady of the Camellias; this seems strange at first, for it is hardly one of her own favourite characters. "Marie Stuart" belongs more to the style of classical drama which she herself enjoys. Yet the members of her company soon discover that on the nights when "Marie Stuart" is played she is in an easy mood, willing to talk at the wings, or to smile at a passing joke. Tremendous as her excitement seems in the interview between the two queens, yet all through that play she is cool. In "Adrienne Lecouvreur," also, she will talk to the others while waiting to go on, and always

seems light-hearted and at her ease. In the green-room scene she appears to be gay rather than to be acting gaiety ; she makes all sorts of funny remarks to the others—as, for instance, that her Michonnet kisses her hand in a very half-hearted manner. In "Frou-Frou" also (which she first played on her return to New York), she keeps to all appearance cool.

Not so when the "Dame aux Camélias" is played. Modjeska then appears to see no one, to hear nothing, and no one ventures to speak to her, except perhaps the Armand, who, if he is worth anything, is as much excited as herself. It is not nervousness in the usual sense of the word; it is a state of highly strung nerves. Camille (or Marguérite) is a character which cannot be played in an every-day mood: without an excitement of the imagination the representation would become common-place and at once vulgar. It must be a great strain upon the nervous system to play the part throughout as Madame Modjeska

plays it ; making Camille a creature capricious, sensitive, delicate, with the strange discordances of manner and changes of mood, which such a temperament would exhibit in the midst of such a life. She comes off the stage in a nervous condition which makes her for the moment blind and deaf to everything about her.

In this play her maid Nanine has to fetch her a cloak to go out, when she is in a state of great excitement ; it is too thin and she throws it back to the maid hastily, asking for another. One night, when playing in America, she forgot everything but the excitement, rolled up the shawl and flung it in Nanine's face. Madame Modjeska's real maid always waits at the wings with the shawls and takes them back to her dressing-room. When Nanine went off she showed her imitative ability by rolling up the cloak as Modjeska had done and flinging it at her maid's face. The latter naturally inquired the reason of this rudeness. "I sup-

posed it was the right way," answered Nanine, "your mistress did so to me." When Modjeska came off she heard of Nanine's indignation, and hastened to explain to her how the thing had happened.

It is not easy to remember others always in such moments of excitement. On one occasion Armand threw the gold at Modjeska at the end of the ball-room scene in such a way that he wounded her eye. After that, he altered the business and would not throw the gold until she had fallen and covered her face. That falling is not so easy as it looks, by the way; it is certainly not agreeable. Madame Modjeska is always covered with bruises when she plays Camille; and sometimes she hurts her head so badly that she can hardly stand up to receive her call and make her bow to the audience. She bruises herself terribly in falling on her knees to her husband in the first act of "Odette"; the passion and agony are real

for the moment, she cannot stay to consider whether she will hurt herself; and the stage is not a soft or agreeable place to fall upon.

When she first played Camille in New York, the management, in order to add a final touch of pretty realism to the room in the cottage where Armand's father comes to see her, had a live canary hung in its cage in the window. Unfortunately the bird was a good songster, and when Camille was on the stage and the scene had commenced, began to sing shrill and clear. The noise was too much, and after attempting to bear it for a minute or two, Modjeska found that the unaccustomed sound drove every word of her part out of her head. This could not go on. It was one of the most important scenes of the play—Armand's father was already on the stage. No one guessed her difficulty, no one came to help her. Driven to despair, she did the only thing that occurred to her as possible. She took the cage down,

and going to one of the windows in the scenes, dropped it through. Then she turned round and went on with her part. From the front it looked as if Camille were rather a passionate person, to throw her pet canary out of window because its song was too shrill ; in reality, of course, she merely dropped the bird-cage on to the stage outside the scene, where a scene-shifter could pick it up without being visible from the front, and carry it away. But the oddest part of the affair was, that the next day Madame Modjeska received a letter from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, demanding to know what had happened to the bird, reproaching her for enacting a mock tragedy on the stage while in consequence of her deed a real tragedy might have been taking place behind. Madame Modjeska's agent had to go in person to the office of the Society and assure them that the bird was not dead, nor harmed in any way. It seems strange,

with so much actual cruelty to animals every day requiring the attention of the Society, that it should have concerned itself with such an incident.

Madame Modjeska was now thoroughly at home on her adopted stage, and happy in having abundance of work. She had her new language and her new parts to study. This suited her, for she is one of those busy people who like to do two things at once. She has a quaint saying of her own, "I must have something to do besides what I am doing."

When she takes up a new part the first idea that arises in her mind is, Can I look the character? With an ideal picture before her of how this character should appear, she goes to her mirror and, putting on an imaginary costume and "make up," looks to see if she will have the right expression of form and of face for what she wants to do. She began to read Lady Macbeth with the idea of playing it, but when she went

to the mirror, she threw the part away at once and for ever. She could not see herself in that character.

In almost all the towns she visited, Madame Modjeska was pronounced to be the most cultivated actress then before the public of the United States. It is not every day that the stage in any country possesses an actress who is well-read, accomplished, and naturally a student as well as instinctively an artist. It is too often the case that an artist of any kind, whether painter, musician or actor, knows little of any art but his own. Only writers are expected to know much of literature. The conversation of artists is very much limited, among themselves, to their own art, and this, not from excessive enthusiasm about that subject, but a lack of interest in any other.

This narrow intellectual horizon is supposed by some people to be good, almost necessary, if any concentrated work is to be done. In

Madame Modjeska's case we have an instance to the contrary. Her love of literature, of history, of painting and music, has enriched her own art. Interested in everything done by others, she uses all efforts to make her own work interesting to them. She is accurate, correct, highly cultivated, shocking the artist by no vulgarisms, the man of letters by no want of knowledge. Probably this love of study, this earnest conscientiousness of mind, has been a powerful agent in helping her to earn her successes. Those audiences which she has not won immediately, as by an electric shock, have been charmed at last by an artist who is always careful, always thorough and essentially refined in everything she does. Her art does not appeal to the coarser public, who appreciate great sensational effects and the ranting of the melodramatic school; she touches those of a more sensitive and delicate nature, who can appreciate how marvellously true her portraiture is. In

Odette, the most recent of her characters, Madame Modjeska gives one touch which to every woman in the audience is intensely real. When her husband, from whom she is separated, tells her that to her child she is dead, she exclaims with a sudden violence, "Very well then; if I am dead to her, she is dead to me." The passion with which she utters this is entirely true in the violent, excitable, loving woman whom she has to represent. It is curious that this vivid touch did not come to her until she had played Odette one or two nights. As she came to live in the character more completely, she began to understand the feelings of this unfortunate mother more thoroughly, and one night, on the stage, the idea of how to utter this speech entered her mind. Although so earnest a student, her art is essentially instinctive, and possibly it is for this reason that she possesses so great an attraction for women. She is thoroughly feminine herself, and yet—or it may be, because

of this fact—she draws women to her wherever she goes. She is always loved most ardently by her own sex, and admired also as an artist. In the States there were often three times as many women as men in her audiences. Her power over her own sex is extremely strong in all the countries which she has visited, but particularly so in America.

CHAPTER XIII.

MADAME MODJESKA's tour through the States had something the character of a triumphal progress, partly in consequence of the various legends regarding her which went in advance, and partly because Mr. Sergent took his company about in some style, but principally because wherever she went she became a general favourite, liked and admired. This first tour took her from New York to Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Boston, Albany, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Longville, Toronto, Pittsburg, and several smaller towns, where she played for one or two nights. It was on a later

campaign that she went down south, visiting Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Atalanta, Augusta, New Orleans, Memphis, Indianapolis, and various towns in Michigan, New York State, and in New England. Everywhere she was popular. The Americans adopted the new actress, who claimed their indulgence as a foreigner and commanded their attention as an artist, with enthusiasm. Her Camille was a perpetual astonishment: sick of the hackneyed Camille of their stage, they received her new interpretation of the character with fervour. At one city, a certain actress who had been recently playing the part before the same public, came to the theatre and sat through the piece every night for a fortnight, endeavouring to learn the method which made this representation so entirely eclipse her own. Modjeska noticed the invariable figure in her audience, and was puzzled to see that after a night or two this constant attendant at the theatre was busy

using a note-book during the performance. All Madame Modjeska's "business" was being noted down; but as she is not a mechanical actress, the little details of the picture vary with every representation. Consequently the notes soon got into a sad state, with scratching out and writing in, and correcting generally.

