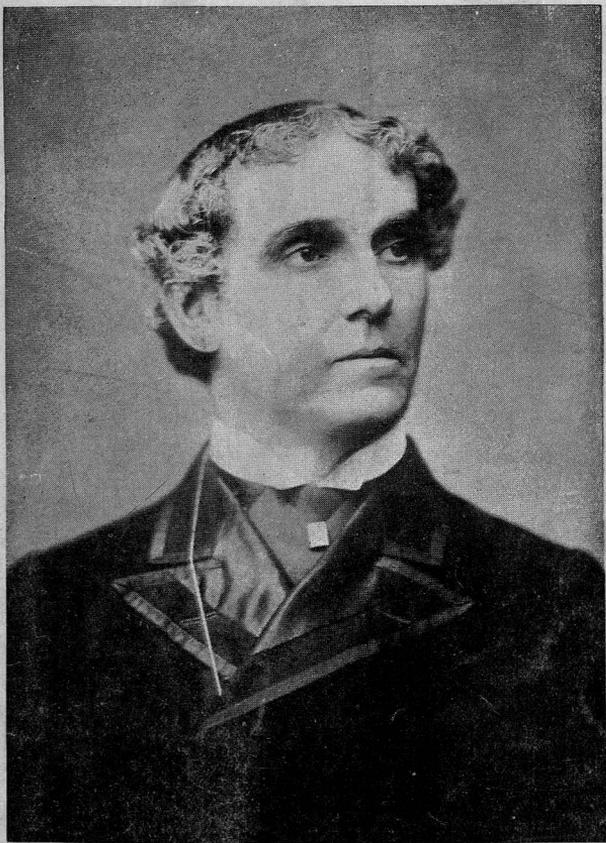
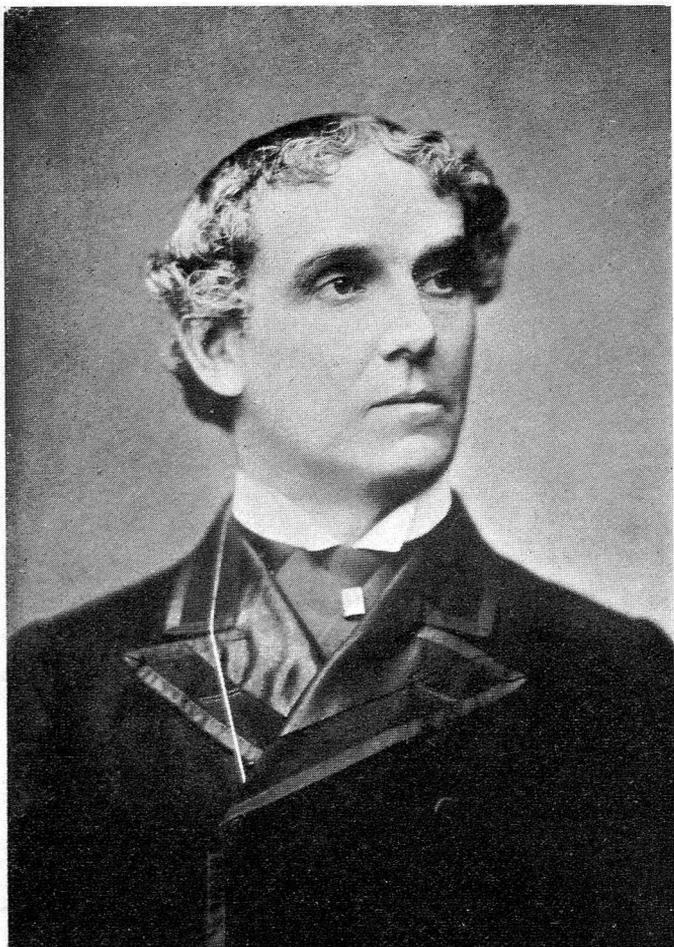


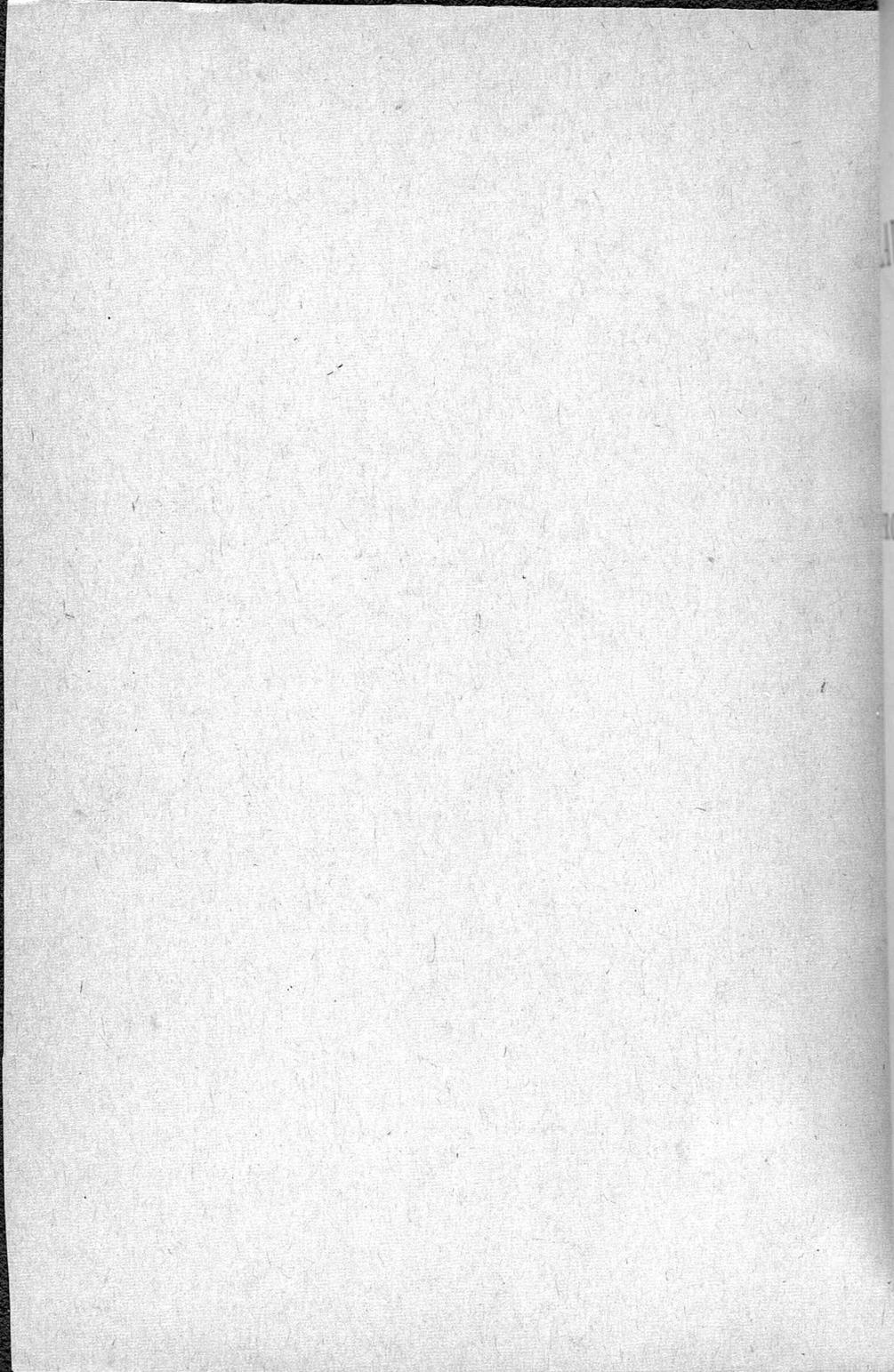


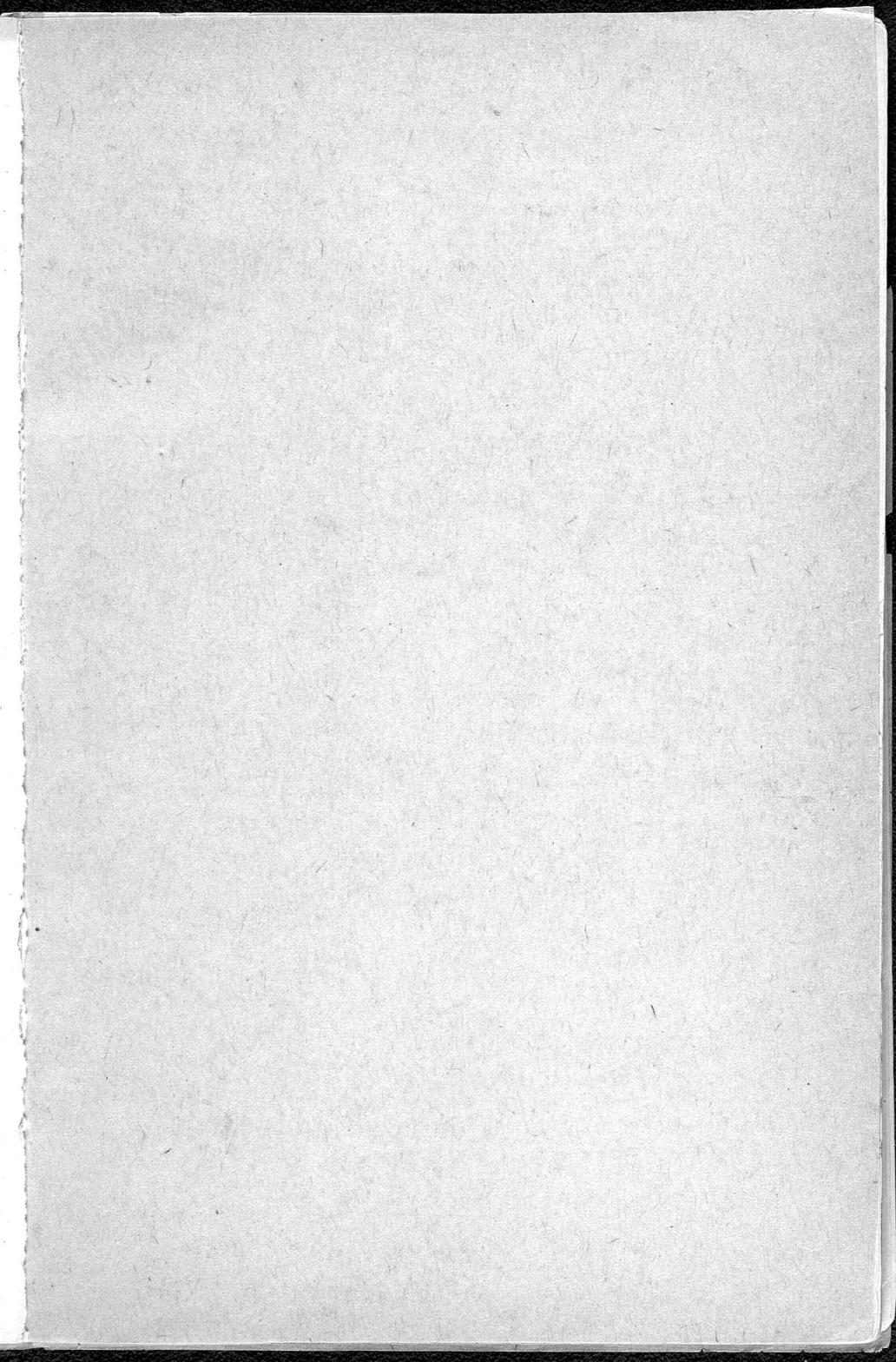
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LAWRENCE BARRETT.

A PROFESSIONAL SKETCH.

BY ELWYN A. ^{elphed}BARRON.

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INTRODUCTORY.

ONE of the Indian poets named the dignities and honors of well-won reputation "the mellowed fruits of virtuous actions." There is nice distinction here between notoriety, or sudden, perhaps questionable fame, and the wholesome, orderly development that only is reputation in mouths of wisest censure.

In its highest, pure sense, reputation is the fruit of long tested good conduct and scrupulously examined merit, being as it is the aggregate result of many findings. Trials and adversities, the flaws of prejudice are its weather; a not over-generous encouragement is its sunshine. But its growth under these conditions is the more substantial, its perfection the richer and sweeter. As the choicest fruits are not those which ripen quickly through much nourishing, the most enduring reputations are not easily won, but crown lives of patient devotion to high aims and lofty purposes,—lives in which self-sacrifice is the instrument of ideal aspirations, and to which the "whips and scorns of outrageous fortune" have come only to strengthen resolution, dignify courage and fortify perseverance.

Self-reliance battling its way through hostile environments, refusing to be dismayed by persistent opposition, presents a type of moral heroism that compels the sullen respect of the meanest and wins the applause of the best. When to this quality of spirit is added the grace of genuine sensibility governed

by noble impulses and governing strong capabilities, we have elements of the power to which, lacking better terms, we give the mysterious name of genius. In whatever sphere of action, in whatever profession or calling, it is the master of fortune, not fortune's favorite, who performs the larger service toward the adjustment of the world,—in ethics, and in æsthetics, as well as in material things—to its noblest uses. Large ability calmly resolute is like a capped wave moving shoreward over a summer sea, the force of which we do not appreciate until it leaps to its goal among the crags and overwhelms us. We know not the storms and stress that give extra momentum to special character more than we know what gales gave irresistible movement to a particular wave; but when a man rises conspicuously eminent from the plane of the commonplace, we are interested in learning what were his early circumstances, and what were the means employed to promote his success.

Apology there need be none for attempting, however imperfectly, to answer biographically such questions; and certainly if reputation is worth achieving we cannot do better than honor, while they live, the men who have done something to merit remembrance.

LAWRENCE BARRETT.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YOUTH.

IN the picturesque town of Paterson, N. J., fifty-one years ago, April 4, 1838, amid humble surroundings, into conditions that ordinarily forbid the promise of future celebrity, Lawrence Barrett was born. His father, Thomas Barrett, was one of those free-souled Irishmen, large of frame, muscular, capable, in whom the ancient Celt revives to make the restraints of industrious life intolerable, and in whom is lacking that economic providence which is essential to the care of a family and the proper education of the young. His mother, on the contrary, was frugal, thrifty, patient, with the ambition to rear her children to usefulness and respectability. To this mother, who often quitted her laborious household duties to bear to school in her arms her feeble, sickly child, Lawrence Barrett owes the moral impulse that enabled him to master circumstances and rise superior to his natural environments.

At an early age he was removed to Detroit, where his father hoped to succeed better with his trade, and there gained health and strength in a climate peculiarly suited to his development. The family necessities, however, compelled him to become a helper at an age when boys most need the nurture of home and the benefits of school, and it is not surprising that he looked to the theatre for employment. He became call boy

and general apprentice to the then principal theatre of Detroit, and unwittingly laid the foundation of his fame. It was accident rather than design that took him to the theatre, however. His first and brief employment was in the linen department of a Detroit dry-goods establishment. His taste for the drama was already marked, and frequently, when business was dull, he would mount a box in the rear of the store and entertain his companions by declaiming passages from plays he had heard at the theatre. He was much of a mimic, and his proclivities gained him great popularity with the boys. The "store walker" was a pompous, exacting, disagreeable fellow, thoroughly detested by the lads over whom he exercised tyrannous sway. Young Barrett delighted to mimic the mannerisms of this individual, and never failed to set his fellows in a roar with his imitations. On one of these occasions, when Barrett was in excellent humor for the mischief and had the little circle about him in high glee, the subject of their ridicule suddenly pounced upon them. The boys were completely humiliated by the majestic rage of their tyrant, and young Barrett took his instant discharge as well-merited punishment. As he was turning away with downcast eyes, the store walker said to him sneeringly: "You have mistaken your vocation, young man; you should go on the stage." It was then and there that the boy, brightening at the hint, resolved that he would go on the stage, and in a few days he was engaged at the old Metropolitan at the bewildering salary of \$2.50 a week. Though exceedingly timid, and easily abashed, the lad was shrewd, observing, naturally studious of men and things, and had a surprisingly analytical turn of mind. He therefore profited by his surroundings more than might a less diffident nature, and he gained a great deal from his elders who, to his admiring, though awe-struck fancy, were men apart from the common.

It need hardly be said that the dramatic profession of that day was less circumspect than we now find it. Its members did not always prove to the highest moral average; and many

who figured as the gods of the call boy's idolatry were neither patterns of sobriety nor examples of reverence. Yet through the atmosphere of intemperance and profanity shone a clear, strange light that stole into the darkness of the boy's mind and filled him with wonderment. It perplexed him sorely for a time, this peculiar influence, and lying on his hard pallet in a dingy out-of-the-way room of the theatre he puzzled his brains to make out the difference between these men and himself. In a vague, uncertain way the answer came to him at last, and he realized for the first time his ignorance and how great a barrier it raised between him and his dreams of the future. But the sturdy self-reliance so conspicuous in the character of the man was not wanting in the boy, and he straightway resolved to overcome the dangers that threatened him. It was a veritable battle with giants to which he pledged himself in the stillness of the night, for at the age of fourteen years Lawrence Barrett could barely read and write.

He lost no time lamenting the fact that his resources were few. He determined to make the very best possible uses of the opportunities at hand. Standing in the wings or in any convenient corner of the stage, when there was no demand upon his services he listened with the ears of the soul to the dialogue of the play, absorbing what his intelligence could grasp, taking care to note the pronunciation of words, learning words, phrases and entire speeches. When the play was over he gathered up the rejected bits of candle from the dressing rooms and bore them, with expectantly beating heart, to his hole-in-the-wall lodging place where, the gift of a friendly actor, he had stored as a treasure of great price a worn and dog-eared copy of Johnson's Dictionary. The little room was without any conveniences, having neither chair nor table nor other furniture than the shake-down bed. For candlestick, therefore, young Barrett drove three nails into the floor and between the heads of these his scrap of candle was placed and lighted. Then, lying flat upon the floor, the precious book,—a wonderland of information, philosophy and literature it seemed

—spread open before him, eagerly, aglow with rapture, sought out for their meanings the words he had learned, and explored the pages for further knowledge. No boy ever read a novel by Scott with more enthusiasm, with greater delight, with more feverish expectancy than did Lawrence Barrett study the dictionary of the pompous, pedantic old Doctor. Sometimes the piece of candle would be barely enough for the supper of a mouse, and the boy who saw its expiring flickerings shadowing his page until he could no longer discern the words in fine print went weeping to bed, only at such times bitter against his fate.

Alert in mind, active in body, willing, even forward, Barrett was a general favorite among the actors of the company, and when his studious habit became marked encouraging contributions to his library of one book served to broaden, though but slightly, his field of fruitful literature. He began to feel the joy of knowing. He found it easier to engage in conversation with his elders, and it delighted him that now and again one of them would discuss with him his plans, offering perhaps a hint for his guidance, or stimulating his mind with anecdotes of others who had struggled to success through adversity. In some mysterious manner his old gods became resolved into men among men, no longer occupying inaccessible heights, no longer creatures of marvelous character, and suddenly the belief that he too might become as one of these filled his young life with a new purpose and his soul with a noble ambition. With this intellectual awakening his moral sensibilities were aroused, and with the wish that he might achieve something as an actor went the resolve that he would be something as a man. The intemperate habits of the actors that before seemed nothing strange, now filled him with disgust. Their shiftlessness and careless dissipation taught him what to avoid, and the very surroundings that were fatal to less earnest natures reinforced his character and fostered his hopes. The conviction that sober industry, zealous endeavors and persistent study would enable him to rise superior to those conditions was the

guardian genius of his youth, the prophecy of his manhood. He plunged into books for safety against the temptations that encompass youth, especially a youth amid the unrealities of the theatre, and for recreation learned passages of Shakespearean plays to declaim in imitation of the leading actors whom it was his occasional privilege to see and hear. Spouting Shakespeare is a familiar weakness of youth, but this boy, with the remarkable voice, the deep, luminous eyes into which the soul cast the lights and shadows of feeling, of impetuous manner and intense earnestness, was something more than a spouter, despite his untutored elocution. His young friends about town esteemed it a pleasure to listen to him, the passion and enthusiasm of an ardent, not unpoetic nature lending to his recitals an eloquence that often impressed others than his familiars, and gained for him such words of approbation as, not misvalued, make the wholesome food of young ambition.

His exceptionally studious habits, the rapidity with which he acquired knowledge and the evident intelligence with which he converted to his own profit the matter he got from books and sensible conversations, early attracted the favorable attention of the manager, and one morning the land of promise was suddenly opened to him and he was invited to enter into the glory thereof. He was to have a part in the next production. It mattered nothing to him that the part was only that of Murad in the "French Spy;" it was a world to conquer as great as any Alexander sighed for, and no one of the cast felt more the weight of responsibility. Barrett went as diligently to the work of mastering the few lines of Murad as if he were bent on plucking out the heart of Hamlet's mystery, and though there were many perturbations of nervous excitement before, when the night came he acquitted himself so creditably that he was entrusted with a great deal of minor work throughout the next year. This was in 1853. The following year the young actor went to Pittsburg as a member of the Grand Opera House Stock Company, then under the management of

Joseph Foster. For two years Barrett played in the support of the leading actors and actresses of the day, among them Edmund Conner, C. W. Couldock, J. A. Neafe, Eliza Logan and Julia Dean, doing some traveling between St. Louis, Chicago and other western cities.

It was while he was a member of Julia Dean's company that he played his first really important character, with a singular result. It was in a small Ohio town. The play was "The Hunchback." The leading man of the company suddenly was taken sick, leaving the only person available for the part of Sir Thomas Clifford the by no means confident Lawrence Barrett. The young man with much hesitation consented to undertake the part, and applied himself to the task so intelligently and faithfully that he acquitted himself respectably enough to win a complimentary speech from Miss Dean. Conscious that he had not distinguished himself, yet feeling that he had done as well as the circumstances permitted, he was up betimes the next morning, feverishly impatient to see what impression his acting had made on the critic of the one paper the town boasted. He bought a copy and withdrew to a secluded part of the hotel, where he might unobserved gladden over the generous words of forbearing criticism he properly felt were his due. With trembling fingers he unfolded the paper and with quick eye scanned its columns for its only important matter. He was not long in finding it, and as he read the notice the eager flush faded from his face, his heart throbbed with violent emotion, and despite his will, tears of resentment and unmerited humiliation sprang into his eyes. The article, mainly devoted to him, was most cruel and unrelieved ridicule of his performance, coupled with a scathing rebuke of the actress for presuming to foist such a wretched leading actor upon an intelligent community.

Fully conscious of the injustice done him, burning with indignation against what he conceived to be the wanton cruelty of the writer, who surely was aware of the facts in the case, young Barrett then formed a resolution to win from rebellious

fame and from unwilling critics a complete vindication of his abilities against the merely censorious.

Years afterward, in 1867, when he had already achieved an enviable distinction and gained the praise of able critics as well as the applause of the public, Mr. Barrett visited England. At a little breakfast with Charles Dickens, Artemus Ward and one or two others, given in his honor in London, the conversation drifted into a discussion of criticism and Mr. Barrett, to illustrate how great hurt to young ambition careless or injudicious criticism might be, related this incident in his own experience, remarking that, though the strictures but strengthened his purpose, many another had been utterly discouraged by them. Mr. Barrett was surprised to note that Ward found the narrative highly amusing, and in his quiet way was laughing immoderately. When the story—told pleasantly enough now that its sting was gone—was ended, Ward said, in his stammering way, and yet unable to control his laughter:

“Why, God bless you, old man, I wrote that article. It was my first dramatic criticism, and I felt that, for my own credit, I had to do some one up. I saw that you were making your first stagger at important work, and I felt perfectly safe in skinning you.”

There was a general laugh, and from that breakfast dated a very warm friendship between Lawrence Barrett and poor Charley Browne.

CHAPTER II.

IN NEW YORK AND BOSTON.

AT the close of his season with Miss Dean, during which he played a number of important parts and made admirable progress in the art of his profession, Mr. Barrett went to New York, with no definite prospects, and was only fortunate in securing an engagement to support a débutante, Mrs. McMahon, who played four weeks at the old Chambers Street theatre. The opening piece chanced to be "The Hunchback," December, 1856, and he was the Sir Thomas Clifford. During this engagement Barrett played a variety of leading parts, and attracted so much favorable attention from managers that he was placed in the happy position of being able to make choice among the theatres of New York for his next season's engagement. At that time men of remarkable talent were the heads of the several leading play-houses, giving the ideal character of actor-manager to the conduct of the theatres. The elder Wallack was in the height of success at his own house; Blake was at the Broadway; Laura Keene had her own theatre, and Burton was then in control of the New Metropolitan, afterward known as the Winter Garden. The position he had accepted reluctantly as principal support to Mrs. McMahon proved to be a most lucky circumstance for the young actor, his enthusiastic, yet well governed and earnest work in that engagement procuring him flattering offers from each of the famous managers named. Mr. Barrett found the proposition of Mr. Burton best suited to him, as presenting larger advantages and better opportunities, and the offer of the eminent comedian was accepted. Mr. Barrett began his work at Burton's theatre in February, 1857, making his appearance

in Douglas Jerrold's three-act play, "Time Tries All." This was a propitious year in the formative period of the young actor's life. Among other helpful incidents, Edwin Forrest played his farewell engagement at the Broadway theatre, where Barrett first saw him in "King Lear," and perhaps nothing in his fanciful dreams, his eager longings, or his encouraged hopes did so much to inspire him and give new purpose to his ambition as did the influence of this performance. Forrest had not yet come to that time of year

"When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,—
Bare, ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."

Indeed, though then fifty-one years of age and soured by disappointments and the pangs of disease, he was at the very zenith of his power, majestic, commanding, overwhelming in the poise or mad whirl of his genius, having at their full the very qualities calculated to arouse the enthusiastic admiration and compel the profound respect of an ardent, impulsive, courageous, aspiring youth. The soul of the tyro leaped out to the veteran, and though Forrest never in any sense served as a model to Barrett he certainly was an inspiring example.

In this year also Matilda Heron, then in the glory of her ill-prized womanhood, made her first appearance in New York and played a brilliant engagement at Wallack's, which was not without its value to the studiously observant Barrett. But the event of most direct and practical service to him was the Metropolitan debut of Edwin Booth, the hereditary prince of theatrical tradition, above whose brow the lustre of manly beauty shone like a shadowy nimbus prophetic of immortal honors. They who believe in a guiding and ruling destiny must see something more than chance issue in the fact that Booth made his appearance at Burton's, where Lawrence Barrett was the leading support in youthful characters, and that these two young men, so opposite in temperament, so different in method, and yet so much alike in purpose, were

brought into professional relations in the very beginning of their respective careers, and were led into a friendship that has since been so fruitful to both of them. Booth was a remarkably handsome man in those days, picturesque in appearance, almost classic in feature, full of spirit, somewhat careless, but frank, genial and loyal, the very man to win the regard of the reserved, modest and book-loving Barrett. The two struck hearts as well as hands in that first season of their association. From that time to the present their relations have been cordially sustained, and the influence of one upon the other has been of a kind to benefit both to a degree few besides themselves appreciate. Unfortunately there is but a meagre record of those days, really among the most critical in the formative period of the actor's life. But were the details of that experience more abundant, it is hardly within the province of a generalizing sketch to recount them. The main facts are alone essential to mark the progressive steps of one whose early trials were not signalized by brilliant achievements, who wrested by sheer force of mind and will from reluctant fortune what honorable triumphs were his to enjoy. It is perhaps enough to know that the particular season referred to was one to arouse the best energies of an ambitious nature, a time of emulation not alone in the sense that some of the noblest examples of the standard, or so-called legitimate school were inspiringly present, but because 1857 was in some respects a transition period with the American stage. Not only did the young Booth, with his easy, graceful and natural methods, his colloquial readings, give rise to a new idea that divided public sentiment as between it and devotion to the barbarian ruggedness and passionate vehemence of the Forrest school; but a new spirit had stolen into the form of the drama itself. At Wallack's old theatre, at the corner of Broome Street and Broadway, Dion Boucicault ushered in with "Jessie Brown" the sensational and pictorial drama, with its startling mechanical effects and broad splashes of familiar character, the commonplace made romantic, and

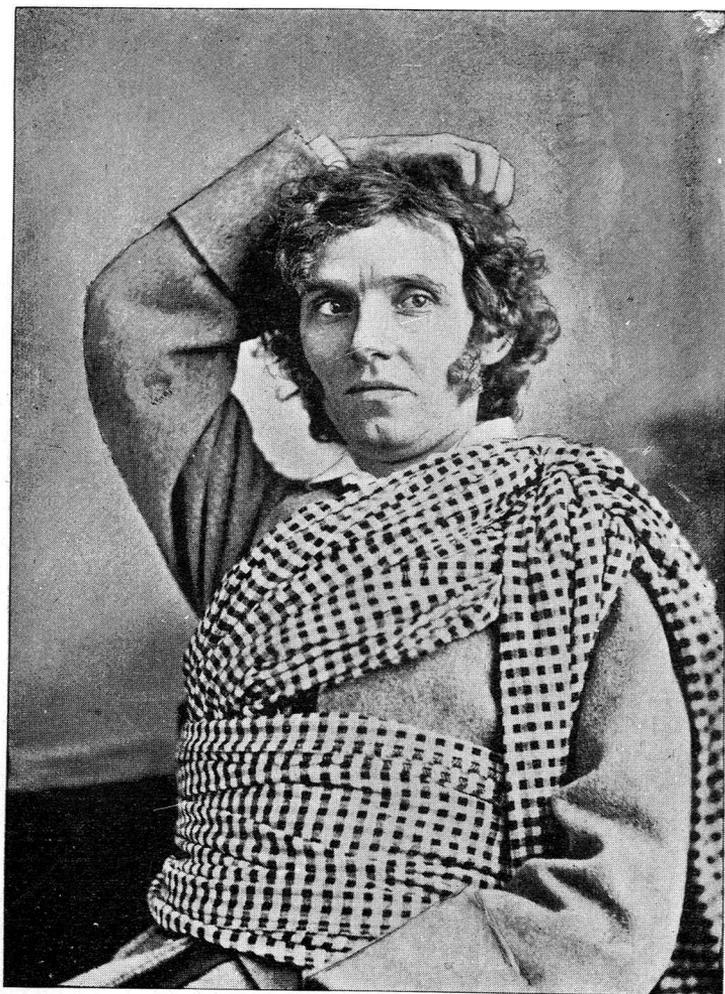
this modernizing of melodrama was an element in the change that brought about in a comparatively few years the complete reformation of acting and the character of plays.

Lawrence Barrett, however, was not entirely in sympathy with the new movement, notwithstanding his ardent admiration of the impulsive, unfettered Edwin Booth. He had a reverence of the old masters, whose names meant so much to him, in whom he beheld the conservers of the best that had been handed down from generation to generation to the glory of the theatre, and so he came into a middle ground of thought that sought to differentiate the two conditions and select a golden mean. He made choice slowly, the analytical faculty that has ever been a distinguishing trait with him being exercised with caution, the more deliberately and repeatedly for the reason he yet doubted his own discretion. In this frame of mind he attended the performances of the elder Wallack, then in the foremost rank of actors. Barrett saw him in many of his most famous characterizations and discovered in them an instance of the degree of moderation he felt might best serve the end of interpreting classic character. Pleased thus to be confirmed in his judgment, the young actor laid down as the fundamental principle of his acting the rule "force when force is reasonable; never as a mere expedient." If he did not entirely succeed in subordinating to this formula his excess of enthusiasm and natural impetuosity, the self-imposed discipline produced such good results that the attention of Charlotte Cushman was specially attracted to the young actor, when she played at Burton's some months later. Miss Cushman was then in her prime, imperiously exacting, not easily pleased with the support furnished her by the stock companies, rather disposed to criticise than commend, notwithstanding she was at heart a most kindly and sympathetic woman. With her art outweighed sentiment, and she did not hesitate to administer reproof when an occasion warranted her in so doing. Compliments from her lips fell into grateful ears, having the value