At Indianapolis, society was in a fever of expectation for a week or more before the arrival of the " titled actress," as they loved to call her. The wildest stories were circulated, the most exaggerated expectations were formed. The Opera House was crowded, on her first appearance, with the most fashionable and cultivated people of the place. When Modjeska came upon the stage, the audience seemed a little disappointed at seeing a woman of charming but not extraordinary appearance. Perhaps the natives of this youthful city thought that a lady whose husband was of a noble family in one of the old countries, must look entirely different

from other women; or perhaps they expected Camille to shine all over with Russian Imperial diamonds. At all events, they greeted the much-heralded actress on her appearance with some chilliness; they did not understand her style, nor in what way she was interpreting Camille's character. The audience, at first cold and unsympathetic, remained quiet; but at last they paid the actress the involuntary tribute of tears. Everbody treated Madame Modjeska with the greatest kindness here, and she found her stay in the town charming. When her benefit was taken the theatre was crowded, and every seat in it was sold at the same price as the stalls—pit, gallery, and all.

In Boston, where the literary society is very pleasant, Madame Modjeska went into it a great deal. Mr. James Field, the well-known author, sent a letter of introduction for her to Longfellow, who came to the theatre to see her first appearance. She had to play on the very night

of her arrival, and had no time to look at the stage, which was badly arranged. At an important exit she fell down at the doorway, tripping over some awkward step which betrayed her. The audience did not laugh—a mark of good feeling intensely appreciated by the actress: but when she returned she was greeted with applause. Then she laughed herself, conscious that her accident had been seen and understood. Thus she was at once on excellent terms with her Boston audience. The next day Mr. Longfellow called upon her, and won her respect at once by his appearance. His long white beard gave a picturesque dignity to his face, which was often illuminated by a beautiful, singularly calm smile. He talked a great deal of Poland, and of some Polish ladies whom he knew; devoting himself to all that he thought would interest his new acquaintance. His delightful manner and charming simplicity touched her heart at once. He never talked of himself, as too many great

men do. He invited Madame Modjeska to lunch, with her son, who was travelling with her. M. Chlapowski had not yet joined her.

Mr. Longfellow showed himself equally delightful in his own house. He read aloud a poem of Campbell's about Poland which touched Madame Modjeska's patriotic feelings, and moved her to tears. He talked to her of literature, of the poets of Germany, France, and England, but never spoke of his own work except once, when she said something to him about playing the "Spanish Student."

"Why don't you play it?" he asked.

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

Longfellow laughed at this, and said he would make the "cuts" himself if she would do it.

He was very kind to her, and she afterwards spent many beautiful hours with him. She found his home life so delightful that it filled

her with reverence. Her friendship with him was one of the most charming episodes of her life. They often met while she was in Boston; she recited to him in Polish, and he thought her native tongue very beautiful. He said he would like to read translations of the Polish poets, and she had them sent to him. He read them, and afterwards wrote to her about them; indeed, he continued to correspond with her to the end of his life. He was most interested in seeing her performance of Juliet, and to her great delight he was satisfied with it. He admired especially her unconventional treatment of the character; and she was never again so much afraid of playing it when he had praised her, for she was certain that he would not tell her what was not true.

On her second visit to Boston she was pleased to find a large portrait of herself as Juliet hanging in his work-room. When she had left America, Longfellow did not forget her.

When he knew where she was he wrote to her, and he looked for news of her, if she did not reply, in the newspapers. He was very anxious about her at one time when he saw in the papers that she was ill, and did not know in what country she was. He wrote then to her intimate friend, Miss Anna Wolska, to ask for Madame Modjeska's address. By Miss Wolska's kindness we are allowed to extract some portions of his letter:

I thought Madame Modjeska was still in England, and have seen with much regret in the papers that she was ill, and had been doomed by her physician to absolute rest for some months. I am not surprised at this. When here she worked too hard in her profession, and I do not wonder that her delicate organisation should suffer from it.

What a lovely woman she is, and what an admirable talent! I trust that rest among her friends in her native land will restore her.

Thanking you again for your kindness,

I am, dear Madam,

Yours very truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

Her friendship with Mr. Longfellow was so

great a pleasure to Madame Modjeska that it grieved her to leave Boston and so lose the delight of his society. But when an actress has reached the position of one of the stars of Europe, she has to pay for it by having no home, no city of her own ; she cannot have her dearest friends near her except for a very short while. Until now Madame Modjeska would have been very lonely in her new theatrical career, but that her son had been able to travel with her. He had been her companion all the time. He very often rehearsed for her, sparing her the fatigue of incessantly going over her parts ; for, on her first tour, she played with the companies of the local theatres.

At Boston M. Chlapowski joined his wife, having now succeeded in disposing of the unfortunate farm and arranging the various liabilities in which he found himself involved in consequence of its failure. A considerable

amount of money had been sucked up by this charming little rural experience. But Madame Modjeska was making money now, and instead of being a burden, as she had once dreaded, was rich and successful. From this time M. Chlapowski travelled with her, devoting himself to her interests and to taking care of her in her arduous career. Travelling in America is no light thing. The journeys are so long, that a theatrical company, continually on the move, seems almost to live in the train.

The "palace-car" which Madame Modjeska travelled in, and which was so much talked about at the time, was really a very comfortable affair. Hers was the first that was used by a dramatic company, so that it was quite a novelty, and gave plenty of subject-matter to the interviewers. When she contracted with Mr. Sergent she told him that he positively must make some arrangement by which she could get eight hours' sleep every night. Unless

that could be accomplished, she felt she could not undertake the work she had to do. She told him that if she were obliged to get out of the train at four in the morning and go to an hotel, she would not play in the evening. This was alarming ; and Mr. Sergent saw that something must be done. He could not afford to have evenings wasted on the tour. And then it struck him that if he could get something entirely new, it would be an admirable advertisement.

Two months after Mr. Sergent had his car built, Mr. Mapleson took the idea, and had one made for his own company. In a short time, others were built, and the contrivance is now familiar upon the American railways.

In the course of the second tour there was a railway accident which might very easily have been fatal to the whole company. Some of them were playing cards, M. Chlapowski among the number, when the train left the track, and after

a few violent shocks stopped on the very verge of a precipice. One yard more, and it would have been over, and every life lost. There was the greatest confusion and terror. All the passengers scrambled out of the train in a wild state of alarm. In the midst of the confusion and cries of fear M. Chlapowski succeeded in freeing himself from the compartment he was in, and jumping out, cried to his partner:

"I had a jack and a queen!"

He had passed through too many adventures to be much disturbed by a railway accident.

In Philadelphia Mr. George Childs, who is so hospitable to all distinguished foreigners, entertained Madame Modjeska, and at Hartford (Connecticut) she stopped during her stay at the house of Charles Dudley Warner, the author of "My Summer in a Garden." At Washington she was shown great attention, and many dinners and receptions were given in her honour. In society here she made the acquaintance of several

great American statesmen and politicians, Blaine, Conkling, Schürz, Eugene Hale, General Sherman, and others. She went principally into literary circles, where she met with great kindness. Boston, after New York, showed the greatest appreciation of her dramatic talents. When she played Juliet there all the literary stars of the Athens of America were present, and received her with the greatest enthusiasm. During the second week of her stay in Boston such was the great demand of the public that four matinées were given in order to satisfy it, so that Madame Modjeska played ten times in six days. For several of the performances tickets were sold by auction, which was also the case in some of the other American cities. In Chicago Madame Modjeska was honoured by a reception given her by the Owl Club, which is a very influential literary and artistic club. It is said that in several cities, Buffalo, Louisville, and others, dramatic and social clubs were

founded to which her name was given. The different towns she visited had different tastes with regard to her characters. Very many preferred her Camille to all her other personations, but in some places Juliet was the great success, in some Adrienne Lecouvreur or Frou-Frou. During her second tour she tried Peg Woffington, but found it impossible to identify herself with the character, which is quite out of accord with her artistic style. The comedy of Peg Woffington is broader than that which she is in the habit of playing. Then too there is the "jig" to dance, and this is a thing not quite in Madame Modjeska's line, although, be it said by the way, she is an exceedingly beautiful dancer. She gave up Peg Woffington after two performances, notwithstanding the real kindness with which her attempt was received by the Philadelphian press and public.