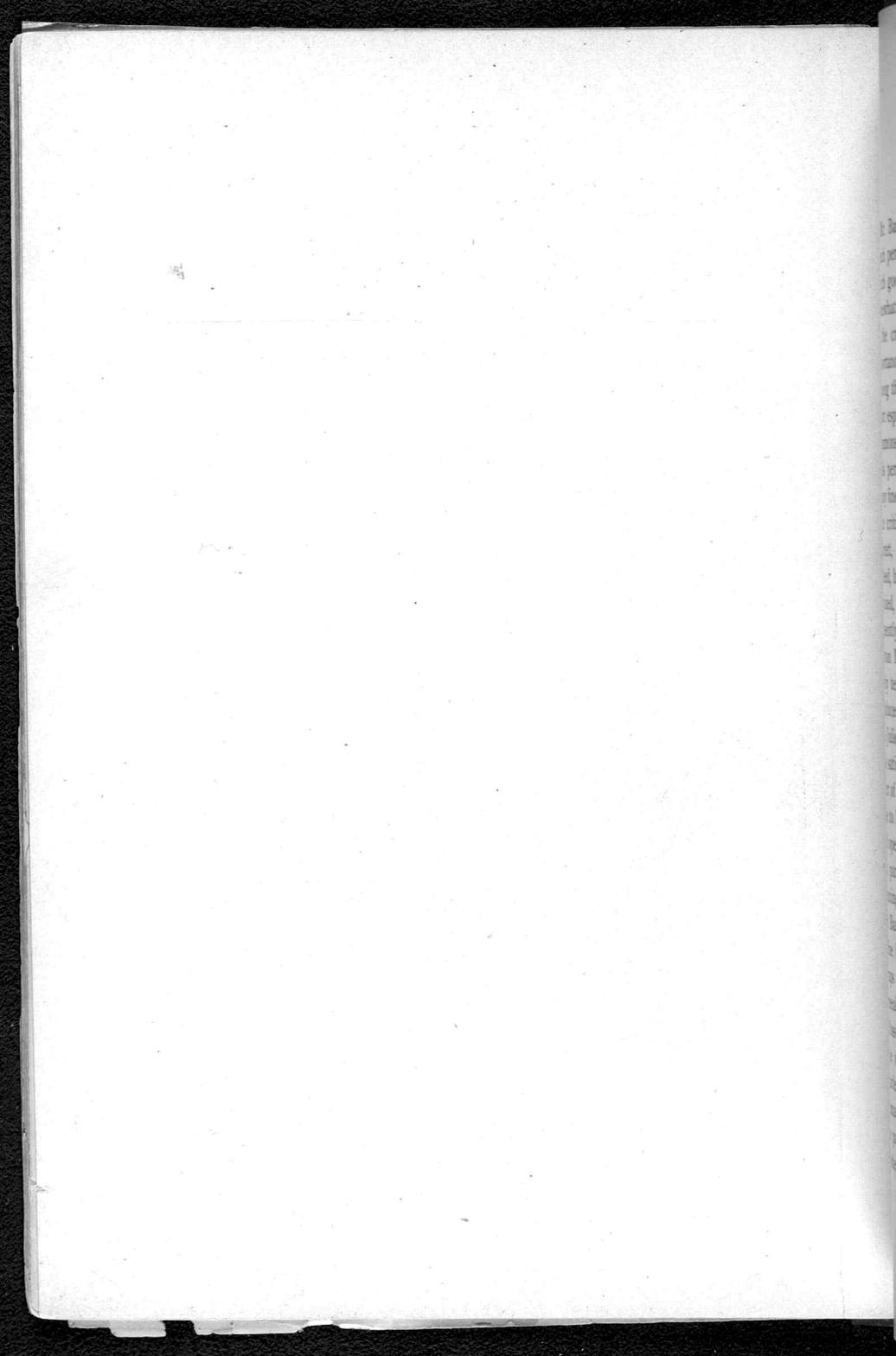
to her younger brother and sister actors of jewels to the society débutante. The great actress evinced more than passing interest in the diffident young man who gave her such intelligent and earnest support. She received him into her friendship with a cordiality that made her long engagement of the highest practical value to Barrett, and often proved a comfort and stay to him in after years of struggles with adversity. This friendship continued during the life of Miss Cushman, and no one more sincerely mourned the death of that gifted woman than the actor who was then well along toward the fulfilment of her predictions as to his success.

In the fall of 1858, yielding to very flattering inducements, Mr. Barrett went to Boston and became leading actor in the Museum stock company. He at once became associated with a society of notable players, among them rare William Warren, then at his best. Mr. Barrett began his engagement by appearing as Frederick Bramble in the old comedy of "The Poor Gentleman," in which Mr. Warren was the Dr. Ollapod and Mr. W. H. Smith was the Sir Robert, with corresponding excellence throughout the cast. During his two years stay at this theatre Mr. Barrett played a great variety of leading characters, established himself firmly in popular favor, and made very considerable progress.

Recognition of his ability is contained in a criticism of a play, "Mésalliance," in which Miss Davenport (Mrs. Lander) appeared as the heroine, giving "a performance that will forever be remembered as among the most brilliant of her efforts." The critic, not disregarding his manifest duty to condemn the moral tone of plays derived from the French source, hastens to note "the credit universally awarded to Mr. Lawrence Barrett,—not only for his excellent performance on this occasion, but for his invariable faithfulness to the arduous duties of his position. He is one of those in the dramatic profession who are going up,—steadily and slowly, perhaps, but surely—and we hope he may succeed in reaching the highest honors to which his ambition can point."



MR. BARRETT AS HAREBELL.



Mr. Barrett remained at the Museum two years, during which period he did the most varied and trying work with which good fortune had favored him. He came to Boston somewhat apprehensively, having, perhaps, extravagant ideas of the critical exactitude of that city, impressed with the importance to himself of making at least a creditable record. Among the first performances that gave him opportunity to court especial notice was his appearance in "King of the Commons." He succeeded well enough to be assured that "his personation clearly shows his undeniable talent, has many fine points, and as a whole reflects great credit on him." The critic also discovered "two desirable qualities in Mr. Barrett, ambition and energy." He had plenty of both, indeed, but he had also a higher virtue not so generously recognized, an intelligence in the direction of his energies. Presently we learn that "Mr. Barrett, the new comer at the Boston Museum, will have his ability as a juvenile tragedian fairly tested this evening, as 'Romeo and Juliet' is to be produced, in which he will sustain the character of Romeo to the Juliet of Miss Cunningham." This unintentional prophecy was satisfactorily verified. Mr. Barrett did sustain the character of Romeo, and that too in a manner so entirely creditable to him that it was the real basis of his Boston popularity, and opened to him the privilege of appearing in other important parts. "Ingomar" was soon after brought out, Miss Cunningham having an enviable local reputation as Parthenia. Mr. Barrett made his first appearance as Ingomar and "made a fine hit. His rendition reminded one continually of good scraps of acting from able actors, and could not fail to be agreeable for just that reason."

Possibly Mr. Barrett was reminded by this agreeable experience of an evening three years before at Burton's, when Charles Matthews produced for the first time in New York the drama entitled "A Day of Reckoning." Mr. Barrett played the part of the young workman, his acting being "the most marked feature of the performance. It was a most conclusive

corroboration of the axiom, 'You never know what you can do till you try.' We do not think it would be possible for any one to play his part much better than he did it." He was so enthusiastically recalled at the end of one scene that Mr. Matthews himself led him before the curtain as a compliment to "a young actor likely to make his mark." Mr. Barrett played all the youthful heroic parts during his stay at the Museum in support of one or another of the stars of magnitude until he had secured that share of appreciation from the frequenters of that theatre which was evinced in the "liberal applause bestowed upon him whenever he makes his first appearance for the evening."

From the Museum Mr. Barrett went to the Howard Athenæum, then under the management of E. L. Davenport. Here he remained one season, playing with the great tragedians and comedians of the day, including Charlotte Cushman, Barry Sullivan, Hackett, Davenport and Couldock, adding to his stock of characters as well as to his store of practical information, not of the theatre alone, but of men and books. Not a systematic reader at that time, perhaps not always careful to make choice of the best, he mentally devoured whatever came to hand, keeping up well with current literature, poetry especially attracting him. He favored the writings of Bayard Taylor and G. P. R. James, but he was not averse to certain sentimental verses by one W. D. Howells, then a youthful contributor to the New York *Saturday Press*. Ambition hindered of its desires sometimes takes gloomy views of the commonplace, and Barrett, no doubt feeling peculiarly afflicted because his struggles were greater than he thought his rewards should be, found a sort of morbid satisfaction in collecting and preserving poems that dealt with the hollowness, the miseries, the disappointments of life. There is no worse pessimist than a young man of two and twenty who has begun to moralize.

CHAPTER III.

AS STAR AND MANAGER.

ONE who remembers says of Mr. Barrett's first appearance on the stage, as Murad in "The French Spy," "the youthful aspirant was tongue-tied and limb-smitten." He was, indeed, laughed at by the more forward youths in the audience, and for a moment felt an almost irresistible inclination to dash from the stage and abjure the theatre forever. This moment of irresolution was in a measure disconcerting and gave a cue to the juvenile roisterers for a volley of bantering noises. Instantly the proud spirit of the sensitive youth rose in rebellion; an honest rage routing his fears, restoring his self-confidence, converted threatened failure into fair success. The trait thus early manifested has ever been characteristic of Mr. Barrett. Antagonism has been to him always a helpful spur, putting him to his mettle, arousing in him new energies, strengthening him to over-ride or beat down obstacles, developing him as the smiles of ready favor never could have done. He began his New York season raw and rudely disciplined, road travel in those days being no better than now for the positive art of the actor. He had, therefore, to encounter and master ridicule in his first appearance at Burton's. But, as we have seen already, his admirable management of himself made that New York season the substantial basis of respectable reputation, and he went to Boston with much to his credit in the way of valuable recognition. There his experience was in all respects beneficial, and it is uncertain how long he might have clung to surroundings so entirely congenial had not the breaking out of the war of the Rebellion affected him.

This event naturally disturbed theatrical plans and arrangements as it interfered with every kind of business carried on between the North and South. There was a general change and shifting about of engagements made when there was but an uncertain prospect of war, and among the professional transitions Mr. Barrett found it to his advantage to accept an offer to unite with the stock company of the old Walnut Street Theatre, then under the management of Mrs. Garretson.

This was coming into an atmosphere of memories and traditions always helpful to a poetic temperament. The oldest theatre in Philadelphia, the natural resort of the ablest actors of the time past and present, this then true temple of Thespis was in the nature of a rallying post to the young actor sturdily pushing along the rugged and evil beset way that only leads to enduring success. Mr. Barrett made his first appearance there in the character of Cassius in "Julius Cæsar." This was the second occasion of his having to do with a part in which he was destined to become famous. He was but seventeen years of age when he first put on the toga of the sour-visaged Roman, playing the part in the old Metropolitan Theatre, Detroit, to the Antony of the now venerable Joseph Proctor and the Brutus of George Jamison. Little did he dream then there would be a time when the popular Edwin Booth should approach him after the glory of a splendid revival and say, with cordial deference, in highest compliment to the achievement of the younger actor, "I shall never play Cassius again." Indeed, since 1871 there has been but one Cassius.

Mr. Barrett remained at the Walnut Street Theatre only three months, going from there to Washington under the management of Mr. Grover. The professional gain to him here did not equal the social privileges he enjoyed. The season was not fruitless of theatric honors, but its chief value consisted in the opportunities for making desirable and influential acquaintances. It was in this winter that Mr. Barrett came to know the late martyred President, James A. Garfield, then a young congressman from Ohio. Between the two grew up a

firm friendship that lasted, with increased esteem as each aspired the road of fame, until the agonized death of the great victim of murderous madness. Mr. Barrett also formed the acquaintance of eminent statesmen and generals then at Washington, and had the honor of becoming personally known to President Lincoln. What such associations would do for a man of Mr. Barrett's mental and moral traits may be imagined. Theretofore his principal ambition was to educate and discipline himself to take honorable rank as an actor. From this time forward the desire possessed him equally with his professional longings to take intellectual stand with men of scholarly attainments, to be one of them as well as to know them. He accordingly added to his studies how to become an actor the more important inquiry how to become a man in the imperial domain of mind. It may be said that his Washington experience was the point of demarkation between a purely selfish ambition and a broad, productive, and beneficial purpose. He discovered, perhaps, that the circle of each individual life impinges many others and that the real test of substantial success is its general utility of service. At any rate there was a marked change in his general demeanor, noted by his associates, curiously commented upon, appreciated by some, misunderstood by many. More and more withdrawing from the careless and idling that he might the more diligently and effectually pursue his plan of self-education, he was charged with exclusiveness and arrogance, and was certainly not a favorite with brawlers and revelers, nor with those who, in the stage parlance of the time, knew no other study than how to "get through" a part. It may here be said, *en passant*, that it is an entire misconception of character by those who, knowing him little, accuse Mr. Barrett of being austere and egotistic. To be sure he has a manly contempt for those who having eyes see not what opportunities lie around them, neglecting advantages to lift themselves above the mean plane of professional vagabondage and mere bohemianism. He does hold himself aloof from associations that could in no wise benefit him and would

tempt him only to squander time on empty things. But with all his positiveness of character and independence of thought, Lawrence Barrett is, among his social and intellectual equals, as modest as he is amiable, as courteous and as well bred as he is brilliant and scholarly. On the stage, in his field of practical duty, it is another matter. He is there, properly, a task master, for he is there a minister of art seeing in individuals the mere instruments to an end, the more valuable as they are intelligent and tractable. It is this spirit has made Mr. Barrett the chief conservator of the classic drama in this country.

At the close of his Washington season Mr. Barrett returned to Philadelphia as a member of the Chestnut Street Theatre Company, where he again played in leading support with Mr. Booth, Mr. Davenport, and others of the great stars with whom he had now become somewhat familiar. At this time, the winter of 1863, the veteran Edwin Forrest was in retirement, living quietly at his home in Broad street. He was a regular attendant at the theatre, however, and nearly every evening he was to be seen in a box of the Chestnut Street Theatre, an attentive listener. He observed young Barrett with peculiar and approving interest, and on several occasions went behind the scenes before the close of the play, called for the young actor and spoke to him words of commendation or offered valuable suggestions as to the betterment of some bit of action or reading. These attentions, we may be sure, were gratefully received by the aspiring and zealous young actor, and the value of them may be surmised from the fact that Mr. Forrest's comment and criticism was so exact as to take note of the pronunciation of words. Mr. Barrett, of course, had the failing of all self-educated men, who acquire language from reading and speak words as they are printed, not always as they are conventionally sounded. One evening Mr. Forrest sent a card from his box on which was written simply, "Extrordinary, not extra-ordinary." Barrett thought this gave him a point against his curt but kindly disposed critic, and he rather triumphantly sent back word, "But it is extraordinary," having

in mind, of course, the question of orthography instead of that of orthoëpy. Mr. Forrest confined his reply to four words, "Look at your dictionary." The injunction was followed and the young actor added to his course of studies the practice of justifying words by the rules of a pronouncing dictionary.

At the time Edwin Booth came to the Chestnut to play an engagement he was arranging matters for an important season at the Winter Garden, formerly Burton's New Metropolitan, in New York. Such was his esteem of Mr. Barrett, personally and as an actor, he made his junior a tempting offer to join with him for that season. Mr. Barrett accordingly returned to New York, this time as the principal member of Mr. Booth's special company. This season at the Winter Garden was an event of no inconsiderable importance. The productions were elaborate and attracted a great deal of attention, critics and professional people sharing the interest of the public. Mr. Barrett won quite his share of the honors, notwithstanding the great and almost affectionate favor in which Mr. Booth, described as "the Hope of the Living Drama," was then held. What impression Mr. Barrett made may be estimated by an incident of the representation of "Othello." The elder Wallack went that evening to see Mr. Booth, toward whom he felt a sort of paternal disposition, play Iago, a part in which the star already had made reputation. Mr. Barrett played Othello and Mr. Wallack looked on in astonishment. Returning to his own theatre, he declared to the actors in the green room that he had just witnessed a performance by a young unknown person more striking than any that he had seen for twenty years. This high praise did not soon find its way to the ears of Mr. Barrett, but it came in time to perform its office of encouragement. It was during this season that "Julius Cæsar" was brought out with a cast including Junius Brutus Booth as Brutus, Edwin Booth as Cassius—a part he much affected then—and John Wilkes Booth as Mark Antony. Mr. Barrett, of course, had had no opportunity to show to this famous

trio what power he had to usurp and hold as his own this very exacting and, until Mr. Barrett's time, not properly esteemed character. The season was brought to a sudden close by the death of Mr. Booth's first wife, Mary Devlin.

While he was in New York a proposition was made to Mr. Barrett that he enter into partnership with Mr. Lewis Baker in the management of the Varieties Theatre, the then principal play-house in New Orleans. After some hesitation Mr. Barrett decided to enter into the enterprise as one affording him an opportunity to essay certain ambitious plans and test himself as an actor of the chief characters of the standard tragic dramas. The arrangement was accordingly perfected and Mr. Barrett began the active management of the house in conjunction with Mr. Setchell, inaugurating a prosperous, and in some respects brilliant season that was continued for thirty weeks. The patronage was a mixed one of soldiers and citizens, Northerners and Southerners, the city being blockaded at the time. Here, for the first time, and not without fear and trembling, Mr. Barrett appeared in some of the great parts with which his name has since been honorably, and in some cases distinctively associated. Among these were Richelieu, Hamlet, and Shylock, and with them the starring career of the young tragedian may be said to have begun, though he was yet to do subordinate work. The success that had attended his appearance as Othello in New York, induced him to produce the passionate tragedy on his own account, the result being in every way gratifying, especially as confirming his opinion of the dramatic harmony between him and the character.