"East Lynne," also, she played during the second tour, at Mr. Sergent's wish. For a

long time she refused to undertake it, as she had little sympathy with the tame and undecided character of the heroine, and did not care to produce a play in which the interest is so entirely centred upon melodramatic situations. In the end she gave in to Mr. Sergent's wishes, and "East Lynne" was played once in almost every week; but she never could conquer her antipathy to the play itself.

American audiences are extremely appreciative; they help their favourites by their own enthusiasm. They do not yawn—they do not come to the theatre after a heavy dinner; and they take a vivid interest in the performance. They are truer and less indolent than English audiences. Madame Modjeska felt that the kindness and the enthusiasm of her public helped her in these daring experiments which she was making in an unfamiliar language.

The first tour through the States lasted about five months. In the spring Madame Modjeska

went to Paris to see the exhibition and to get new dresses for her next campaign. She had also to sit for her portrait, which Carolus Duran was commissioned to paint by an American gentleman, who presented it to the Philadelphia National Gallery. Duran had painted an admirably successful portrait of Mademoiselle Croizette, of the Théâtre Français ; his portrait of Madame Modjeska was not so great a triumph. Perhaps he had not enough sittings ; possibly he found her expression beyond his skill. The Parisian and the Polish type are very different ; and the man who can paint the one may not be able to paint the other. And Duran had only a short time in which to study the mysterious, veiled expression of this face which he undertook to reproduce. An American portrait-painter has said of Modjeska's face: "None could be harder to paint ; it is all eyes and mouth—all expression." This is true, but the difficulty is greater than is

conveyed in those words. Modjeska's is a face which changes as often off the stage as on it. Continually she is becoming something new and different before your very eyes. How can a painter seize upon the face of a woman who at one moment is Frou-Frou all over—childlike, gay, eager; at another, is speaking through her tears, the tender woman, the earnest patriot; in the next, has retired behind the veil of hauteur, which is one of her familiar expressions, and which fits her so well when she is the martyred Queen of Scots. This by-play of the face is continual, unconscious, rapid as the changes of the sea or sky; and no one who possesses this rare gift of a vividly expressive countenance can be rightly treated by any form of portraiture.

But, if he had no extraordinary success with the face, Duran seized a graceful pose, and painted some exquisite drapery. Madame Modjeska stands before an olive-green curtain,

dressed in dark grey velvet trimmed with chinchilla fur. One hand hangs at her side, the other is plucking leaves from some roses fastened at her bosom. Duran, like many favourite Parisian portrait-painters, has a genius in painting silks, naterials, and furs.

During this visit to Paris, Madame Modjeska went to see Victor Hugo. A mutual friend was anxious to introduce her to him, as she was a great admirer of his work, and had acted in two or three of his plays, translated into Polish.

M. Hugo received her in a charming manner. When he saw her and knew who she was, he roused from the indifference with which he greets the numerous visitors who come to him on his reception days ; a look like a lion came into his face, and a wonderful light into his eyes. Until he is stirred, his appearance is commonplace ; then a change comes like lightning, and something glances from his face

which makes one shudder in recognising the presence of a great genius. They had a very long conversation together. Victor Hugo refused to believe that England or America could know anything of art, or have any appreciation of it. Madame Modjeska defended America, which she called her country. M. Hugo graciously allowed himself to be convinced as to the artistic appreciativeness of Modjeska's adopted land, saying he was glad to believe it not so bad as he had thought. He was very much interested in her playing in English, a feat which seemed to him extraordinary. M. Hugo parted with her with all the stately courtesy and gallantry of his school, begging her to come often, and to regard his house as her own ; but she never saw him again, as she was leaving Paris almost immediately.

The portrait finished, the costumes ordered, Madame Modjeska spent the rest of her holiday in going quietly home to see her mother. She

then returned to America for the second tour, which was far more fatiguing than the first, as she visited some places only to play for one or two nights. The journeys are so long and so wearisome that but for the famous "palace car," it would have been impossible for them to have been accomplished as they were. The car was, in one sense, a source of annoyance to Madame Modjeska, as it was practically turned into a great advertisement; but it enabled her to sleep at night, and so she was content. It is not very pleasant when you go out of doors in the daytime to see your name printed in large letters on your moveable house; but it is a great and unmixed boon to be able to go straight to bed from the theatre instead of waiting for a train at one or two, or being roused up from rest to catch a train at four. In theatrical, as in all other life, the bitter and sweet have to be taken together.

Returning to the towns she had already

visited, Madame Modjeska was warmly welcomed by the friends she had formed; this made her feel at home, and she began to have a real affection for her adopted country. She was a great favourite in the cultured literary and artistic circles; and now when she returned to find herself more admired and beloved than before, it added a new charm to the land where she had found her fortune. Being a devoted Catholic, she always visited the Polish Catholic churches wherever she went, and received the kindest hospitality from the priests. In some American towns, especially Chicago, she found many of her own religion and her own nationality; these, her country-people, receiving her with a patriotic pride. The Poles are intensely proud of their great artists, as they consider it raises and honours their unhappy country when any one of its children achieves distinction. At one American town where Madame Modjeska played for only one or two nights, during the *entr'acte*

she heard, to her astonishment and delight, a Polish national air played by the orchestra. The conductor of the band was a Pole, and had planned this graceful surprise as a welcome to his countrywoman.

Madame Modjeska was claimed as a sister by the Jews in America; but they were compelled to part with her again, finding her to be of pure Polish extraction, and, moreover, a devout Catholic. When in her own country, the German press had created for her a Teutonic genealogy, which made her very indignant; but the funniest of the claims to her was made in Dublin, when she visited that city in her tour through the English provinces. One of the papers declared it to be impossible that a foreign actress should have conquered the difficulties of playing on the English stage, and asserted that Madame Modjeska was an Irishwoman, her name being nothing more nor less than a Polish *contrefaçon* of the Irish *Madge*.

The American audiences are responsive, enthusiastic, and full of quick appreciation; but sometimes in the course of her travels, Madame Modjeska played to very rough and noisy houses. At Ann Arbor, a small town in Michigan, Mr. Sergent arranged to give one performance. There is a large university in this town, and all theatrical companies dread playing here, as the house is full of students, who make any noise or disturbance that may happen to please them. When Madame Modjeska went on she saw a theatre full of young men talking, sitting in easy attitudes, their coats off, their feet in the typical American attitude, held higher than their heads. The play was "Camille," and Armand's entrance was the signal for a buzz of remarks in the theatre; and one of the students began to whistle a variety air. Modjeska would not have the curtain rung down, but stopped the dialogue, and simply looked at the house, smiling and saying nothing. In a minute or two the noise ceased,

and the actress's good-humoured appeal was answered by an outburst of applause. The audience became quiet, and proved to be both intelligent and appreciative.

At Buffalo, when Madame Modjeska was playing Juliet, there was an interruption both more serious and more absurd. A banquet had been given to the students that day, and they came to the theatre in a very lively frame of mind. They succeeded, however, in behaving decently during the greater part of the play, indeed until the great potion scene. A mischievous young fellow in the gallery then found an irresistible opportunity; at the instant Juliet raised the phial to her lips, in the midst of a perfect silence there came a sound exactly like the uncorking of a champagne bottle. This noise, made with the mouth, is heard sometimes in the gallery when the house is kept waiting and is getting uproarious; but never has it, surely, been produced at such a maddening moment on any other occasion! The

house burst into roars of laughter; and the actress, finding it impossible to preserve her tragic mood, had the curtain rung down. Then the temper of the house turned, and their wrath fell upon the guilty student. To prevent any further disturbance Madame Modjeska had the curtain lifted and began the potion scene again from its commencement. Never was it more enthusiastically applauded, or received with more respectful attention. When the act was over the students came in a body to offer their apologies to Madame Modjeska, and the guilty one himself proposed to apologise publicly for his joke. But Madame Modjeska, who would not let them think her offended by the absurd incident, refused to allow this; nevertheless the next day the apology was published in the papers.

Mr. Sergent's attention had been a good deal taken up, during this tour, by his new star Captain Boyton (who gave to Madame Modjeska

a pair of young alligators as pets); but he was still bent upon her playing "East Lynne," and when the tour was completed he took the Grand Opera House in New York, for her to appear in this drama. However, the instinct of the actress had been right. It was impossible for her to make "East Lynne" a great success. In order to fill the house it was necessary to replace it by "Camille."

In June Madame Modjeska left New York, fulfilling the long-cherished wish of her heart by sailing for England, with the understanding that she was to make an appearance in London. Mr. Sergent had agreed, verbally, to take her there during her contract with him, and obtain an engagement for her in a London theatre. Apart from her great desire to come to London, it appeared to her to be a necessity, now that she had taken her position upon the English stage.

Mr. Sergent brought her over, but having arrived here, he said he could not find an open-

ing, but would secure one for the autumn. So she decided to pay another visit to her own country in the meantime, and went away quite at ease about her future arrangements.

Before she went, however, she saw Mr. Irving at the Lyceum—that theatre which had appeared in her dreams at night as being the very home of the drama. The piece on then was "Vanderdecken"; and to her mind it surpassed all the fairy tales which she had read in her youth.

CHAPTER XIV.

MADAME MODJESKA now went to Paris, and on to Poland to see her family, believing that while she was away her manager would find her an engagement in London. She relied upon his doing this, not knowing that he did not consider himself bound by any formal arrangement. She had a heavy fine now to pay to the Warsaw Theatre, although the President had given her verbal leave of absence. While in San Francisco, at the commencement of her work in America, she received notice that she must write, applying for renewed leave of absence, every three months. This she did,

for some time, but on one unfortunate occasion, in the hurry of her many engagements, she forgot to write. Immediately she received a peremptory order to return home to Warsaw, or to pay a fine of ten thousand roubles. Her intention was to pay the fine, as she was under contract to remain with Mr. Sergent for another three years. She went to Warsaw now merely for a brief holiday, Mr. Sergent having solemnly promised to have obtained for her on her return an engagement for the autumn in London. When she came back to London in September, however, he had arranged nothing, and he wished her to return to America. This she refused to do, as it had always been understood between them that she should play in London before making another American tour. To obtain a London reputation and the support of the leading journals is considered very valuable by any who aspire to high rank on the English or American stage. Nothing else can give the

same position, and however successful an American actor is in his own country, he considers it necessary to complete his triumphs by an appearance in leading parts in London. Madame Modjeska, a foreigner upon the American stage, felt that it was a necessity in her career that she should make her appearance in London and win a recognised position in the centre of the English drama. She had resolved upon doing this before signing the contract with Sergent. She had made him promise that it should be accomplished when the tour in America was finished; she had told her friends in America and in her own country that she intended to appear on the English stage in London. Was it likely that she would easily consent to give up her ardent ambition, merely because her agent was too indifferent or too much occupied with other matters to fulfil his part of the business?

She told Mr. Sergent she would not go back to America without playing in London; it

would be like confessing herself unsuccessful ; she would suffer for it in her position in America. She proposed to wait until Mr. Sergent should be able to obtain her a London engagement, either for the winter or for the next season. Mr. Sergent did not seem surprised at this determination of hers.

"What will you do in the meantime?" he asked her.

"Oh," she said, "I will go and pay off my debt to Warsaw ; I will play for them at the Imperial Theatre."

"Very well," said Mr. Sergent, "I have nothing to say against your returning to Poland, but could you lend me a thousand dollars?"

Madame Modjeska agreed to let Mr. Sergent have the money he wanted ; and thus pacified, he consented very pleasantly to her proposal.

"All right," he said, "that will suit me. I have already three companies to look after, and I am willing you should go to Warsaw.

I will come back to London in February and get you an engagement."

As there was no reason now for her to remain in London, she returned to Cracow for the great jubilee given in honour of Kraszewski. It was in the beginning of October 1879 that this national *fête* was held.

Josef Kraszewski is a great Polish poet and novelist, and a most ardent patriot. He is one of the most popular of Polish authors, and he is the most prolific author of modern times, excepting, perhaps, Dumas père. His works are counted by hundreds. His writings are marked by a strong moral and patriotic tendency, and it is well known that his aim is to raise his country and stimulate his compatriots, rather than to earn money or success for himself. On the fiftieth anniversary of his birth the Poles determined to show him that they appreciated the productions of his laborious life. They determined to organise a great *fête*

in his honour at Cracow; this city was chosen for many reasons. For one, Kraszewski was exiled by the Russian Government; and it was useless to think of making any national demonstration in the dominions of the Tzar. Cracow is full of historic memories; it has been the scene of many Polish triumphs; and a great old hall in the centre of the city, a hall familiar to history, which had been lying in ruins for years, had just been rebuilt and renovated in the style of the fourteenth century.

This, then, was to be the scene of the demonstration, and Poles flocked into Cracow. Every Pole who filled any position of dignity, whether he served under Austria, Russia, or Prussia, came to honour the veteran of Polish literature. Thousands and thousands of people came into the city; and at last the ovation to Kraszewski culminated in a national demonstration, the people making publicly their vows of brother-

hood, and giving utterance to their yearnings after independence and union.

In the midst of this excitement Madame Modjeska arrived from London. In her first brief visit she had only been in the country, at the residence of her husband's family and at a remote retreat in the Carpathian Mountains. Her reception in Cracow was extraordinary.

Siemiradzki, the great Polish painter, just at this time presented his beautiful picture "The Torches of Nero" to the city of Cracow, in order to make the commencement for a national gallery. The enthusiastic people insisted that he and Madame Modjeska should share the honours of the jubilee with Kraszewski; these three were ranked together. At a gala performance a play of Kraszewski's was produced by the principal actors and actresses of Poland, who came to Cracow for that purpose; and on this occasion Madame Modjeska made her re-appearance on the stage of her own country. It was seized by

the people as an opportunity of giving her a public welcome home. It is difficult for those who are accustomed to Anglo-Saxon audiences to imagine the frenzy which appears to seize upon a Polish crowd when its enthusiasm is fully roused. The people stand up, in boxes and stalls as well as in other parts of the house, waving handkerchiefs and giving vociferous expression to their excited feelings. It is extraordinary to an English person familiar with the decorous style of applause at the Lyceum or the Haymarket, to hear the shouts and yells of "Modrzejewska! Modrzejewska!" in a Polish theatre. Such audiences inspire their artists; it is impossible to act coldly to a house that is all life and fire.

Soon after the Kraszewski *fête* Madame Modjeska gave a series of performances in Cracow; a great number of the visitors to the city remained to see her, and all the seats were immediately secured. She was to play her old parts, opening in "Adrienne."

And now she passed through a strange experience. A few days before the first performance her husband said to her, "Do you remember your part?"

The question seemed absurd—in Polish as well as in English, Adrienne was one of her most familiar parts. But how long it was since she had spoken her own language! She found it impossible to recall to her mind Adrienne's first words in Polish; she could not form them, though perfectly familiar with them in English. A feeling of despair fell upon her. It seemed to her as if all the recollections of her Polish *répertoire* had been drowned in the ocean, or had been cast out from her mind by the efforts she had made to conquer the English language and to learn her parts in it. This was a strange feeling indeed—she had not been afraid when she was about to appear in San Francisco, and to play in a new language; now, in her own home she trembled lest the ordeal she had

passed through had robbed her of the ability to play in her own tongue! For two years she had been schooling herself to the intonations and inflexions necessary for speaking English, had been charging her memory with heavy parts in English, had even been accustoming herself to the style and mannerisms of the English stage. The effort to recall her old familiar memories seemed too great for her. Could it be possible that she would have to learn her very words over again? Convinced that this task lay before her, or else that she would have to refuse to play, she went to bed in despair and fell asleep with her mind full of this new misfortune.