It was during this season that Mr. Lester Wallack—then known as Mr. Wallack the younger, though at this writing he has just bowed an aged head in sad farewell to the triumphs of the theatre—produced, at his own theatre in New York, an admirable romantic drama, unique in style and quality, that made an instant success and ran for over one hundred nights, something extraordinary at that time. This was the interesting

but now neglected play of "Rosedale." Mr. Barrett secured the play for representation at his New Orleans theatre, appearing in it as Elliott Grey, the part played by Mr. Wallack, and was so entirely successful in a character that seemed to be especially fashioned for him, that he purchased from its author the American rights to the play. When the old Varieties was destroyed, and its memorable season brought to a summary close, Mr. Barrett decided to tempt fortune as a star and began his independent career with this play, at Pike's Opera House in Cincinnati, in the fall of 1864. Mr. Barrett was then twenty-six years of age, and, by sheer force of mind, had lifted himself from the mean condition of the ignorant lad, painfully poring over the mystery of words in a dim closet of the theatre, to a position that not only gave commanding prominence to his unmistakable talent, but made it difficult of belief, that ten years before he was entirely without advantages of education. The more he became favored of circumstances, the greater was his resolution to deserve well of fortune. Praise was not food to his vanity but inspiration to his genius, and in each new success he simply found an incentive to better performance. During these ten years, certainly the most arduous and trying in his life, Mr. Barrett almost confined his studies to the drama itself, devoting himself most assiduously to Shakespeare. He now recognized the fact that all things are concomitants of dramatic art, and enlarged his study to embrace its most illustrative collateral branches, biography, history, general literature, and such essays as embodied mental or physical analysis. His work began to reveal the intelligent student as well as the sympathetic mimic of passion, and presently a discerning writer found occasion to remark, "That which most impresses us in the impersonations of this young actor is the mental clearness of his conception and the scholarly precision with which he develops an idea."

Mr. Barrett played in "Rosedale" throughout the season of 1864 and 1865, occasionally assuming one and another of the characters by means of which he hoped to gain a higher place

in his profession than is assured by other than the classic drama. He early learned in this season how great and almost disheartening is the distinction made by popular, that is to say, journalistic, criticism between the ambitious efforts of a subordinate actor, and the no less earnest, hopeful, and one would think equally deserving endeavors of that same actor in the capacity of principal, or star. Whereas he before received kind consideration and generous encouragement, he now tasted the bitter sweet of the faint praise that damns, and felt the smart of censure whose severity sometimes smacked of resentment. It is a strange quality of human weakness that we often disparage the success, the struggle for which we had applauded heartily. The same hand we reach down to raise the lowly, we thrust upward to drag down the high. In art nothing is more strenuously opposed than the aggressive influence which dispassionate judgment tells us is irresistible. A nature less self-contained, a purpose less firmly fixed, had been dismayed and given over to defeat by the vigorous criticism Mr. Barrett had to encounter and surmount in the beginning of his career—a criticism so adverse, so determined, so persistent in some quarters that, in reading it, one is tempted to ask if it proceeded entirely from that moral sense which is cruel only to be kind, or had in it something of the spirit which

Damns the worth it cannot imitate.

On the other side were a few men of approved judgment, whose words had value whether spoken in reproof or in commendation. These encouraged the young actor by kindly explaining his faults and cordially acknowledging his worth; and if occasionally some writer was moved by good feeling to extol what others merely praised, the actor was gratified but never unduly elated. Indeed, it is a fact worth knowing that Mr. Barrett is a very clever analyst of criticism. He knows a hawk from a hernshaw, blow the wind whence it may, and is not more easily swayed by flattery than disconcerted by injudicious censure. He early learned to distinguish between

those extremes which are self-consuming when opposed, and a temperate adjustment of differences to an intelligent demonstration. He read comments on his acting not for the praise or blame they contained, but for the instruction they might impart. He was anxious to learn, and he valued criticism proportionately as it taught him how to improve. Sitting one morning at a late breakfast with a journalist friend, Mr. Barrett said, in the course of conversation: "That was a delightful article you wrote last night, old fellow, and I read it with genuine pleasure; but here is one less kind that does me more good. It points out a fault and suggests a remedy." That night Mr. Barrett proved the sincerity of his words by following what he knew to be a bit of good advice, possibly to the astonishment of the unfriendly critic.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST VISIT TO ENGLAND.

IN the several years of his first starring experience, Mr. Barrett encountered varying fortunes, but little that was significant or decisive with reference to his future career. The constant self-examination to which he subjected himself informed him of a certain though not generally recognized progress. As his mind expanded under the nourishing influence of healthful and delightful study his hope increased and gave him strength to persevere in his fight against prejudice and discouragements of every description. He found least opposition when he appeared in romantic or semi-melodramatic creations; but this, instead of tempting him to continue acting in "Rosedale," "The Duke's Motto," and corresponding dramas, only served to increase his determination to win honor in the higher class of plays. He did not, however, make rapid progress in this direction, the public mind being yet too much absorbed in memories of the passing generation easily to be won to regard of new adventurers in a somewhat jealously guarded province of the drama.

In 1867, at the close of a fairly prosperous season, Mr. Barrett decided to go to England, not especially with a view to acting there—though he may have had a vague hope of finding an opportunity so to do—but to profit by acquaintance with scenes rich in theatrical traditions, and to gratify a natural longing for travel. It was his fortune on arriving in London to be brought at once into friendly relations with some of the leading spirits of the day. Charles Matthews, with whom he had played at Burton's years before, was then a man of no little importance in literary and artistic circles, and he

very cordially welcomed the young actor, for whom he had conceived a great respect. With the same generous frankness that prompted him to lead young Barrett before the curtain a triumphant night in New York, he now introduced the rising star to his London confreres and acquaintances. Among others he met Charles Dickens and discovered much that was congenial between them upon which to base a lasting, and in some measure, influential friendship. Charles Fechter and others of the principal actors of London contributed to the pleasure of his visit, entertaining him most hospitably, quite dispelling from his mind any consciousness that he was a stranger among them and little more than a beginner at the art some of them were thought to have mastered. It was at this time Mr. Barrett first met Artemus Ward and learned from his stammering tongue who it was so mercilessly criticised his maiden effort as a "juvenile lead." Mr. Barrett did not appear professionally at any time during this visit, but the year following he returned to England under engagement to act for one week at Liverpool. This he did, appearing in a round of tragic characters with greater artistic than popular success. That he deserved better of the conservative Liverpool people, we may infer from the favorable impression he made upon the late John Oxenford, then one of the literary authorities of London, famous in art circles as the critic of the *Times*. He arrived in Liverpool on his way from America to London, and reading the announcement that an American actor would that evening appear as Hamlet, resolved, in idle curiosity, while waiting for his train, to get a glimpse of the unknown tragedian. At the end of the third act Mr. Oxenford sent to Mr. Barrett on the stage a note of gratulation, saying that he had come to the theatre only for a moment, being in haste to reach London, "but I have missed three express trains and been held here until the end of the third act by the power of your performance." He concluded his brief note by assuring Mr. Barrett of success should he appear in London.

In those days there was less inducement than now to an American actor anxious to test his abilities in England. There was, indeed, a coldness amounting almost to opposition, due to the belief, apparently, that this country was a theatric Nazareth from which no true prophet could come. American actors did little enough to overcome this prejudice, which even Edwin Forrest had not greatly disturbed, and it must be recognized as a gratifying compliment to Mr. Barrett that the success of his Liverpool engagement was sufficient to secure to him several offers of further engagements in England, even though he declined them as being unsatisfactory. In a monetary sense few English engagements are satisfactory to American actors. The hope of achieving greater professional distinction is about all there is to tempt the Yankee player across the sea. As for the matter of money, there has been, until recently, no comparison between the two countries, and even now the advantages are so largely with the American side that the United States have become something in the sort with recuperating resorts for European artists, and a field of adventure for European speculators. The uninviting financial prospect deterred Mr. Barrett from spending more time in a country he had found very agreeable and in which he had made many valuable friends, besides enjoying exceptional social honors.

When Mr. Barrett returned from England in the December of 1867, he was induced to make an engagement to appear, as soon as the trip could be made, at Maguire's Opera House, San Francisco. Going to California in those days was no pleasure jaunt. It involved hardships and suffering in one direction and positive danger in another. There was no overland railway, and the journey could be made more safely and generally more quickly by water, and travel was rarely in any other way than by steamer to Aspinwall, thence by rail across the isthmus of Panama, where another steamer was taken for 'Frisco. This required from twenty-seven to thirty days in good weather. Though Mr. Barrett is rather fond of ocean

travel in the improved and perfectly comfortable steamers of the European lines, there was little to charm him in the tedious time consumed by the traffic steamers of the old New York and Aspinwall line and the craft of the Pacific. He was inclined to forswear that route for the future. Ending a distressing voyage, he arrived in San Francisco about February 1, 1868, and began his engagement February 13, appearing as Hamlet. His success was immediate, and to the reputation that had preceded him was added a local fame that much exceeded his hope. He became a great favorite with the public and was instrumental in retrieving the fortunes of the house, which had begun to decline through lack of suitable attractions. Mr. Barrett played a very prosperous season of eleven weeks supported by a company of which Mr. John McCullough was the leading actor. The cordial frankness and free-hearted manner ever characteristic of McCullough, were even more marked in that period of his young manhood, when he was care free and apparently indifferent to the honors of the future. Mr. Barrett conceived a great liking for this joyous Irishman, this splendid type of physical manhood, whose temperament and habits were so unlike his own, but whose genial nature was irresistible. McCullough was popular with everybody and knew everybody, was admired as an actor but inspired no great confidence as a business man. When Mr. Barrett became known to Ralston and other capitalists of the city, his practical ideas and conservative methods commanded their respect as business men, and brought to a point some vaguely entertained notions as to the need of a really first-class theatre in that city. These gentlemen proposed to Mr. Barrett to build a magnificent theatre, provided he would remain and undertake its management. After some deliberation Mr. Barrett accepted the proposition, a formal agreement was entered into between the parties, and the building of the new theatre was begun forthwith.

The next six months or more Mr. Barrett had pretty much at his own disposal and he improved a considerable part of

the time by playing engagements in the interior of the state and in Nevada. This was a unique and interesting experience, revealing varied and rough phases of life of which the actor had little knowledge even from reading. He entered inquisitively into the life he encountered and made some acquaintances with men who, then roughing it in the mining camp, have since gained wealth and in some instances have arisen to political eminence. It was in the summer of this year that he made his third visit to England. The principal purpose of the visit was to purchase costumes and engage certain people for the new California Theatre. When he returned he determined, recalling with aversion the disagreeable features of his first journey to California, to make the second trip overland. Much of the journey across the plains was made by stage, and what hardships and dangers beset the way are too familiar incidents of Western romance for recital in these pages. Mr. Barrett has no pleasant recollections of that severely trying journey in which he almost lost his life through privation, but it is one of the treasures in his storehouse of experience, a memory he would not lose. The new theatre, a superb structure, built at the cost of half a million of dollars, was opened as the California Theatre, under the management of Barrett and McCullough, January 18, 1879, and ran a splendid course of twenty months under that auspicious union of actor managers. Mr. Barrett received \$18,000 a year for his services as actor and manager. He was left free to carry out his ideas, and the glory of that brilliant season has not yet faded from the remembrance of Californians. The theatre and the splendor of its productions excited universal comment, the reputation of the management quickly becoming a guaranty to actors in the East who more willingly than ever before faced the discomforts and perils of the long overland journey. Accordingly some of the most celebrated actors of the day appeared at the theatre, and the grand dramas were presented with unprecedented casts, with unaccustomed scenic embellishments and auxiliary numbers, and had the liberal support of an always generous public. The



MR. BARRETT AS YORICK.

first really great American production of "Julius Cæsar" was one of the triumphs in the brilliant career of this noble theatrical enterprise. It is significant that the theatre, which was remarkably prosperous during the time that Mr. Barrett remained in active management, fell upon troublous times soon after he retired from its control. Not without some regret did he decide, at the end of twenty months, that his best interests lay in the large field of general action, and in order to resume his active career he sold his rights in the theatre to his managerial partner, Mr. McCullough. From that time, though its lustre did not immediately pale, the California Theatre seemed fated. Mr. McCullough became heavily involved financially and was finally forced from the management of the house by his personal necessities. In the end the theatre fell under that mysterious ban of ill-luck that the superstitious imagine may infect stone and brick as well as flesh and blood, and in some way the tragic fate of its original projector seemed to bear upon the fortunes of the chief temple of dramatic art on the Pacific coast. The practical may argue that Mr. Barrett withdrew in time; but there is an inviting speculation in the question what might have been the result had the calm intelligence, sound judgment and artistic enterprise of Lawrence Barrett continued energetically to direct the affairs of the house. The California Theatre possibly had thrived in prosperity, but very probably the dramatic art of this country had missed its now chief servant and conservator.

Mr. Barrett resumed his interrupted career as a star by appearing at Niblo's Garden under Jarrett and Palmer in the summer of 1870. During this engagement "Julius Cæsar" was produced on elaborate scale with Mr. Barrett as Cassius, E. L. Davenport as Brutus, Walter Montgomery as Mark Antony, Mark Smith as Casca, Theo Hamilton as Julius Cæsar, Madame Ponisi as Portia and Miss Virginia Buchanan as Calphurnia. As this was on the eve of the great success Mr. Barrett was to achieve as the representative of Cassius,

the following extract from a criticism in the New York *Leader* of Sept. 10, 1870, may prove interesting.

“Whatever may be the individual star standards of these personages—and estimated by their individual exertions in the star field, they are all supereminent—the performance could not help being an unusually good one, because each actor was stimulated by the presence of kindred ability into a generous rivalry, that meant for the audience just so much extra talent. This is one of the advantages of a stock company formed on sound principles in art, or, to borrow a phrase from another profession, when the right men are in the right place. Mr. Lawrence Barrett, as Cassius, shot up a head and shoulders esthetically taller than he appeared in the unsupported turgidities of the week before. If we may use the agricultural idiom which Mr. Greely is introducing so successfully into polite literature, we may say he seemed to be manured by the occasion into new development, and put forth leaves which looked wonderfully like laurel before the play was over. This is saying a great deal for a young actor who has been thus early subjected to all the disadvantages of the star system, and who has many infirmities of manner to soften and eradicate before he can hope to have columns written on his ideality and his elocution. He, however, luckily possesses the acting instinct, a quick, vigorous mind, a virile body, attuned with a splendid voice, and a passionate nature which needs the curb rather than the spur. These are things not to be slighted in this day of Chesterfield tragedians. Cassius was, therefore, a manly success; a bold, somewhat hard, but an even performance; and in the quarrel scene with Brutus, the vehemence, the fiery temper and impassioned manner not only bespoke his *forte*, but won him plaudits that rung all round the house. But the interest of the performance was materially heightened by the vivid contrast presented in the conjunction of Barrett and Davenport, the latter playing Brutus. One all impulse, the other all method, the characterizations thus joined stood out in black and white from the start. Mr. Davenport admirably

assumed the dignity and stately bearing of the Roman; his whole impersonation was marked, by the precision and perfection of an actor who never yet depended on his impulses, but who made his whole art, from the first essay in his profession, a matter of technical study, with a reason behind every gesture, and something of the irrefutable coolness of reason in every gesture, too. It would be folly to expect the same finish in Mr. Barrett; we doubt that he ever will attain it. There seems to be little room for repose in his strenuous, impatient manner; but in its stead he has the *clans* of a Frenchman or a Celt; and never did it appear in more vivid light than by the side of this imperturbable Brutus."

Since that time Mr. Barrett has tempered the Celtic transports of emotion with requisite artistic repose, a fact the careful critic of the *Leader* may have observed if he yet lives to balance candidly the virtues and demerits of actors.

The popular success of this production is attested by the number of performances, four given in one week. This was remarkable enough to arouse the ready letter writers of private life, one of whom hastened to assure his paper that "not in London, not in New York, not anywhere in the whole history of the stage was 'Julius Cæsar' ever before played four nights in one week." During this engagement Mr. Barrett for the first time played Iago, Mr. Davenport being the Othello. Mr. Edwin Booth was now at his own new and magnificent theatre, at the corner of Twenty-third street and Sixth Avenue, and was eager to have with him the young actor with whom his earlier associations had been so agreeable. Very satisfactory arrangements were made, and Mr. Barrett went to Booth's in December, and for sixteen weeks played opposite characters in the round of great plays that followed one another in rapid succession. At the end of this special season Mr. Booth withdrew to meet engagements elsewhere, leaving the theatre to Mr. Barrett, who was prepared for a great revival of Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale." The play was brought out toward the end of April with Mr. Barrett as King Leontes, Mark

Smith as Autolycus, and a fine general cast in a superb production. For a month the patronage was suited to the importance of the enterprise, but it was found advisable to make a change at the end of six weeks. The New York press united to lament the withdrawal, after so brief a season, of the finest Shakespearean revival that had been seen in America, and which was said to be no less brilliant in performance than in appointments. But the support of the thoughtful portions of the community, merely, is not sufficient to sustain a costly enterprise. Mr. Barrett's acting of King Leontes was variously criticised, and one of the free lances of the press came to the relief of the perplexed ones by declaring the truth of the matter to be that "Leontes is such a disagreeable brute that even Mr. Barrett's talent cannot make him endurable." This fact has always weighed against the play.