When she awoke in the morning, all was changed; she remembered her words, and felt confident of herself again. The access of memory was so strange, it can only be supposed that by an energetic effort of her will she had aroused that part of her brain which had already

become dormant. Had a longer time elapsed it might have become totally obscured. As it was, when she came upon the stage she found she had the double faculty; her familiar language, her early training, had returned to her, but her art was heightened and strengthened by her recent experiences. The courage which she had been compelled to exercise in order to face American audiences had developed her powers and given her a new confidence. Marie Stuart, as she played it now, was very different from Marie Stuart as she had played it before in Cracow. In the third act she amazed her audience, who found that their great actress had returned with two-fold power; or rather that she was changed, new, surprising. The house became positively frantic, and when the act was over, half the audience crowded on to the stage to offer their congratulations. A much greater triumph for the actress than the enthusiasm of the public was that her comrades were excited;

and possibly it was one of the most wonderful moments in Madame Modjeska's life, when her old rival Madame Thespis came to her room and, flinging herself into her arms, absolutely wept with enthusiasm and delight!

Madame Modjeska was now the heroine of the hour in her native town. She received every attention from society in Cracow, which is the most exclusive in the country, and has acquired the name of the Faubourg St. Germain of Poland. Her position here is very unusual; no other actress on the Polish stage, even though she has married into a noble family, is received by society. But Madame Chlapowska in her own country is a *grande dame* as well as an artist.

From Cracow she went to Lemberg, where she was received magnificently; the station is some miles from the town, and all the road was lit by torches, while a military band came out to escort her. She played for a short time at the

theatre, and during her stay her colleagues gave a ball in her honour, and a sleighing excursion by torchlight. She was received by the townspeople in the style accorded only to the great favourites of the nation.

In December Madame Modjeska went to Warsaw. Having nothing to do was irksome to her, and it seemed far better to go to Warsaw and pay off her debt to the Imperial Theatre than to remain idle. She had not seriously entertained the idea of playing there without hearing again from Mr. Sergent; as, if he had arranged for her appearance in London, she would have been very willing to return there immediately, and pay her debt to the Imperial Theatre in money. But Mr. Sergent did not write or communicate with her in any way; and being left like this, without any agent, it seemed to her that she had better pay her debt than remain idle. For ten nights she played at the Imperial Theatre for nothing; these performances paid the fine.

Then they kept her for twenty more nights, paying her for them as a "star."

During these thirty appearances in Warsaw occurred a sad, romantic incident, curiously illustrating the temper of the people and their rulers.

The students of the college wished to offer Modjeska a wreath. But they are not allowed to do anything of this kind without special permission from their Rector, and from the Chief of Police, both, of course, Russians. The students, being of Polish nationality, are kept under very strictly; and anything in the smallest degree revolutionary in character is visited with the severest punishment. In the eyes of Russian rulers it seems to be sinful to be a Pole, and possess any quality but that of submission. In this instance the students were anxious simply to show their admiration for their celebrated countrywoman; they had no idea of doing anything which should look suspicious to the authorities—indeed, they were anxious to avoid

any chance of being accused of mingling their patriotic feelings with their artistic enthusiasm. They took special pains to have the ribbons of the wreath of different colours from those which belonged to their country. The Polish national colours are red and white; the students chose pink and white. The simple words inscribed were, "To Madame Modjeska, from the young students." They asked formal permission to present a wreath to the Polish actress; and at the theatre, on the evening, they went to the box of the Chief of Police, where he was sitting, and asked him if he had any objection to what they were about to do. He laughed at them a little, in a good-humoured way; asked them if they had all their buttons right, on their uniforms; and told them they must not step on people's toes in passing along the stalls. How could the boys suppose that they were doing any dangerous thing, when what they proposed to do was so simple and no one had any objection

to it? That night all was good humour and pleasure; Madame Modjeska was charmed with her wreath; the boys delighted to offer it. The next day, to the students, the face of the world had changed, as in a transformation scene.

They were denounced for offering Madame Modjeska a wreath with revolutionary colours upon it, and bearing *a long inscription in Polish.* The Rector was furious, and expelled seventeen boys from the school for committing this sin, and to the expulsion was added the condition that they were not to be admitted into any other school in the whole empire. This meant the ruin of their hopes and of their future. The thing was terrible to them; and they were without redress. It was of no use to appeal to the Russian authorities. The inhabitants of a free country can hardly imagine such a position as this. The boys dreaded to tell their parents what had happened to them; they clung together, wailing over their misfortunes and the hopelessness of their

case. Suddenly one of the boys rose up in the midst of them and cried out, "I will deliver you!"

What inspired him with such a strange and desperate idea, none can tell. But he did not hesitate in carrying it out. He went straight to his room, locked the door, and shot himself.

He had fulfilled his promise to his comrades; he saved them. The next day the boys were all taken back, and the matter was hushed up as much as possible. So terrible a result of the tyrannical act had not been anticipated, and if it had been carried any further it might have roused the people. The tragedy was kept from Modjeska's knowledge while she was in Warsaw; yet she seemed to feel its melancholy in the air. One afternoon she went to a matinée, and as she entered the theatre she said to her friends:

"How strange it is—I am so miserable, I long to cry—and I feel as if I could not breathe."

She could not shake off the overpowering sadness which had come upon her.

The others said nothing; they knew that it was the day and the hour of the unhappy student's funeral.

Madame Modjeska knew nothing of this until she had left Warsaw. After her performances here were over, she went to Posen, on a charitable mission. The people of this town were very much persecuted; among other tyrannies their theatre was taken from them. The Germans had a theatre in the town, which they were allowed to hold on condition that they would never allow a Polish troupe to play in it. The people of Posen are very poor; but they wanted a theatre of their own where their own actors might appear and play to them in their own language. Enthusiasm gave them courage, and they built a theatre, paying off the expense by degrees as they could collect money. Hearing of this, Madame Modjeska went there and gave six performances without being paid, in order to help them to pay off their debt. The prices

were all raised, and a great deal of money was made for the theatre. The people were most enthusiastic; they took the four horses out of her carriage in order that she might be drawn by young men of the nobility. Everyone vied in doing her honour. She was an idol at home; for there she could act in her own language, showing herself in her full power; while she carried with her the fame of success in a foreign tongue. At the hotel where she stayed she gave receptions and entertained her friends. When she was leaving she asked for her bill, but the landlord would not make her one. "No, Madame," he said, "you have done me too much honour by staying in my house."

This was a charming little trip to Posen, full of pleasure. She met all her husband's family, and found herself welcomed everywhere. She was strong and anxious for work, and fancied her future arrangements secure.

CHAPTER XV.

In February, according to the arrangement made, Madame Modjeska came back to London. She had no sanguine expectations now, for she had written several times to Mr. Sergent and had only received one letter from him. Mr. Chlapowski came to London first to see if he could learn anything; but he found no Mr. Sergent, no letters from him, no engagement. He returned to Madame Modjeska, and she came with him to London, resolved, if Mr. Sergent were indeed not to be found, to get an engagement for herself.

Mr. Hamilton Aïdé gave a large reception

at which Madame Modjeska recited. She preferred to recite in Polish, as she had not been speaking English for a whole year. Her recitation was very wonderful and must have been appreciated by her audience, which was largely made up of actors and actresses, who would be likely to value such a performance rightly even without understanding the language in which it is given. But when she attempted to talk, she spoke English with difficulty and with a strong accent. Probably this discouraged those who might otherwise have assisted her in obtaining an opening; for after this her prospects appeared to be no better than before. All the theatrical people whom Madame Modjeska met looked at her doubtfully; and she felt their hesitation, their polite sneers, and cold smiles, as so many stabs. Some who were managers as well as actors, might have taken her and placed her at once before the public; but they knew too little of her to make the venture. They did not read Polish or

American newspapers; her name was almost unknown to them. This indifference hurt her as it must hurt those who suffer from it, however excusable it may be in those who manifest it. In a thousand forms she met with these stabs and sneers. People asked her whether she really meant to play in London; and if so, what language she meant to play in? This seemed to be a very cruel question, when she had made a sort of triumphal progress through America, playing in English. It roused all the heroic element in her. She had climbed high walls to reach a stage before now—why not again? In Poland she had struggled to her position through poverty and discouragement; in America she had won it by a single great effort. This new discouragement in London was very disheartening; it seemed strange to have to make her position afresh so often. She worked hard to recover her English, and also to conquer a slight Yankee accent which she had acquired

in America. And she determined to make an appearance as soon as possible. She might have engaged the Imperial or the Olympic for evening performances, but she did not think those theatres were suitable ones for her first appearance. The Adelphi Theatre she was able to have in the afternoon; but all the other theatres were engaged entirely. She seriously thought of taking the Adelphi to give some *matinées*, when she met Mr. Mortimer of the *Figaro*, whose acquaintance Monsieur Chlapowski had made when in England before, through Mr. Sergent. Madame Modjeska told him that she was very anxious to get some opening, but that she really did not know how to set about it. Mr. Sergent had entirely neglected his business in London, and whatever he had done, had been in the wrong way. He either was not able or was not willing to obtain an engagement for the actress who had been his star. Madame Modjeska herself was ready even to undertake all

risk in order to get a hearing ; but she did not know where to go. Mr. Mortimer told her that he had reason to believe that Mr. Wilson Barrett, who was then lessee of the Court Theatre, was willing to give her an opening. He offered to introduce her to him, as a matter of business ; and that same evening he took her to the theatre, and the introduction had a pleasant result. Mr. Barrett told her that he had read some of her American notices ; it was the first time that she had met with a London manager who had taken that amount of trouble. Mr. Barrett was willing to let her have his theatre and company for an afternoon performance; he was ready to take the risk, because he was aware that if the London public understood and liked her, she would probably be the favourite of the hour. He had heard of her from certain English actors who had met her in America, and their report of her success induced him to read the papers and find out

what he could about her. The theatre he then had was well adapted for her appearance. At the Princess's the public demands melodrama or rough comedy ; at the Court it was entirely different—he wanted something refined and *spirituelle.* The Court was just the theatre where Madame Modjeska might find her audience, and Mr. Barrett was aware of this. As a London manager he was comparatively new ; in the provinces he had several companies at work, and at Leeds especially he was, and is, the king of managers, a hero of the stage. In London he had made a success with Mr. Charles Coghlan's admirable performance in "The Old Love and the New," but the run of the play was nearly at its end, and he was ready for a new venture. He showed a readiness to help a foreigner, and to introduce a new artist to the London public, which encouraged Madame Modjeska very much in the midst of her disappointments. Mr. Boucicault and Mr. Coghlan had both spoken to

him of Modjeska, whom they had seen in America, and he was prepared to appreciate her talent, and to believe that she held the secret of success. He told her that he was willing to take the risk of some *matinées* and to share the profits with her. This was a good offer, and she at once accepted it. The great disadvantage of the Court theatre is that it is so very small. When the play in which Madame Modjeska was to open came under discussion, the principal difficulty was the smallness of the stage. It seemed impossible to put on "Marie Stuart" or any play requiring spectacular effect; and for this reason the "Dame aux Camélias" was chosen.

Two days after this first introduction and agreement, Mr. Barrett began to advertise. Everybody who was in London at that time must remember the sudden and unexplained appearance of the single word "Modjeska."

Probably the sight of this unfamiliar name all

over London is the first memory which most of the English public have of the favourite of Warsaw and America. The name was printed in enormous letters; "Court Theatre" was put in the corner in type so small that it was generally overlooked. Thus most people wondered vaguely what the word could mean; was it a new hair-wash, a fresh kind of oil-cloth, something superlative in wax-candles, or a startling sort of soap? Soon came more explanatory advertisements. Madame Modjeska was announced definitely to appear as Constance in Mr. Mortimer's translation of the "Dame aux Camélias." This play, disliked intensely by a large proportion of the English public, was chosen partly for its adaptability to a small stage, and for some other managerial reasons. For one thing, it is a play for two persons; the other parts—with the exception, perhaps, of that of the father—are so small as to be unimportant; thus there is little difficulty about the company. Then another and

strong reason for this choice was that Madame Modjeska had always found Camille—as it is called in America—very successful wherever she had played it. She had won audiences with this play that she had not been able to attract with "Adrienne Lecouvreur." Mr. Mortimer had adapted the play for England, having re-christened it "Heartsease." Everybody is familiar with the opera of "La Traviata," the libretto of which is based upon Dumas' novel; but "La Dame aux Camélias" had long been a prohibited play in England when Madame Modjeska came to London.

In the character of the heroine there is a rare opportunity for a refined actress; nevertheless there can be no doubt that in any adaptation, the play, in itself, is painful and to many persons revolting. Even in France there was very great difficulty in getting it upon the stage. Once there, it holds its own by virtue of strong dramatic effects; and when the heroine

is played by so rare an actress as Madame Modjeska, all the questionable elements disappear in presence of the purifying atmosphere of true love and sacrifice. Mr. Mortimer's version follows the original story in all material respects, but there are various attempts made to veil the real character of the heroine, and her relations with the people about her. The result is a hopeless confusion; the circumstances are all left as in the original, only that engagements and marriages are talked of in such a manner as to make the plot really very difficult to follow. To those who knew the story well, this did not matter, as these small changes which satisfied the licenser made no difference to the general character of the play. But to those who had never seen it before, and desired to discover what it all meant, the confusion must have been great indeed.

On May 1, 1880, Madame Modjeska appeared for the first time in London at a *matinée* at the

Court theatre. This was just twelve months after her arrival here under Mr. Sergent's management: a whole year had passed away while waiting for an engagement. In two or three weeks after Madame Modjeska had determined to get an engagement for herself, she had arranged to appear at the Court.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME MODJESKA had visited the grave, sursounded by its immortal camellias, of the original Marie Duplessis; doubtless she had thought over the description of her which is in Jules Janin's preface to Dumas' novel. She was not afraid of giving to her impersonation all the charm and refinement which she possessed; and, consequently, she surprised and delighted London playgoers as she had surprised and delighted Americans. She won her public at once on that Saturday afternoon in May when she first appeared as the unhappy Lady of the Camellias, under the new name of Constance. The Prince and Princess

of Wales were present, and the audience was a brilliant one. There was real enthusiasm; for indeed the new actress was novel in her style and method. It was not only a fresh face, but a fresh conception that people found at the Court.

The Prince of Wales congratulated her with all his usual kindness to artists, and amused himself with the attempt to pronounce her husband's name. To utter Chlapowski correctly is almost an impossibility for an English tongue.

For a fortnight these afternoon performances continued; during the first few days Madame Modjeska had an offer from the St. James's Theatre, suggesting that it would be better for her to play at night. But Mr. Barrett decided that question by saying that if she played at night it should be at the Court. Madame Modjeska was compelled to rest for a week, having caught a severe cold; then Mr. Barrett took off the "Old Love and the New," and put on

"Heartsease" in the evening. On her first appearance at night the house was full of celebrities; Gustave Doré, Bastien Lepage, Alma Tadema, Joachim, Madame Trebelli—all sorts of artists and people of consequence, including Mdlle. Sara Bernhardt, who brought an immense bouquet to throw to the new Constance.

Then followed three months of the greatest possible success and of great excitement. Everybody petted and spoiled the new actress; those of her own profession were generously kind to her; society received her with enthusiasm. She played every night with the greatest pleasure, seeing the house always crowded; and she went into society incessantly, finding everyone so kind to her. She was constantly at afternoon receptions, and she went out, after the theatre, as often as she felt fit. Sometimes she was too tired to fulfil her social engagements, after the excitement of the performance. But her work did not really fatigue

her while it was so successful; it was a perfect delight to her to play to enthusiastic houses. These were three very happy months.

Madame Modjeska possesses the singular faculty of being able to do two things at once. She will sit upon the stage writing a letter which appears to break her heart, giving utterance to sobs of despair, with the tears falling down her face—she conveys to the audience a real, terrible spectacle of a suffering woman writing words that cost her agony; while upon the paper that lies before her she draws funny caricatures, and all sorts of queer things. When Mr. Dacre played Armand with her, she on one occasion wrote a real letter to him instead of the letter to Nichette which she is supposed to write in the last act. Constance wears a white wrapper in this act, and Armand, when he comes in, kisses her dress. Mr. Dacre's lips had left a red mark so often on her white gown that Modjeska declared, in fun, it was impossible for

her to buy any more new ones. She forgot to tell him this till she was on the stage, and then when she had to send her letter to Nichette it occurred to her to write to him. She quickly wrote:

"Please do not put your red lips on my wrapper, because it is a new one," and wrote "To Armand," outside. Nanine carried it to him where he stood waiting in the wings, and it made him laugh so much that it was some time before he could recover his gravity. By the time he went on to the stage, Modjeska was absorbed again in her part and had forgotten all about the letter—she could not understand why Mr. Dacre seemed afraid to touch her and looked as if he could not speak.