"A Winter's Tale" was succeeded, June 5, by the first American production of W. G. Wills' poetic drama, the "Man o' Arlie," adapted from the German of Karl von Holte. The play was very successfully brought out in London in 1867, and had a noted run. The cast for the production at Booth's included—besides Mr. Barrett as James Harebell—Mr. Glossford as Saunders, Miss Ellen Livingston as Mary Harebell, Mr. Anderson as Lord Steelman, Mr. Sheridan as Sir Gerald Hope, Mr. Howsen as George Brandon, Miss McCormack and Mr. Pitou as Robert Harebell and Teresa Selden as Miss Steelman. Some of the comment on the production and performance will be found interesting. Mr. William Winter wrote for the *Tribune*: "The first representation in America of 'The Man o' Arlie' was given, last night, at Booth's Theatre. A large company of persons witnessed it—the house, though not crowded, being well filled. Just before the performance began, the Caledonian Club, arrayed in Scottish dress, and marshaled by the shrill music of the pipes, marched into the house and took places in the auditorium. Sincere and hearty enthusiasm prevailed, indeed, both at the first and afterward. Significant token of this was seen in the fact that Mr. Lawrence Barrett

—who played James Harebell with delicious sweetness of sentiment and very noble fervor and thought as becomes the part—was called before the curtain at the end of every act, and in each case by spontaneous and genuine applause. ‘The Man o’ Arlie’ is a simple, tender, affecting and lovely work, and it was seen with profound pleasure. There is no attribute of the piece that startles. There is no trickery in it. The aim which it powerfully follows and thoroughly accomplishes is to affect the mind and heart by a straightforward exposition of true experience, upon a high plane of life, thought and feeling. No one can see it and feel its force without being elevated in moral condition. Mr. Barrett has done himself great honor by this performance, revealing qualities of mind and temperament that will endear him to all who appreciate fineness of feeling and of art.”

The *Sun*, after commenting on the sad and tearful story, said:

“Mr. Lawrence Barrett acted the part of James Harebell, the poet, with genuine pathos. It seemed particularly suited to his temperament and adapted to his refined and delicate mode of acting. Certainly, he never has appeared to such excellent advantage in any play in which we have seen him. He took hold upon the sympathies of the audience at the outset and held them firmly to the end. The joyousness of the early scenes, the sweet homeliness and tenderness of domestic life, the giving way of reason, and the final representation of the ‘darkened mind’ were alike admirably done—always within bounds, naturally, and without yielding to any temptation to exaggeration. The audience was deeply touched by the performance, and listened to it, not with loud and meaningless applause so much as with the sincere tribute of emotion.”

After the play had been running for some time the *Tribune* said: “Mr. Barrett’s personation of the poet has aroused much enthusiasm—but not more than is fully warranted by its beauty of spirit and form;” and *Harper’s Weekly* took unusual

pains to say: "As an act of justice to a most meritorious young actor, we are happy to invite the public attention to one of the finest personations it has been our fortune to witness. It is true that tragedy is scarcely the thing for hot weather; but if it is justified it is when an exquisite representation enlists the sympathies and holds the attention from the rise to the fall of the curtain. As the 'Man o' Arlie,' Lawrence Barrett demonstrates that he is an actor of the highest grade, and the little songs he brings in so naturally prove that it is not alone as such he could shine. From first to last Barrett as James Harebell allows no blur to detract from his art, so natural that art in him is nature. To those who desire to see a fine and growing native artist, let nothing prevent a visit to Booth's Theatre while this drama is on the boards." The play was continued at Booth's for a trifle over four weeks and in a review of the brief season the *Express* said of Mr. Barrett's personation of Harebell: "A chaste and symmetrical figure, sentient with the being of the poet and the man, and so noble in its aspirations toward a true art standard, that it has won for him 'golden opinions from all sorts of people.' There is power, force, and energy in this young actor, as his Cassius and Leontes have shown us; but it was left for the 'Man o' Arlie' to show, too, how well grounded, how sympathetic, and how intrinsically poetic is the art of which he is possessed."

Mr. Barrett thought it well to go upon the road with this play, and at the conclusion of his engagement at Booth's he arranged a short tour for the fall, that embraced a part of New England and terminated with an engagement at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia. This was a pleasant, and in fair degree profitable, experience, the actor nowhere encountering dissent from the uniform praise of his New York critics. James Harebell has ever since been in Mr. Barrett's ready repertoire though, because of its deep-toned sadness, its almost painful pathos, it is rarely played by him. Perhaps no character he personates affects him more profoundly, and there are scenes in which he has been so overcome by his own

emotions responding to the sentiment of the character as to be forced to interrupt his speech by some trifle of business to recover necessary self-possession.

CHAPTER V.

HIS CREATION AS CASSIUS.

DURING this year, 1871, the building of the new Varieties Theatre, New Orleans, was in progress, and Mr. Barrett had already been urgently invited to assume the management of the house. This he was reluctant to do, not wishing for a second time to interrupt his active career; but repeated appeals and the offer of a very large salary, with a guaranty against any pecuniary risk in the enterprise, induced him to undertake the management. The theatre was brilliantly opened the night of December 4, 1871, with Albury's charming four-act comedy, "The Coquettes." The house staff was: Lawrence Barrett, manager; Lorraine Rogers, business manager; John Selwyn, stage manager; M. Maddern, leader of orchestra; H. Tryon, scene painter, and F. B. Cilley, treasurer. The stock company consisted of George Clancey, Stuart Robeson, Dominick Murray, George Ryer, T. J. Hind, George Holland, Frank Murdock, Harold Fosberg, John Howson, Augustus Pitou, H. B. Bradley, George Herbert, R. M. Brelsford, C. H. Fry, R. J. Brown, Augusta L. Dargon, Edith Challis, M. E. Gordon, Iona Burke, Rosa Cooke, Mary Carr, Georgie Reignolds, Rose Wood, and Mrs. Schubert. The occasion was made memorable in many ways, the elegant and beautiful temple of the imperial art being opened with ceremonious pomp, and with the patronage of the fashion and pride of the Crescent City. An inaugural poem, written by Mr. E. C. Hancock, associate editor of the *New Orleans Times*, was read before the curtain by Mr. Barrett, in which was expressed a hope that was not altogether prophetic, though the initial weeks were in every way satisfactory. The theatre

had an excellent stock, produced plays in capital style, presenting several changes of bill a week, and had engagements with most of the leading stars of the day. It was the chief place of polite amusement in New Orleans. The beginning was so very auspicious and the promise of success so bright, that Mr. Barrett felt warranted in accepting an offer made him by Mr. Booth. This was to appear as Cassius in a grand revival of "Julius Cæsar" at Booth's Theatre, New York. He accordingly went to New York where extraordinary preparations were making for those Shakespearean productions the most remarkable in the history of the American stage, and which are yet cited as standards of comparison. They were sumptuous in scenery and costumes and unprecedented in caste. "Julius Cæsar" was in every particular the most notable of these superb revivals. It was presented the night of December 24, 1871, with the precision that could result alone from the thorough and harmonious discipline of skilled actors, and achieved an instant success, creating, really, a profound sensation professionally and in popular effect. When this play was brought out at Niblo's a year before, it was thought remarkable that it should be given four times in one week. "Julius Cæsar" ran at Booth's for eighty-three successive nights, exclusive of Sundays. The cast of principal characters presented Edwin Booth as Brutus, Lawrence Barrett as Cassius, Frank C. Bangs as Mark Antony, Miss Pateman as Portia, Miss Selden as Calphurnia, Mr. Waller as Cæsar and James Stark as Casca. The production was described as being the most impressive stage portrait ever witnessed in New York. It was in this engagement, as Cassius, that Mr. Barrett overleaped whatever prejudice had before impaired his success in the metropolis, and proved his right to the distinction immediately allowed him and which he has since maintained with so much honor to himself and with such profit to the American stage. There need be no apology for introducing here some of the leading opinions as to the high

order and decisive character of his work in this rôle. The New York *Tribune* said:

"Mr. Barrett personated Cassius. We say personated, and mean it. Mr. Barrett is a man of genius; we have had doubts on this point, but those doubts are removed. The actor grasped this part with a grip of gold—with intuition, that is, and he moved his sympathetic auditors to literal tears of delight. The identification was perfect. From first to last it never swerved; Mr. Barrett was always Cassius—and Cassius is a very complex character to represent. He has been clearly drawn by the poet, but he is none the less a personage difficult to reproduce. He is a man of splendid intellect, and of very tender heart—tender in its affinities with all that is good. Mr. Barrett made this clear, and he worked up the leading scenes with admirable skill and with inspired fervor. He has probably achieved other fine successes; we doubt if he ever achieved so fine a success as this. The audience gave him a very cordial testimonial in its applause. For our own part, we confidently place Mr. Barrett—on the strength of his Cassius—among those artists from whom it is always safe to expect revelations of power. We were mistaken in thinking him specifically a comedian. His powers are versatile."

Subsequently the same journal remarked: "Mr. Barrett acted Cassius with splendid spirit and great effect. On a previous occasion we have expressed the opinion that this is a work of absolute genius. It will suffice now to remark that it easily bore away the richest honors of last night's performance."

The *Evening Post* declared, "Barrett's Cassius stands out boldly as a striking and characteristic personation," and it was the *Sun*, we believe, that said, "the conception is not only a correct one, but it is embodied with extraordinary force and fervor." Reviewing the general work at the end of the month, a personal writer for the New York *Leader*, Nym Crinkle, said: "Infinitely superior is this cast to the somewhat famous one at

the Winter Garden when 'Julius Cæsar' was mounted so extravagantly. The return of Mr. Lawrence Barrett did more than anything, unless it be the assumption of the rôle of Brutus by Edwin Booth, to insure the real success of the piece. Mr. Barrett's greatest role is Cassius. I know of no one who can approach him in the fiery impatience and nervous vigor of the part. You know what a splendid voice he has; how clear and ringing is his articulation; how elastic and instant his actions are; and how much passion he can put into his face. Well, try to think of a better character for him than Cassius. I can't. So you see it is a hit. And I am glad of it. People applaud him vociferously, and the critics do him ample justice at last." The *Albion*, a critical periodical of importance at the time, in its second review of the great production, said: "The crowning feature of the representation is to be found in the Cassius of Lawrence Barrett, an artistic triumph of which any actor may might be proud. It is one of the most intense, thrilling embodiments of character that has been seen for many years. Mr. Barrett won great honor upon his first performance of the part, in connection with Mr. Davenport, and Mr. Walter Montgomery, (since deceased), but he has never before been seen to such advantage as at the present time, and it is but natural that he should gather a harvest of praise more abundant than ever. From first to last the personation is consistent and powerful; there is no falling off, no perceptible husbanding of resources to make 'points' and produce startling effects. Although notably great in certain passages, it is also evenly good throughout; and everywhere reveals a force and unity which mark it as a truly noble work of art. Mere industry and care are insufficient to account for Mr. Barrett's Cassius; it bears the unmistakable stamp of genius."

These extracts summarize a glorious judgment of the accomplishment of a young actor at whom, but a few years before, when he made his first New York appearance at Burton's as a recruit from the unschooled and unschooling

West, superficial critics were disposed to laugh. As Cassius had been a well favored part with Mr. Booth, one in which he had won high credit, there was a good deal of curiosity with the public to see him again in the rôle Mr. Barrett had so splendidly usurped. Letters to the press and the press itself frequently urged Mr. Booth to alternate with Mr. Barrett in playing Cassius and Brutus. It was on the occasion when, taking note of this general wish, Mr. Barrett volunteered to surrender his part to Mr. Booth, that the senior tragedian said with cordial candor, "I shall never play Cassius again." Of all the praise and commendation Mr. Barrett received at the pens of his kindly critics nothing was more flattering to his ambition, more gratifying to his sensibility than this significant and not ungenerous declaration of his fellow tragedian.

Before the run of "Julius Cæsar" came to an end Mr. Barrett was compelled by business concerns to withdraw from the cast and return to his theatre at New Orleans. The management of the house had failed to meet its obligations, and Mr. Barrett was forced once more to assume the entire and active responsibility of the house, and that not without sharp regret, for the double reason that his departure from New York interrupted the thus far greatest success of his life, and at the same time militated against the continued prosperity of "Julius Cæsar." Mr. Junius Brutus Booth succeeded Mr. Barrett as Cassius, and the *Herald* commenting on the change said: "The departure of Mr. Barrett from Booth's Theatre has deprived 'Julius Cæsar' of one of its principal attractions. To those who look for vigorous and appropriate expression of the thoughts shadowed forth by the dialogue, the substitution of Mr. Junius Brutus Booth for Mr. Barrett cannot be regarded otherwise than as a misfortune." The run continued but two weeks longer.

The result of the season as it related to Mr. Barrett is fairly expressed in the words of a correspondent writing from New York to a southern paper. "He (Mr. Barrett) has not

only stood beside the first tragedian of the day, upon his own boards, and held his own right nobly, but he has acted down and compelled applause from an ugly nest of adverse critics. He has drawn so strong and yet so beautiful a picture of the great Roman that it stands out clear, sharp-cut and distinct, even from the grand group that surrounds it here. And while he has thrown about it the graphic vividness of a Doré, he has lost no clearly delicate detail of a Meissonier."

Returned to New Orleans, Mr. Barrett devoted himself with customary energy to the management of the Varieties, taking upon himself the entire responsibility of business and stage direction in addition to sustaining the burden of the dramatic representations. His professional reappearance was made March 4, 1872, as Hamlet, and he was welcomed by an audience that crowded the theatre and most enthusiastically attested his popularity. Actors worked for their living in those days, and in this first week of his return Mr. Barrett appeared in six widely different characterizations in eight performances, Hamlet, Raphael in "The Marble Heart," Alfred Evelyn in "Money," Shylock, Richelieu and Richard III. Surely there must be versatility of art and expression with the actor who can represent these varied characters to the satisfaction of an intelligent audience; and the general consensus of opinion in those earlier days indicates the excellence of Barrett's romantic and comedy performances as well as the power, intelligence and scholarly precision of his classic personations. The New Orleans *Times* said: "Among the personations of the week we unhesitatingly select Hamlet as the most finished and acceptable. To say this does not detract from his other renditions, for in them all he has shown the fires of that wonderful genius which so eminently marks him as an actor whom few on the stage can equal; but in the 'Melancholy Prince,' he finds a character so well suited to him that without an effort he seems to glide into the wayward, pensive mood which characterizes the ideal, and in evident sympathy with the character he displays to its full bent that

poetic temperament with which he is so gifted." We need hardly remark that no actor ever glided into a truly great character without a previous mighty battle with himself, subduing imperfections of habit or natural disposition and enlarging traits and qualities essential to the "artless art of perfect simulation."

For two months Mr. Barrett was indefatigable in his dual office of actor-manager, doing much to establish the theatre and correct the mistakes of his former representatives. Besides the plays named, he produced and took part in "London Assurance," "Rosedale," "The Streets of New York," "Julius Cæsar," "The Man o' Arlie," "The Romance of a Poor Young Man," and "Romeo and Juliet," closing his engagement with the last named play. The *Picayune* in reviewing this brief but arduous season said:

"It is rare that a manager has risen so rapidly as has Mr. Lawrence Barrett in the confidence and respect of this community, and in the personal esteem of those around him as employés and artists. When he took charge of the Varieties some months ago it was almost a theatrical corpse; but he touched it and it sprang up a living, breathing dramatic fact. The untiring energy, cultivated taste, the uniform courtesy, and a certain grave dignity of manner he has always exercised and exhibited, have made him hosts of friends, on and off the boards, among people whose good will is worth having. He has done more than any one else to put the entertainments upon a firm and popular foundation. His extraordinary exertions as actor and manager, it is to be hoped, have not impaired his health. He owes it to himself and to art to seek some recreation for a while from the incessant and exhausting demands of his profession. He has succeeded in putting the drama upon that high footing it held in older times; and although the full fruits of his labors may not be immediate, the appreciation and substantial proofs of public approval and favor have been sufficient to show that his merits have taken deep root in the public mind."

In retiring from the personal management in order to meet engagements elsewhere, Mr. Barrett did not surrender control of the Varieties, which he held under a five years lease. This was unfortunate and gave rise to the most serious disaster of his business career. Political disturbances, local riots and other distressing circumstances combined to reduce the patronage of the theatres to a minimum, and, deprived of Mr. Barrett's vitalizing presence, the Varieties fell into sore straits and at the end of the year Mr. Barrett found himself involved to the extent of \$57,000. It required the hard savings of many years to relieve him from this burden which bore heavily upon a nature painfully sensitive to the humiliations of debt.

CHAPTER VI.

GROWING RECOGNITION.