It was during this period of happy work that Madame Modjeska made the acquaintance of Mr. Tennyson and of Mr. Browning. The latter, who knows something of Poland and of Polish poets, delighted her by talking about them.

Mr. Tennyson, in whose house she stayed for a day, read her some of his poems and made her shed tears. With him, as with Victor Hugo, she had to defend her adopted country—America.

In September she went for a fortnight to play at Liverpool and at Leeds, and then returned to rehearse Marie Stuart.

Few outsiders can have any idea of the ghastliness of stage rehearsals. They seem bad enough to the stray visitor, but to the actor, who has to repeat his lines in cold blood, they are infinitely dreary. A dress rehearsal is rather amusing to the idler who strolls into the stalls, but to the actor it is simply horrible. The company is very tired of rehearsals, and quite spiritless; nothing interests them but the dresses, which of course don't fit or are grievously unbecoming. They come from the hands of their tailors and dressmakers, thinking of alterations in the costumes, instead of their parts. There is no rouge or powder to make the face bear the strong light; but

there are friends in the house remarking how one looks, there are one or two critics hidden away in corners, there is a full orchestra staring and yawning. One feels feverish and unreal, it is difficult to rouse oneself into the right mood and deliver a speech with spirit; if one does, in the very midst there suddenly comes a loud voice from the stalls or dress circle remarking some awkward "super," or some inappropriate dress. This comes from the manager, who is looking on from different parts of the house. Then the translator or author appears, and the actors feel bound to ask his approval.

"Do you like this effect?"

"No, not much," is the answer.

"Yes, it's beautiful!" from someone else of authority in the stalls.

"It's perfectly charming!" from another part of the house.

"Is it right or not?" says someone on the stage, in despair at the conflicting opinions.

"Yes, I think it will do"—this from the manager.

Then the author refuses to allow that it is right, and has to settle the matter with the manager. Meantime the rehearsal waits, and when a decision is arrived at, the scene has to be done over again. Sometimes a dress rehearsal lasts till two or three in the morning.

In Poland there is a very good institution, unknown with us—a reading rehearsal. Before any parts are studied, the actors meet and read their lines aloud, the "artistic leader" following with the book. This provides a quiet opportunity for intelligent discussion, and each actor gets an idea of the whole play and benefits by the suggestions of the others and of the "artistic leader." Then the dress rehearsal is absolutely private, there are no visitors whatever, and no remarks are allowed. Only the President and the stage-manager are in the house, and the rehearsal is never interrupted.

At the dress rehearsal of "Marie Stuart," Madame Modjeska thought she would have to give up the part. She was so tired when she came to the third act that she could not remember her lines.

To begin with, the dress would not do. It had been designed by Mr. Forbes-Robertson, and was charming, as all his designs are. But when Modjeska put it on, she saw at once that it made her look too young and slight for the dignified queen. She had to decide immediately what could be done, in the two or three days before the performance, to alter her appearance. She ordered a large fur-trimmed cloak, which was not at all a part of the original design; she had her cap altered and her heels raised. This Marie Stuart costume was, when complete, one of the most beautiful dresses ever worn upon the stage; but it was enough to make her forget her words to have to attend to its most important details at the last moment.

Then she had studied the third act in three different translations ; this is a shocking tax on the memory. There had been a great many rehearsals; yet when it came to the final, dress rehearsal, she found the third act gone from her mind. People unfamiliar with the life of this exciting, arduous profession, can hardly imagine the agony of such a moment. She was terrified and thought she must give up the part. Then it got about that she did not know her lines, and that the piece must be a failure in consequence. Nevertheless she had a splendid first night audience, and mercifully, her memory served her well—her words all came back to her at the great and critical moment. Mr. Gladstone and many other people of position were present.

"Marie Stuart" ran from October till Christmas. Madame Modjeska found that this season brought her a different public, less fashionable than before, but perhaps more serious. Never at any time did she receive so many letters from

strangers about her acting, and telling her of the pleasure they had received from it, as during the run of "Marie Stuart." But Madame Modjeska had made it a condition in her contract with Mr. Barrett that she was not to play in any one piece more than fifty nights; this run had now been much exceeded, and she was getting tired out. It is one of her strong convictions that work can no longer be artistic when it becomes mechanical. Therefore at Christmas a change was made and "Adrienne Lecouvreur" was put on.

This was another great success, and there were crowded houses, with the "Modjeska stalls," as the extra rows were called, still filled, until the awful frosts of that terrible winter set in. The audiences fell away then, and Mr. Barrett determined to try "Romeo and Juliet." In the meantime "Heartsease" was played for three weeks.

Notwithstanding that Madame Modjeska had played Juliet in America so often as to have

worn the dresses out twice, she went to Mrs. Sterling for pronunciation and the reading of the part. She trembled at the idea of playing Shakespearian tragedy in London. At first the houses for "Romeo and Juliet" were not good; but by degrees they improved; and when Madame Modjeska at last saw full houses again, her pronunciation became very much better. Encouragement gave her confidence.

"Romeo and Juliet" ran two months, and then Madame Modjeska desired again to make a change; she was very anxious to produce Mr. Wills's "Juana." The history of this play is very curious. It seems impossible to judge, except by the actual test of producing it, whether a play will succeed. Everyone had faith in "Juana"; Mr. Barrett got new scenery and new costumes for it; other managers made offers for it to Mr. Wills and tried to persuade Madame Modjeska to give up the play to them, so general was the belief that it would

be successful. And yet it had to be taken off in two or three weeks, for though the papers noticed it well, nothing would induce the public to come and see it. That mysterious thing, the general taste, was dead against it.

"Adrienne Lecouvreur" was put on again; but it takes some time to bring back popular favour when once it has been thoroughly displaced. The house did not fill again as it had filled before "Juana." At the end of a week of disheartened playing to a scanty house, Madame Modjeska fainted dead away during the raving scene. When she recovered, all she could say was, "I can't—I can't act any more! It is not worth while!" The disappointment of the failure of "Juana," and the difficulty of making the public, which had been so kind, forget the mistake she had made, crushed her; she could not resist feeling that they were glad to desert a foreigner.

"Frou-Frou" was then in preparation, and

was put on at once. With this play the company moved from the Court to the Princess's, a theatre much less suitable for Madame Modjeska. The audience which appreciates "The Lights o' London" can hardly be expected to appreciate "Frou-Frou." Mr. Barrett arranged that Madame Modjeska should go through the provinces before the conclusion of her contract with him; but before that she was to have a holiday. Her health was now very delicate and a rest was necessary.

In the last week at the Princess's Madame Modjeska took her benefit; and on this occasion the profession came forward to assist her with the greatest generosity and kindness. Mr. Irving, Mr. Toole, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Madame Bernhardt, Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Hare, and Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft were all quite ready with their friendly services.

During her holiday, which she spent in Brittany, Madame Modjeska took up paint

brushes for the first time in her life. The luggage had gone astray, and she found herself at St. Malo with nothing to do. Her son had his paint-box with him, and she tried to amuse herself with the colours. This was the beginning of a new interest ; since then she has painted industriously in her few holidays. She has discovered, to her delight, that she has talent ; and she promises herself, when she has left the stage, to go to Rome and study in earnest. But as she is an extraordinary and indefatigable worker, it is possible that while she is still one of the stars of Europe, we may find some charming, careful sketch of hers upon the walls of one of the summer exhibitions.

Madame Modjeska has adopted three of her nieces, and when she has a little freedom from her exciting life she surrounds herself with those she calls her "children." She is extremely fond of young girls, and delights in having them around her.

It is wonderfully pretty and pleasant to see the great actress in her private circle so completely sink the artist in the woman. She fully deserves her home name of "Mamusza" ("the little mother"); and it is possible, when she is the centre of her adopted family, to forget that she is anything but a mother, a generous friend to her own sex, a benefactress to all who need help. And yet she who has so many domestic virtues, who is at home in any *rôle*, whether it be that of the *grande dame*, the "Mamusza," a sick nurse, a cook, or a *blanchisseuse* — she is sad when she is away for three weeks from her work, and is home-sick for the stage, as most other women are for their own firesides.