ON the evening of June 3, 1872, Mr. Barrett made his reappearance upon the stage of the California Theatre, in the character of Hamlet. This visit had been anticipated pleasantly, both by the actor and by the public, and it was not without a glow of pride that the actor stood in the house built as a tribute to his talents, and bowed to the prolonged applause of a vast audience. It was a genuine California welcome.

This engagement was remarkable in success beyond any precedent in the history of the California Theatre. The stay was a prolonged one, and the actor was seen in a round of the best characters, having excellent patronage and cordial endorsement throughout the engagement. This was the beginning of a tour of the country, among the principal states of the Union that did not prove a great financial advantage to the young tragedian whose fame was only beginning to get noised about in the minor cities on which he had to depend largely for time. Prior to this time, Mr. Barrett had been seen in Chicago—where he enjoyed no little popularity—only in romantic rôles. In his earlier starring experience he had played "Rosedale" with very great success in that city. When, however, he was engaged to open Gardiner's new Academy of Music, Sept. 1, 1873, he made his appearance for the first time as Richelieu. The general critical impression of his work during this engagement is pictured in the following excerpt from the *Evening Post*: "Mr. Barrett is far from being a stranger in our midst. He is a prodigy in his line. From being considered a fair actor in society drama he has come to be regarded as a rival of the histrionic kings who



MR. BARRETT AS LANCIOTTO.

now strut upon the Thespian boards. He has even cast off the servility of mimicry, which used to disfigure his earliest efforts, and, daring all, stands forth as distinctively original as any tragedian of our day. Gifted with an intellectual face and a graceful figure, with a keen and flashing eye, and with a voice that can thrill with passion, hiss with hatred, or kindle with warlike enthusiasm, Mr. Barrett has much to thank nature for and has also much reason to pride himself on his own indomitable industry." That which was particularly notable was the fact that the young tragedian had pushed away in many respects from the tradition of the character, and instead of dwarfing every other element of the Cardinal's nature to that of craft, he defined a loftier and better type in which craft and cunning were incidental and called into play only for specific purposes. Whatever the Richelieu of history, the actor felt that his first duty lay with the Richelieu of the play, and the conviction formed then with respect to this character has governed Mr. Barrett's study of every other part he has undertaken to interpret. Certainly a consistent performance should be the first and chief concern with an actor; the dramatist only has to do with the historic truth of a dramatic creation. In this engagement Mr. Barrett also was seen as Hamlet and Richard III.; and though in recent years he has not played Richard, it was one of the characters in which he was very popular at that time, when every tragic actor thought it incumbent upon him to appear as the crook-backed tyrant. He presented an intellectual rather than a brutal villain, and he invested the character with the courage of a mind conscious of superiority, not the mere bravado of a malignant nature. It does not appear that at this time he had given the same stamp of large originality to his Hamlet that distinctly marked his personations of Richelieu and Richard, but we nevertheless find the critic beginning to associate Barrett's Hamlet with that of Booth, certainly a high recognition of his ability at a time when Mr. Booth was generally accepted as the ideal and incomparable Hamlet.

In all the criticisms of Mr. Barrett's work there was one point at which opinion concurred; his remarkable elocution invariably commanded and received praise. What an eminent critic recently declared of his readings was but the repetition of an estimate made by a vocal teacher in 1873: "There is more pleasure in hearing his rich voice, with its faultless inflection, careful modulation and perfect distinctness than one often finds at concert or opera. A more careful reader we never heard on the stage, nor one whose voice, in every range of tone, was more delightful to the ear." This season Mr. Barrett made his most extensive professional tour up to that point in his career. Among the cities he visited in their order were Pittsburg, St. Louis, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Louisville, Albany, Waterbury, New Haven, Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, Richmond, Va., Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, Memphis, Springfield, Ill., Quincy, leading cities of Indiana and smaller cities of Ohio, Detroit, Minneapolis and St. Paul and parts of Canada. His active repertoire comprised "Hamlet," "Richard III.," "Richelieu," "Julius Cæsar," "Lady of Lyons," "Marble Heart," "Man o' Arlie," "Damon and Pythias," "David Garrick," and the little comedy of "Home," in which he played Col. John White. He was received with honor in each of these places, if not with unanimous endorsement.

For several years Mr. Barrett had been patiently studying the tragedy of "King Lear," rather for his own instruction than with any immediate intention of producing it; but in this year, emboldened by his success with other great and thought-flooded characters, he decided to make trial of himself in the rôle before a friendly community. When, therefore he neared his engagement at his own theatre, the Varieties, New Orleans, he announced his plan, and on the night of Jan. 30, 1874, made his first public appearance in the sublime character. The occasion was his benefit, and the double attraction crowded the theatre with the best people of the city. Though Mr. Barrett was by no means satisfied with the results of his

work, even considered as a first performance, the audience was evidently surprised that the personation presented so much naturalness and force as to command "constant interest and sincere applause." The papers agreed in declaring that "for a young man contending against many disadvantages, Mr. Barrett achieved a wonderful success." Mr. Barrett has many times since then appeared in this deep-souled character, and received no little encouragement to persevere in the endeavor to master it; but he is now nearly of a mind with Charles Lamb, that "King Lear" is not a play for the stage, and that no actor may hope to grasp for portraiture the shadowy elements of this subtle epitome of human nature and its immortal properties of passion, sorrow, agony and madness. The late John McCullough, whose life so pitifully ended, had, in the strong days of his glorious physical manhood, a consuming ambition to excel as King Lear. Sitting one evening in the rags of the demented King, he shook his head, deprecating the praise of a fellow actor, and said with more sadness than often came into his voice, "I am afraid I shall never play Lear. So many great actors have failed in it. But I would rather act the part one night as I feel it than be President of the United States."

That a prophet is not without honor save in his own country is a general truth that was not enforced against Mr. Barrett. On the occasion of his first visit to Detroit he was, to be sure, approached somewhat warily and had to content him with audiences of moderate size, though these did not lack sympathy. When he came again, however, he was made to feel that the city of one's youth may rejoice in his fair fame and good fortune, and it grew into a fashion to treat his reappearances as events for social recognition as well as occasions for artistic distinction. This year one of the old citizens of Detroit addressed the following not uninteresting letter to the *Union*:

"About twenty years ago this gentleman (Mr. Barrett) was playing as a stock actor in the old Metropolitan Theatre on

Jefferson Avenue, in this city. He was not then a star of the first or second magnitude, and probably had not himself the remotest idea of being one. Mr. A. D. Frazer, who is now in retirement, was then in full practice at the bar, and he was probably the most severe critic, and at the same time the most competent judge of dramatic talent then in Detroit. He and I strolled around the Metropolitan one evening, and went in to spend the evening. Mr. Barrett played in a comedy, and so far as I could see, went through it as any other stock actor would do. I discovered nothing whatever to especially attract my attention, in the acting of Mr. Barrett, and on the whole, as I remember, his peculiar manner, and a sort of stiffness which he had not yet overcome, were rather displeasing to me. On passing out after the play was over, Mr. F. and I naturally engaged in conversation as to the entertainment of the evening, when he remembered that he thought he had detected something extraordinary in that young man—alluding to Mr. Barrett; and he then made the remark and prediction that, if the young actor continued on the stage, and if he studied his profession as he could and ought to do, he would some day arise to distinction. Nearly a quarter of a century has since passed away. Mr. Frazer is in advanced age, and Mr. Barrett is now among the first of American actors; and time has justified the shrewd observation of the one as to the then undeveloped talents of the other."

Mr. Barrett visited Boston to close his season, acting at the Boston Theatre May 25, his first appearance in that city in six years. The *Post* of the next day said: "When this gentleman left the city some time ago, he was merely a promising young actor; last evening he appeared once more before our public, at the Boston Theatre, a star, in an impersonation that requires the exercise of the most subtle gifts of the finished dramatic artist. The man who can present satisfactorily Bulwer's Richelieu, will find no further test in his profession that need appall him. To call Mr. Barrett's success satisfactory, merely, would but tamely express the impression which he made

upon his audience last evening. No actor who has appeared here the present season has received more flattering demonstrations of favor than were accorded him, and it certainly was not praise wasted or ill bestowed." One of his critics expressed the not altogether fanciful opinion that the actor was great in proportion to the difficulties to be surmounted, so that the more exacting and trying the rôle, the more admirable the performance. This is not an unusual view of Mr. Barrett's art; and it is due to this distinguishing quality of the actor that he has the courage to undertake and the power to perpetuate new characters that have sprung from the patient toil or genius of modern writers of tragic drama. More is demanded of the actor who attempts to introduce into the classic repertoire the work of some new playwright, than is required of the actor who follows the old order exclusively, profiting by tradition and example. Mr. Barrett has dared to be a creator, and we shall see what has been the estimation of his effort in that noblest and most joyful province of dramatic action.

In the fall and winter season of 1874-75 Mr. Barrett traversed much the same ground covered in the previous season, and had the good fortune to play to largely increased patronage. In this season *Shylock* and *King Lear* were given more prominence in his repertoire, and he was particularly happy in giving new soul and coloring to the character of the Jew. Mr. Barrett got from his study of the play a sympathy with *Shylock*, whom he thought to have been abused by the perhaps prejudiced actors of the past, the tradition of whose acting had governed for so many generations the treatment of the rôle. He gained for the Jew the sympathies of an audience in his departure from the conventional. As a just view of his sincere purpose and high ambition in whatever work he took in hand, the *Brooklyn Eagle* said editorially, referring to the reign of farce and burlesque: "During this steady degredation of a noble art, Mr. Barrett worked hard to snatch some remnant of the spirit of its former time, and Ristori came thrice among us

to remind us not only of what the stage might be and ought to be, but of what it had been. If we leave wholly out of consideration the skill and talent of Mr. Barrett, the lovers of the great dramatic literature of the English language, the only line of literature in which that language is unsurpassed by other nations, owe Mr. Barrett no small debt of gratitude for his unswerving adherence to it, amid the temptations of the puerile and vulgar which none of his brothers of the stage have so consistently resisted. Ristori, in her unchallenged greatness, comes like a meteor and so departs; but through obscurity and discouragement, Mr. Barrett has toiled steadily among us, traveling from New York to Leavenworth, and each year at least once reviving Shakespeare and Bulwer where the heels of Lydia Thompson and her ilk seemed to have trampled them out of sight forever. It is only in the last two years that he has begun to reap the reward of a life's faithful toil, only in the last two years that the preëminence of his talent has begun to be adequately recognized. If Ristori, by the sublimity of her genius, reawakes our old enthusiasm for great acting *per se*, Lawrence Barrett steadily keeps before us year after year the memory of our enthusiasm for our own plays in our own familiar tongue, and by the skill and fervor of his renditions makes us once more to see those heroes of the mind which in our younger theatre days illustrated to us the beauties of virtue, the grandeur of heroism, and the nobilities of love and friendship."

This season Mr. Barrett enlarged his available repertoire by the addition of such then popular plays as "Money," "The Robbers," "The Iron Chest," "The Wonder," and "The Duke's Motto." Occasionally, too, he presented "Romeo and Juliet," chiefly to favor Miss Effie Ellsler, who was then playing juvenile parts with him, and in whom Mr. Barrett detected an ability he thought might be developed to good uses. Mr. John W. Norton was his leading actor in these two seasons, and during the first the ill-starred Louise Hawthorne was his leading lady.

CHAPTER VII.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF LITERARY MEN.

IN the fall of 1875, in recognition of popular sentiment, a revival of "Julius Cæsar" at Booth's Theatre was effected with Mr. E. L. Davenport playing Brutus to the Cassius of Mr. Barrett. This production was scarcely less elaborate in spectacular appointments and in the employment of numbers than was the original representation of the grand tragedy at this theatre. The public impression, too, seemed to be greater, the nightly patronage being of a size to warrant an indefinite run of the play. The remarkable record of one hundred and fifty nights was added to the past successes of this exceptionally favored classic, and even then its career was only brought to a close by the pressure of engagements made with managers in other cities. After a brief tour with the play Mr. Barrett returned to Booth's for the long anticipated production of "King Lear," which was brought out with a great cast, including E. L. Davenport as Edgar, F. B. Ward as Edmund, and the late W. E. Sheridan as Kent. Mr. Barrett was, of course, the King, a character in the interpretation of which he achieved a popular success and an artistic recognition exceeding his hopes. His critics assured him that the part was one in which he might excel when he had given it the same creative study that distinguished some of his other performances. The run of this play was brought to a summary close by the unparalleled horror of the Brooklyn Theatre holocaust, a calamity that depressed the theatrical business throughout the entire country for many months. Patronage fell off to the extent that made it impossible to support such an expensive affair, and the management withdrew "King

Lear" and put in its place Gilbert's drama of "Daniel Druce," the title rôle of which Mr. Barrett created in this country.

Mr. Barrett now began to entertain the idea of seeking for plays of merit among native writers, believing that he could in this way develop a stage literature worthy to rank with many of the standard plays of the past and give the American stage greater distinction abroad. He was on friendly terms with Mr. W. D. Howells, whose reputation as a novelist was then at its best, and when that author suggested his wish to write for the theatre Mr. Barrett urged him to make the venture, promising to produce the play if it gave any promise of dramatic service. The result was the comedy, "A Counterfeit Presentment," first played by Mr. Barrett at the Grand Opera House, Cincinnati, October 11, 1877. It proved to be a pretty, quiet treatment of phases of real life, devoid of sensationalism, its claims resting upon the literary quality of its dialogue and the unaffected naturalness of its incidents and characters. The cast included Mr. John A. Lane and Miss Ellen Cummins, and though the play was favorably received, it was not a financial success, nor did it long hold a place in the repertoire of the actor. Nevertheless it was played in all the leading cities during that season, in part because its pure and delicate tone made it attractive of a select class of patrons, but chiefly for the reason that Mr. Barrett had no half-hearted interest in encouraging the growth of a high grade native drama.

The modern institution, the interviewer, was just then coming into favor with the press, and to one of the strange genus Mr. Barrett said: "It is one of my highest aims to bring literary men to the stage. The men who have left the highest marks in literary history were dramatists. Shakespeare, Corneille, Molière, Congreve and Schiller, for example. The literary men of America are in heartfelt sympathy with the stage, and I am encouraged to believe that some of them will yet enrich our dramatic literature with

contributions destined to achieve lasting and brilliant success." So sincere was Mr. Barrett in this belief and his purpose to establish the fact, he followed his acceptance of "A Counterfeit Presentment" by inducing Mr. Howells to undertake another play and by engaging Bayard Taylor to translate and adapt for his use Schiller's "Don Carlos," a tragedy almost Shakespearean in noble sentiment and lofty character. Mr. Taylor's work, in an imperfect state, is now in the possession of Mr. Barrett, but, owing to the death of the poet, has never been produced by him. Mr. Howells prepared in time for the next season his translation from the Spanish of Estebados, to which he gave the title "The New Play." This excellent play was first produced at Cleveland, October 26, 1878, and was at once successful. A few months later Mr. Barrett wisely changed the title, and under the name of "Yorick's Love" Mr. Howells' clever play was a conspicuous feature in Mr. Barrett's repertoire for several years. His acting as Yorick caused Mr. Barrett to be regarded by his critics in a new light. His work hitherto had been strictly in the line of theatric tradition, however much it may have been tempered and diversified by the influence of a vigorous, thoughtful and original mind. He was accordingly measured by traditional standards, held accountable to old canons of criticism, judged by the findings of the old school of critics who were governed by conditions wholly unlike those of the modern stage. As Yorick he allowed his fancy and his genius free play, standing boldly out from the environments of tradition as a creator as well as a delineator. His performance was a startling revelation to many of his critics, and one of the happiest of them found no better way in which to express his surprise than in the declaration, "For once Mr. Barrett ceases to be scholarly and rises to the natural." The truth, the fervor, the passion, the pathos, the soulful impulse of his performance permitted no other opinion. The personation was thoroughly and heartily natural, in the dramatic sense of the term. It is doubtful, however, if this new esteem sprang from the

unwonted power and thoroughness of the actor's performance, so much as from the absence of opportunity to introduce that iniquity of criticism, "comparative analysis." Mr. Barrett stood on his own merits free from the slights of bias toward some other player or ideal, and had the benefit of impartial judgments. It required something of this kind to remove a not prevalent but obstinate opinion found in occasional critiques, that Mr. Barrett lacked both originality and versatility. As a matter of fact there were few actors less dependent upon established rules and fixed methods, or of more diversified talents than Mr. Barrett in those days. Every actor has his distinguishing traits and mannerisms, the individuality that makes him what he is; and in proportion as he rises superior to the commonplace does this individuality impress itself upon his work and upon the sensibilities of an audience. Unless an actor can give something of himself to a character assumed he must remain forever a negative force in the drama. Positive energy is not diffusive and, as many writers employ the word, no really great actor has much versatility. In the proper and artistic sense, however, Mr. Barrett has proved himself possessed of unusual versatility. This was shown not merely in the ability to interpret a variety of dissimilar characters, in comedy, in romance, in melodrama, in classic tragedy, but in his mental acquirements and general accomplishments. From the untutored supernumerary of the old Metropolitan Theatre he had grown into one of the most scholarly and widely informed men before the public. He was thoroughly versed in literature,—not only as a reader but as a writer, as his contributions to the leading magazines of the time attest,—and had devoted himself to a knowledge of the kindred arts of music, sculpture and painting with most beneficial results. He brought to bear upon his profession, from every available source, whatever would fit him adequately to fill a star position, a position he conceived to be an artistic ideal. He had just the mind for creative versatility as distinguished from the mimetic; and as an

interpreter, which we believe is the chief end of acting, Mr. Barrett is as versatile as his characters are various.