After this holiday with her children in Brittany, Madame Modjeska returned to London to start upon a three months' tour through England, Scotland and Ireland, giving six plays in each town. Everywhere she had full houses

and very warm receptions. But in Dublin she met with an audience which reminded her of Poland ; the enthusiasm with which she was received had in it some of the fervour and fire to which she is accustomed in her own country. There is no doubt that it is much harder for an actor to play well to a quiet and unresponsive audience ; there is something inspiring in the delight which the more excitable races exhibit when an artist pleases them.

When this provincial tour was over, Madame Modjeska went again to Warsaw, after engaging herself to return to London and play "Odette" at the Haymarket. "Odette" had a most successful run ; the houses were crowded to the very end, and it might have been played much longer with the same success if Madame Modjeska could have been induced to go on. But she was again in delicate health, and needed a complete rest before sailing for America for her third tour through that her "second country."

Whether "Odette" is a great addition to her English *répertoire* is a matter of opinion. There are some fine touches in it: the mother-love and the mother's despair when her child is stolen from her, are good dramatic points in the strange character of "Odette." But there is no doubt that the part does not give Madame Modjeska scope; it is too slight.

During her stay in Warsaw she played "Nora," a piece by a Scandinavian author, which has a magnificent *rôle* for her. It is a subtle part, in which she has to develop the feelings of an unhappy wife and mother; it contains real tragedy, and yet it gives an opportunity for Madame Modjeska to show another of her powers which we have never seen in England. She dances the tarantella in it; and anyone who knows what Russians and Poles expect in the way of dancing, confirmed lovers of the ballet as they are, will understand that she danced it well, when it is said that the

house received it with absolute enthusiasm. Shouts of "Modrzejewska! Modrzejewska!" filled the theatre. This piece Madame Modjeska has had translated into English, in order to play it in America.

The great success which she has achieved in this last visit to the States is in Shakespearian comedy. In England we have had no opportunity of judging of her gifts as a comédienne; but in her own country she played comedy for many years. It is possible that she might have taken a great position upon the London stage as a comédienne had she chosen to do so. But we have only seen her as a suffering woman, an exponent of tragic or emotional rôles, weeping the tears that rise from an agonised heart. And it was as a tragédienne that she had become known all over America, during her two first tours through the States. But now she has appeared there in a totally new line, giving another side of her art to the public. Her

Rosalind has charmed the Americans. She studied the part alone, without any such assistance as she had for Juliet; and began to learn the words when she was about starting for America. She was then perfectly familiar with Shakespearian language and wonderfully at home in the English tongue; so that she was able to work out for herself her own idea of the most delicious of Shakespearian ladies. She had seen the play produced at the Imperial Theatre, with Miss Litton as Rosalind and Kyrle Bellew as Orlando. Mr. Bellew's performance interested her exceedingly. When she read the play for herself she came to the conclusion that Orlando is never deceived by his lady-love's masquerade, but merely follows her whim and lets her lead him as she will. Be this as it may, Rosalind, with her quick wit and warm heart, is one of the most fascinating characters of the stage. Its gaiety and sweetness are the very charms which Madame Modjeska can so well express, and she

has, too, the light foot and girlish figure which must belong to Rosalind. The dress which she wears shows her slender form to admiration. It is made from Mr. Forbes-Robertson's beautiful design, but the colours Madame Modjeska chose for herself. Instead of the brown tints which Miss Litton wore, Madame Modjeska's cloak and hat are blue. Perhaps no dress she has ever worn has suited her so well as this picturesque costume with its feathered hat, its doublet, and long tight-fitting boots of buff leather. The wide blue velvet cloak, which would be a source of great distress to anyone at all awkward, in the hands of an experienced and graceful actress becomes a most elegant and expressive part of the costume. Few women possess the bearing which becomes such a dress; but Madame Modjeska is one of those few. She can put on to perfection the pretty imitation of a "swashing and a martial outside." America has fully appreciated her bright and charming impersonation,

The *New York Herald* says:—

"This Rosalind can act and be pretty as a picture too. So thought the brilliant audience that crowded Booth's last evening. Long it is indeed since so fresh, so dainty, and so human a Rosalind tripped through the enchanted forest of Arden. It was a piece of pure womanhood, joyous in its sense of youth and warm with life."

The *New York Times* speaks with equal enthusiasm of the performance:—

"Madame Modjeska's acting last night was full of artistic feeling. It had the depth and tenderness of restrained passion, and it had an airiness, an ingenuous braggadocio, a refined charm which were, it seemed to us, and apparently to the audience, fascinating."

The *New York Evening Post* pronounces "this Rosalind, taking it all in all, one of the best seen here in this generation."

The *Philadelphian Ledger* goes further than

these other critics, and draws an interesting comparison between the new Rosalind and the last notable actress identified with the part, the lovely Adelaide Neilson:—

"Miss Neilson depended largely upon her personal charms for her success," says this journal. "Madame Modjeska, while not lacking in this regard, is too true an artist to make it a leading feature in her impersonation. She possesses the faculty of appearing to entirely sink her individuality in the character she represents, and by her art conceals her art."

With regard to the charming costume of doublet and hose the *Philadelphian Press* observes:—

"Madame Modjeska's dressing of the part was almost an inspiration of genius, and for once we saw a Rosalind who was a counterfeit presentment of a boy."

The critics of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia have, in fact, given an enthusiastic

approval of Madame Modjeska's Rosalind ; the complete finish of her style having won universal admiration when applied to this bright and delicate *rôle.*

The *Philadelphian Times* says:—"It is a wonderfully well-studied and wonderfully clever piece of acting." Another journal remarks that—"Her bye-play was wonderful and was rapturously applauded."

The *New York Herald,* in its first notice of this performance, says:—

"Her Rosalind is an exquisite creation. The refinement of her art made itself felt in a hundred bits of bye-play which added to the effect of the impersonation."

A Rosalind whose "manly garb is as modest as it is trim and picturesque," who seizes upon the ideal part of the character, and who is capable of detail which is amusing yet never coarse, cannot but win the hearts of her audiences. But, although the part is so love-

able, so interesting in itself, it requires a really fine actress. A beautiful face and a pretty figure are not sufficient qualifications for a Rosalind, though some have fancied so; and in the hands even of a clever actress, the whole impersonation may be ruined by a touch of vulgarity. We have had fair Rosalinds and realistic Rosalinds, beauties and hoydens; but the public fully appreciates the boon when an actress takes the part who is an artist in spirit and who has read her Shakespeare with understanding.

The *Athenæum* of January 20, 1883, observed:—

"The Rosalind of Madame Modjeska has taken a strong hold upon the American public, and has given rise to a series of comparisons between the imaginative style of acting, of which Madame Modjeska is regarded as the exponent, and the realistic, as illustrated in Mrs. Langtry."

This may be considered Madame Modjeska's final triumph over the English language. When she is regarded as a distinguished exponent of such a part as Shakespeare's Rosalind, it must be granted that she has achieved a *tour de force* in respect of the difficult tongue in which he wrote. It is strange to look back to that time in her career when she was doing battle with her English grammar, sometimes hoping to succeed in the task, more often full of despair, and when those about her thought it simply absurd that she could ever hope to act upon the English stage. It is a wonderful instance of what courage and a resolute will can accomplish, even when these qualities have no stronger instrument than the physique of a delicate woman. Stranger still is it to look back in her career to the time when she, who has since become a star both upon her own and a foreign stage, was discouraged from making even a humble attempt upon the boards. Her beautiful boy's dress for Rosalind, a triumph

of the artist and the costumier, is a strange contrast to that she wore when she played a man in her first amateur essay, and was dressed in her cousin's coat ; but there are contrasts more serious and as strange between the different periods of this chequered career—contrasts that supply some food for thought. How far popular favour may be won by ambition and perseverance, how far it is purely capricious and careless, none can say. Not even those who have compelled the world of fashion to worship at their feet can tell precisely by what especial grace or gift it has been charmed.

London: Printed by W. H. Allen & Co. 13 Waterloo Place. S.W.