September 22, 1879, Mr. Barrett dedicated Pope's new theatre, St. Louis, to the drama with the performance of "Hamlet." The house was crowded in every part and the private boxes, parquet and balcony were brilliant with the beauty and fashion of that city. The occasion was further marked for remembrance by an eloquent address by the Hon. Chester H. Krum, who improved the opportunity to speak in compliment of Mr. Barrett, and by a poetic prologue written and spoken by George Alfred Townsend. Throughout the season Mr. Barrett gave special prominence to "Yorick's Love," playing it in all the principal cities with unmarred success, the general verdict being one of approval. The company with him was unusually well balanced in strength. In the summer of 1881 Mr. Barrett revisited England, renewing earlier acquaintances and gaining other friends. The few meetings he had had with Henry Irving in the course of former visits were the basis of a warm friendship that sprang up on this occasion, Mr. Barrett having so far made good the promise of his younger days that he now stood on a professional equality with England's foremost actor. The friendship was profitable to both. Mr. Barrett was the honored guest of the Lyceum Theatre during his stay and availed himself of courteous invitations to see Mr. Irving in a variety of characters, among them Hamlet, Charles I., Shylock and Doricourt. Mr. Barrett then for the first time saw Miss Ellen Terry and recognized how large a share of his own success Mr. Irving owes to the joyous, vivifying genius of this brilliant actress.

Returning to America, Mr. Barrett began his new season in the west, but a month later appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, in a round of characters. He was exceptionally well received both by the public and by the press. Mr. William Winter, who formerly had been one of Mr. Barrett's severest and most unyielding critics, now revealed to

him the generous side of his nature, and admitted the actor's honestly urged claims in no half-hearted or reluctant spirit. In his review of the brief engagement Mr. Winter said:

"It is not a new truth that Lawrence Barrett is one of the best actors of his time, whether in comedy or tragedy; yet at each fresh performance that is given by him the sense of his extraordinary and indomitable intellectual force comes home to mind with the effect of novelty. He has been seen within twelve days as Richelieu—which he acted seven times—Hamlet, Yorick, Shylock, David Garrick, Othello and Cassius. This was carrying a tremendous weight, and it is not easily possible to do justice to such an exploit. The time has gone for weighing in nice scales such exercise of the actor's power, to determine its existence and its limitations. This power displayed its scope and conquered its recognition long ago, and there is no person who can teach Mr. Barrett anything about his own profession. But the tendency of observing thought to dwell on the character of the actor's efforts, and on their influence over the public taste, is rational and not exercised amiss. Mr. Barrett has an almost unequaled magnetism and ability, in promoting the noble excitement of thought. To see him act is to see a splendid engine of intellect in grand and ceaseless motion, and to be roused into a mental activity that at once disperses all the wearisome commonplaces of daily life. Those who saw him, last night as Cassius, or, two nights since as Shylock and Garrick, must signally have felt this astonishing and invigorating influence of mental passion. His Cassius is a great work,—a pure ideal of Roman heroism. The massive grace of the execution keeps an even balance with the grandeur of the ideal. There is scarce another work on the stage that burns with such intellectual concentration, or is rounded into such a statue-like beauty and completeness of art. There certainly is no work of Mr. Barrett's that so wholly shows him in the type that he distinctly embodies—the man of clear, exalted, restless, passionate intellect. * * It is not that Mr. Barrett is a Cassius,

because he enacts Cassius so impressively well, but that this character calls forth into bold relief the intense mentality in which he is a distinctive actor. Nor is it meant to deny or overlook the brighter or sweeter elements of his nature. He gave as David Garrick an embodiment that proves them—an embodiment not only easy, graceful, colloquial, humorous, subtle, in gesture and inflection—and brilliant in the use of transparency (as in the scene of simulated inebriety)—but very winning in its simple manliness, pleasing in sentiment, and dignified by the gentle gravity of a spirit that experience has saddened and innate goodness made patient and tender.”

This gratifying expression of scholarly opinion is a bright reflection of the general tone of criticism that Mr. Barrett's work invited this season. Whether this favorable turn was due wholly to the marked improvement apparent in the actor's performance or was influenced in part by the large increase of popular patronage he received, it were perhaps impertinent to inquire. An editorial paragraph in the *Brooklyn Times* was not, however, without significance. It said: “Mr. Barrett has been a patient waiter. He has appeared in this city year after year presenting in masterly style the very best plays, but he has been greeted by audiences that would have shamed a New England village. With firm belief in himself and in the dignity of the stage, he has refused to lower either the character of his acting or the quality of his plays to catch what is, oftentimes wrongly, called the ‘popular taste;’ and he is winning his reward. He would not sink to his audience, but he has raised his audience to him, and there probably will be no reason to complain hereafter of any neglect by the Brooklyn public.” This season was, indeed, the beginning of Mr. Barrett's real financial success as a star actor of classic characters.

November 28, 1881, an engagement was begun at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, that was distinguished by the production of the third play by an American author, resulting from Mr. Barrett's at once patriotic and artistic patronage of the

"native dramatist." This was Mr. William Young's romantic tragedy, "Pendragon," founded upon the Arthurian legends. It received its first representation December 5, with Mr. Barrett as King Arthur, and with an efficient cast. The play was magnificently mounted and richly dressed, the material conditions being in every possible way equal to the dignity and character of the drama. The play was successful with the public and with the critics, save that attention was directed to its extreme sombreness, its "annoying uniformity of lofty poise, and some few structural weaknesses that have since been remedied between the actor and the author." There was only praise in comment upon Mr. Barrett's personation of King Arthur. Reviewing the engagement at the end of the week the *Inter Ocean* said:

"The pronounced success that has attended the production and performance of the new blank-verse tragedy, 'Pendragon,' has a double value. It offers encouragement to American authors and justifies our tragedians in departing from the time-worn path beaten around the works of Shakespeare and other poets of another time. Mr. Barrett has been the most daring of our classical actors in that he has produced two new plays and created two new characters, while his fellow artists in the tragic school have been content to follow in the way of numberless leaders, guided by their experiences or inspired by the traditions that fashion the graces and effects of the parts played. In this Mr. Barrett does the stage a great service, besides holding out a hand to lift up the despairing genius of this country, which has found managers unwilling to risk anything on native productions while spending wasted thousands upon things foreign. * * Mr. Barrett comes very near to perfection in the mental and sentimental grasp and absorption of written ideas, in the analysis of heart and mind. There is an inexplicable charm in his definition of the impassioned speech that ever flows from the restless Arthur, even in the sustained and trying scene where the heart-stung king abases his lofty and pure spirit to lift some

of her shame from the groveling Guinever. He gives beauty to the lines and brilliancy to the thoughts. He makes Arthur real, and honors himself. This is a bright crown to the finely artistic and unusually successful engagement which concludes to-night. With this fortnight Mr. Barrett has won more admirers than during any previous engagement, and has secured tribute from Chicago to further his future advance along the honest way to his honest fame."

"Pendragon" did not prove a pecuniary success, and after a stipulated number of performances in the course of the next year, Mr. Barrett returned it to the author with the request that specific changes be made in the form and incidental conditions of the work. Mr. Young has largely reconstructed his really fine and beautifully poetic play, which is again in the hands of Mr. Barrett, as his personal property, and will be revived in commanding style after another season or two.

The season of 1881-82 was a particularly wearisome one to the actor, owing to the great amount of work forced upon him by the demands for a complete repertoire in his many engagements that were more than ordinarily wide-spread, extending as far west as Leadville. He therefore eagerly sought the recreation of foreign travel and, with his family, passed the summer of 1882 in visiting the principal points of interest in Europe, spending some time in Germany. In the meantime, however, preparations were doing for the production the next season of the Hon. George H. Boker's historical tragedy, "Francesca da Rimini," a poetic work that had been in the possession of its author for thirty years. Mr. Barrett saw great possibilities in the work and with his practical assistance the play was suitably changed, new situations were effected, a more picturesque coloring was given the scenes and story, and all that was repellant in the too close following of Dante was removed. The play was first produced at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, at the beginning of the season, September

11, and was received in a spirit that assured Mr. Barrett of its unqualified success, a success so well established by the favor of other cities that Mr. Barrett found the financial profit of the season considerably in excess of any former earnings in his professional career. Indeed, this season was the end of his struggle for preferment. The public, uncertain, coy and hard to please, had come to appreciate his worth, and seemed now anxious to make amends for its past indifference. It suddenly confessed the truth it had long disregarded, and, in its patronage, acknowledged the genius of the actor as it had earlier admitted the culture of the artist. It began paying him the reward of many years of arduous and worthy work, but it also took account of the fact that his powers were yet ripening. The Chicago *Inter Ocean* of November 7 observed:

“He has made the most pronounced changes in his work during the past three years, changes that are wholly in the nature of improvement. There is more warmth, more feeling, more expression in his acting. His grasp of emotion is truer, his definition of sentiment is finer, the use and control of his voice better. These differences admonish one to be careful in judging this actor by any previous experience of his work; and these differences appear admirably clear in his impersonation of Lanciotto in ‘*Francesca da Rimini*.’ The character is one that embraces the greatest contrasts of feeling,—misanthropy, benevolence, gentleness, affection, the fiercest passions, soldierly daring and valor, womanly tenderness and compassion, and all within a nature the most keenly sensitive to its isolation from and unlikeness to others. Mr. Barrett defines these conflicting phases with the most admirable ability, in a manner to leave no doubt as to the brilliancy of his power, and the sympathetic quality of his reflection.” And a few days later the same journal said: “We are heartily glad to see that the fine scholarly grace, artistic finish, and sensitive emotions which so clearly distinguish this actor are being more generally recognized



MR. BARRETT AS RIENZI.

for their worth. With people who think as well as feel, and like to confess a reason for their sentiments, Mr. Barrett has long been in high esteem. If he has not enjoyed popular favor to the extent of some others it is in great part due to the fact that he has been faithful to his art without regard to the pecuniary fruits of his practices. His work has at all times been conscientiously performed, with due regard of the proprieties of the character assumed, with almost reverent respect for the true principles of his noble profession. An actor who will not pose for the applause of the vulgar, unreasoning minds that delight in sensation, cannot hope to catch the questionable success with which too many content themselves. Mr. Barrett can easily devise means for increasing the size of his audiences, but it would be at the sacrifice of his better qualities, the accomplishments that now endear him to intelligent lovers of dramatic art in its highest form. This faithful adherence to well-conceived duty will not go without its reward, for there is certainly growing a better and more finely cultivated appreciation of theatrical work in its intellectual phase, and it must follow that the actors who best define the nature and significance of characters will find most favor with educated people. Mr. Barrett is in the very prime of mental vigor and physical health, and that means continued growth of artistic power and dramatic force."

Mr. Winter, in his thoughtful and comprehensive criticism of the performance of "Francesca da Rimini," clearly defined one great quality of Mr. Barrett's success as an interpreter. He said: "Mr. Barrett's delivery of one line—in which all this pent-up misery is crystallized into words of simple yet burning eloquence—will long be remembered. It comes when Paulo has entreated the moody Lanciotto to be hopeful, and to 'Look up.' The answer is a quick, involuntary, lamentable, wailing cry of passionate despair: 'I cannot, brother;—God has bowed me down.' Moments like this, in which there is subtlety as well as power, and which discover a deep

knowledge of the human heart, impress us as more affecting in themselves and as nobler achievements for the actor, than those frenzied and far more tumultuous outbursts—the one of frantic joy and the other of frantic ferocity—with which, ending the third and fourth acts, last night, Mr. Barrett electrified his audience and swept the house like a whirlwind. Yet these paroxysms of tragic power are very splendid, and should have their rightful due of admiration.”

Many years before this, “*Francesca da Rimini*” was a failure at the old Broadway Theatre when produced in its original form with Mr. E. L. Davenport and a good company in the cast. Mr. Barrett attained the height of popularity in this play, and gave it deserved prominence during the remainder of the season, steadily perfecting his characterization of Lanciotto until he finally brought it to an intensely human embodiment of passion, pathos, and exquisite soulful sensibility. Early in the season Mr. Barrett was earnestly requested to take part in a grand dramatic festival to be given in Cincinnati the first week in May, 1883, and had given his consent to appear. It was the purpose to unite the leading actors of America then available—Mr. Booth was in Europe—in a series of great productions. When, therefore, Mr. Barrett visited Cincinnati in January he was welcomed as the special guest of the Festival Association, and was entertained at the Queen City Club, where a dinner was served in his honor presided over by Governor E. F. Noyes.

This festival was a remarkable event in the local record of a city earnest in its desire to shine as a patron of the arts, and though it was not a monetary triumph, so great was the expense, it was a splendid affair artistically in many ways, and was superbly patronized by people who came from all parts of the Union to witness the performances of such an extraordinary association of noted players. “*Julius Cæsar*” was presented with a cast that included Mr. Barrett as Cassius, John McCullough as Brutus, and James Murdoch as Antony. In “*The Hunchback*,” Mr. Barrett played Sir Thomas

Clifford, Mr. McCullough, Master Walter, and Miss Mary Anderson, Julia. Mr. Barrett here made his first appearance as Benedick in "Much Ado about Nothing," Mlle. Rhea playing Beatrice. Mr. Barrett gave the audience an agreeable surprise. One of the visiting critics—the Festival attracted all the leading dramatic writers of the country—said of his performance: "It was like the revelation of a new man. The jovial spontaneity, the readiness and vivacity of his manner, the hearty good humor of his lighter episodes, and the fine comedy tone that pervaded his impersonation throughout, were a positive refutation of the not uncommon but ridiculous assertion that he is a hard, unsympathetic actor." Mr. John A. Ellsler was the Dogberry on this occasion. When "Hamlet" was produced as a gracious compliment to the veteran Murdock, Mr. Barrett proved his artistic honesty by assuming the humble character of Horatio. Mr. McCullough was the Ghost. At the matinee Mr. Barrett played Romeo to the Juliet of Miss Anderson, acting with enthusiasm and ardor. In the representation of "Othello" Mr. Barrett played Iago, Mr. McCullough the Moor, and Miss Clara Morris made an unfortunate Shakespearean appearance as Emilia. Miss Anderson for the first time in her life assumed the character of Desdemona. Never before in the history of the stage were six plays so splendidly done in one week, or as a united series of performances. It is questionable, however, if there was any real gain to dramatic art, and a subsequent attempt to repeat the enterprise proved both an artistic and financial failure,—possibly because there were no actors of note connected with the second venture.

CHAPTER VIII.

APPEARANCE IN LONDON.

RETURNING from a trip west, including a fine engagement in California, in the latter part of August Mr. Barrett began a special engagement at the Star Theatre, New York, presenting "Francesca da Rimini." So great was the success of the production,—though that success was due more to the actor than to the play,—it was found unadvisable to change the bill during the engagement, and the play was continued to uninterruptedly large patronage for nine weeks. It was one of the most notable engagements ever played in New York and was threefold complimentary to Mr. Barrett; it was a recognition of his enterprise in the production of the drama, an acknowledgment of his superb performance, and a testimonial to him of the good wishes he would take abroad, whither he was about to go to make his first formal and professional appearance in London. The total receipts of this brilliant engagement were in excess of \$70,000. On the last Saturday night there was a famous gathering of people eminent in art and literature, prominent in society, to say farewell to the tragedian. At the close of the third act he was three times recalled, the last time complying with the unmistakable wish of the audience that he should make a speech. He was evidently deeply affected, and with some difficulty got command of his voice sufficiently to make his fervent speech understood. He said:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I feel that if there is an excuse for an artist in stepping out of his assumed character to address an audience in his own real person it might be on an occasion like the present, at the close of an engagement

which has lasted about nine weeks by your sufferance, patience and support,—an engagement which, I may sincerely say to my pride as well as to your own, is unexampled in the history of the drama in this country. It has been a genuine, positive success, a quiet success, but sustained and supported chiefly by yourselves and those who have occupied the seats which you now occupy, for the past nine weeks. I feel that on this occasion there is much that I should say, but I feel that the most important part has remained unsaid. This venture has been entirely my own. I trusted entirely to the support of the New York public to carry forward this enterprise, and it has been successful in the highest sense and gratifying to the highest degree.

“In the name of the ladies and gentlemen of my company I thank you also for the courtesy you have extended to them. They one and all feel themselves entirely at home. I speak more timidly when I speak absolutely of myself through you to the many audiences who have sat before me. I have been your servant for a quarter of a century, and have been associated with the New York drama since the first appearance of America’s greatest actor—one of the greatest actors in the world—Mr. Edwin Booth. Were I to attempt to tell you all I feel on the present occasion I should be undertaking a task which I could not fulfill, and which you have not probably the patience to hear. When my foreign engagement is concluded I shall return to you with anxiety and happiness. This is to be my home; you are to be my friends. Until I once more appear before you, thank you, thank you. Mr. Lester Wallack has, like a true artist, done even more than he promised, and the press—the respectable press—has come forward in the truest spirit. To these and to all I return an artist’s thanks—an artist who has labored, perhaps unsuccessfully, to make himself prominent in assisting and forwarding the literature of his country, and who is proud of being an American in every sense of the word.

"This occasion has something more than an ordinary significance to me. I may tell you that, before I shall have the happiness of coming before you again, I shall appear before a foreign audience. What the result may be no one can tell; but I feel full of hope. I trust that in connection with this you will pardon me if I make a few remarks concerning my friend, Mr. Henry Irving. England's distinguished artist, supported by eminent artists from the Lyceum Theatre company, is now among us, while our own Mary Anderson is playing on his stage with great success. I trust he will meet with the liberal and cordial support due to his merit as an artist and in recognition of what he has done for the art of which I have the honor to be a member, and that you will receive and extend to him the liberal support due to an artist of such celebrity and distinction."

Mr. Barrett sailed for London March 25, 1884, to begin, April 14, an engagement of seven weeks at Mr. Irving's Lyceum Theatre, Mr. Irving at that time being in the midst of his first American season. Miss Anderson was about to conclude a triumphant career at the Lyceum, and Mr. Barrett arrived in time to rejoice with his fair countrywoman in her good fortune in securing the favor of the English public. Mr. Barrett was most cordially welcomed to London, where his personal friends were numerous, and the fact that he was about to make his dramatic debut in that metropolis gave occasion for something more than private courtesies and attentions. It also exposed him to the interviewer, who by this time had become almost as formidable as his American prototype.

Seldom, if ever, in the personal history of the dramatic art has there been a more distinguished occasion or a more gracious hospitality than was a dinner at the Langham Hotel at which Mr. Wilson Barrett was the genial host and Mr. Lawrence Barrett the honored guest. It was a very notable gathering of celebrities, among them being the Earl of Lytton, Lord Greville, Signor Salvini, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. S. B.

Bancroft, Mr. W. S. Gilbert, Mr. W. H. Kendall, Sir A. Bostwick, Mr. John Ryder, Capt. Hawley Smart, Sir Charles Young, General E. A. Merritt, Carl Rosa, Sir Julius Benedict, T. P. O'Connor, M. P., Comyns Carr, G. R. Sims, John Hare, Charles Dickens, Moncure Conway, Oscar Wilde, J. Forbes Robertson, Lionel Brough, Bronson Howard, Howard Paul, Henry A. Jones, Dr. H. Griffin, B. L. Farjeon, Henry Neville, A. W. Pinero, Charles Warner, in all one hundred and fifty guests chosen from literary and artistic London. The occasion was one of felicity and social brilliancy, with an honest English heartiness of welcome to the American actor. The utmost of good-fellowship prevailed, constraint was banished in the first half hour, and the chief guest was made to feel that he was among friends with hearts behind their candid speech. One of the morning papers describes the double feast as a veritable symposium, and added :

"The speaking, which began at two o'clock in the morning, had in it all the sparkle of such an hour when intellect and sentiment are commonly, perhaps because abnormally, most alive and quickened. When Mr. Wilson Barrett, in a speech full of point and delicate grace proposed the toast of the evening, the reception accorded it was so hearty and unanimous that it must have convinced our honored guest that he had already secured many true, warm-hearted friends among those met together to bid him welcome. Wilson Barrett has a deserved fame as a ready public speaker, but on this occasion he eclipsed all his previous efforts in oratory.

"Nor was Mr. Lawrence Barrett one whit behind when, in a low, carefully modulated voice, he returned thanks in phrases which at times almost rose to eloquence. The two speeches will not readily be forgotten by any of those who had the privilege of listening to them."

Charles Dickens proposed the drama, coupling with it the names of Salvini and Toole. The latter made a humorous response, but the Italian hesitated to trust himself to speak in a strange tongue, and handed a translation of a short essay,

rather than speech, to his host, with a request that he would read it to the company.

The toast of music was responded to by Sir Julius Benedict, who crowned an evening of bright sayings by one of the most delightful bulls ever uttered by a person who could not claim to be an Irishman. Winding up his little oration, which received a hearty burst of applause, he said: "I am glad to think what I said is so good (and placing his hand on his heart, confirmed it with words that caused as much love as laughter), but it is not half so good as what I have not said."

The whole affair was one of the most successful of its kind, and when somewhere about five in the morning the company took their departure, it was no empty compliment when Lord Lytton thanked the host for one of the most memorable and enjoyable evenings he had ever spent in a large professional gathering.

Mr. Barrett began his engagement April 14, making his first appearance as Yorick in Mr. Howells' play of "Yorick's Love." The welcome was an almost unprecedentedly warm one. The theatre was crowded, and the audience was one of great brilliancy, the more complimentary to the actor because of the recent death of the Duke of Albany, which many feared would have a depressing effect upon Mr. Barrett's season. There was a throng of notable men and women who were attracted to the theatre only by events of the first magnitude, and the Americans in London were present to participate in the triumph of their countryman. The actor did triumph, though the play was rather severely treated. The *Telegraph* said: "It says much for Mr. Barrett's acting that he could sustain the interest of a work so clumsy and unsatisfactory." And the *Times* remarked: "His highest achievement was that, with his great command of the minutiae of his art, together with a naturally pleasing air of gentleness and refinement, he could interest us in this monotone of passion." The general opinion of Mr. Barrett, as he appeared on this occasion, is well

expressed in the following paragraph from the critique published in the *Daily Telegraph*:

“Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest,” is a pleasant motto, as true on the stage as elsewhere. In the English theatrical world there are no prejudices. Miss Mary Anderson departs, and Mr. Lawrence Barrett reigns in her stead. A cold, statuesque, and impassive beauty delights and disappears; whereupon attention is instantly directed to the nervous power, the quick, intelligent eye, the pleasant voice, and the wholly refined manner of an actor who little knew how severely he prejudiced his cause by announcing himself portentously as the ‘American tragedian.’ Nothing is more grateful to an English audience than the unexpected. Those alarming words ‘American tragedian’ augured ill for the success of Mr. Lawrence Barrett. But judge of the surprise of all who expected, and were bravely determined to endure, when there rushed upon the stage a well looking, impulsive, and bright-faced gentleman, with a graceful figure and a persuasive voice, who had evidently determined to show us that the tragic moments of life are not wholly dissociated from pathos, and that the agonies of existence need not necessarily be associated with the grand manner, or expressed in deep baritone or double bass. In less than five minutes Mr. Barrett had made friends with his audience. The overwhelming reception accorded to him unnerved, and, for a moment, paralyzed the actor; but it caused the very nervousness that does an actor good. Sympathy is the sustenance of a sincere artist. In this instance it created an excitement that admirably suited the opening scenes of the play called ‘Yorick’s Love,’ which deal with the position of a well recognized comedian suddenly being called upon to play a part of intense interest and serious moment. Every gesture, every glance, every movement, every flash of intelligence that came from the new actor were eagerly scanned, and the audience soon settled down contented with the idea that if tragedy could be played as brightly, as quickly, as sympathetically and with as much intelligence as this, then tragedy

might be made a pleasant, instead of a very depressing form of entertainment. It says much for Mr. Lawrence Barrett's acting that it could sustain the interest of so unsatisfactory and clumsy a dramatic work. He never faltered or delayed in energy, and his best work was shown in that struggle of a generous nature and an affectionate disposition against the complicity of fate and circumstances which is, of course, the leading motive of *Othello*. The point made by Mr. Barrett, at the close of the first act, where the mind of the loving husband receives its first shock, was singularly impressive, and his half-hysterical burst of maddened rage when the truth began to dawn upon him was even better than the grim vengeance of the murderer.

"So far then, the appearance of Mr. Lawrence Barrett has been an unexpected and pleasant surprise. He belongs to the order of tragedians that is most welcome, since he sinks his own individuality in his work, and relieves tragedy from its funereal gloom and mourning. Bright in manner and natural in expression, he can be solemn without being wearisome, and earnest without pedantry, and it would no doubt please many play-goers to see an actor so full of magnetism and so glib of tongue in one of the rôles of Shakespearean drama."

Mr. Barrett followed "*Yorick's Love*" with "*Richelieu*," in which he was so successful the play was continued five weeks, completing the engagement. For his farewell appearance, however, Mr. Barrett preferred the character of *Yorick*. There was an enthusiastic call for the actor at the end of the play, and coming before the curtain Mr. Barrett said, addressing the large audience:

"I thank you for your reception of Mr. Howells' play of '*Yorick's Love*,' and I thank you for your reception of our performance of Lord Lytton's '*Richelieu*,' and for the measure of success which we have been enabled to achieve notwithstanding the recent period of social and public depression in London. I thank you for permitting me to have the honor of

appearing in a city in which it is the pride and ambition of every actor once at least during his career to appear and play in. To have gained even a slight recognition at your hands as an actor of modest claims would have satisfied me. (Cries of "No," "No.") But you have received me with so hearty a welcome that I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to you. In my own country I could never have imagined that this could have come to pass. There is not an English speaking actor who has not welcomed me, not an English speaking actress who has not treated me as a brother, not an employé of this house who has not treated me with the utmost kindness and consideration. To the great press of London, which has given me more than I could have asked, more than I could ever hope to claim, I have also to return my hearty and sincere thanks. I trust, and I cherish the hope encouraged by this kind reception which you have accorded me, that I may again, ere long, have the honor of appearing before you."

This intimation of a possible return to London was greeted with a cheer and great applause. Although socially and artistically the London season of Mr. Barrett was a decided success, it was not financially what it deserved to be. Indeed, his experience was precisely in a line with that of Mr. Booth before him, the experience of Mr. McCullough, of Mr. Jefferson, in short of every American actor or actress, Miss Anderson alone excepted, who had undertaken to professionally court the London public. It is a truism of theatrical philosophy that there is no money for American actors of the star class in London. But in addition to natural causes, Mr. Barrett had against him an indifferent supporting company, a fact very generally noted. Mr. Whitefoot, editor of the *Sportsman*, summed the case in turf parlance: "The American actor is a thoroughbred and he had a goodish course for a run, but he was badly jockeyed." He was affected by the popular dislike of "Yorick's Love," a play the critics would not commend; and when he appeared as Richelieu he

had to encounter the prejudice in favor of English impersonators of the great Cardinal. The first estimate of his performance was censorious; but in a week a very marked change of critical tone was noted, and one of those who frankly admitted his undue severity said, in finally reviewing the personation: "That the American tragedian thoroughly conceives the very complex character of Richelieu is certain, and that he possesses all the dramatic power necessary for the successful impersonation of the Cardinal is equally sure. His performance is an intelligent one, constantly marked by unmistakable evidences of rare genius."

Mr. Toole gave a midnight supper at the Chandos Street Theatre as a farewell testimonial to Mr. Barrett. It was a distinguished affair, largely attended by noblemen and artists and professional people who came to say good-bye. Among the guests were Lord Loudesborough, Henry Irving, Wilson Barrett, Charles Wyndham, Bronson Howard, George Augustus Sala, Henry Rutledge, John Hollinshead, Joseph Hatton, and a score of other good fellows. These bade Mr. Barrett God speed and good luck, and, congratulating him on his London debut, echoed the sentiment of the enthusiast who cried from the gallery, when Mr. Barrett modestly deprecated his first night's reception, "It's no more than you deserve, old man." He left London poorer in pocket than when he arrived, but he had reason to believe that the artistic satisfaction gained, and the respect for him established in the British mind richly compensated him for any monetary loss sustained. He brought back to America many, many pleasant recollections of his first season in London, during which he did a very great deal to increase English respect for the American stage.

CHAPTER IX.

MEMORABLE ACHIEVEMENTS.

MR. BARRETT arrived in New York July 15, very glad once more to be in his native land, where he found an affectionate welcome awaiting him. One of the first greetings was a cablegram from Alma Tadema, which read: "Welcome home; best love from all of us," a peculiarly felicitous remembrance of many delightful hours in club and studio that the two friends had enjoyed together. To a representative of the New York *Herald* Mr. Barrett gave his impression of his London season, which may serve a good purpose if repeated here. He said of the engagement:

"I have every reason to regard it as a great success. Everything passed off well and there is nothing about it I regret except that it was not long enough. My audiences were bright, intelligent, and extraordinarily demonstrative throughout. On the first night I was called out by acclamation after the first act of 'Yorick's Love.' After the second the audience brought me out several times, and at the end there was a tempest of applause. I never saw anything like the enthusiasm of my first night, excepting that on the occasion of the close of my engagement, when the great warmth and affection displayed in the most enthusiastic manner by my audience proved a very gratifying conclusion to a most happy engagement. On the next night, the memorable re-entry of Mr. Irving at the Lyceum, when I entered the box which Mr. Irving had placed at my disposal, the audience rose and cheered me. You can imagine my gratification at this spontaneous outburst from, perhaps,

the most notable audience that has assembled at a London 'first night.'"

An arrangement had already been entered into by which Mr. Barrett was to play a return engagement at the Lyceum in 1885, but the plans that subsequently engaged his attention for this country determined him to withdraw from that agreement. The intention was that he should play in "Francesca da Rimini" for three months and then appear with Mr. Irving in a series of Shakespearean revivals. Mr. Irving in the meantime decided to make a second tour of this country, and Mr. Barrett did not care to assume the management of the Lyceum alone, which would have been necessary had he filled the proposed London engagement.

The regular season for this year began at Denver, August 3, with the presentation of "Yorick's Love." It happened that the Rev. Robert Laird Collyer, a gentleman of peculiar idiosyncrasies, was in Colorado at the time, and in an interview with a reporter expressed some very singular, if not altogether inexplicable, views relative to Mr. Barrett. This gentleman saw fit to revive a long before dismissed falsehood that Mr. Barrett's real name is not Barrett, but Brannigan. This senseless, contemptible lie had its malicious origin some years ago in a sketch of Mr. Barrett in a collection of short biographies of American actors, and was inserted for the express purpose of humiliating a then successful actor by making it appear that he was ashamed of a name certainly no more Hibernian than Barrett. The invidious remarks of Mr. Collier were promptly resented by the Hon. George C. Bates, who, in a long communication to the Denver *Republican*, said :

"Having lived in Detroit constantly from May 10, 1833, down to April 1, 1852, and being engaged in the practice of my profession there, I knew Lawrence Barrett as a mere lad, away back in 1848, when by his industry, his brightness as a boy, he attracted the attention and secured the good will of all prominent citizens, including General Cox, Judges Sibley and Mona, Senators Woodbridge and Porter, and such men,

and when he was always and only known by his true and real name of Lawrence Barrett. My only child, Captain Kensie Bates, U. S. A., who died at Detroit February 20, 1882, was his playmate and companion, and down to the day of his death was his devoted friend. All our old citizens of Detroit, from his very youth, were proud of Barrett for his abstinence from all boyish vices and bad habits, his intense devotion to his duties and his steady advance up the ladder of fame."

Falsehood travels further than truth, and is hard to down. There are people, having great admiration for Mr. Barrett as an actor, who believe the absurd libel, never having heard it authoritatively denied. The story was conceived in guile and fostered by petty malice.

Mr. Barrett extended his tour to California, where he played an unprecedentedly large engagement, and then journeyed eastward, playing in all the principal cities of the Union. In the West he relaxed from the more arduous duties of his regular repertoire by occasionally appearing as Benedick in "Much Ado," a character for which he has great liking, and which he finds truly recreating. He added two plays to his long list of personally controlled dramas, appearing at Washington December 19, as Thorold in Robert Browning's old play, "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon," first, and unsuccessfully produced by Macready at the Drury Lane Theatre, London, in 1845. The poet himself presented the manuscript to Mr. Barrett, telling him to do what he pleased with it, and it pleased the actor to make a success of the sombre drama, for in his acting it was a success despite its gloom. The other play was the delightful little comedy, translated from the French of de Banville by Captain Alfred Thompson, and entitled "The King's Pleasure." The Gringoire of Mr. Barrett will long remain a charming memory to lovers of dramatic art.

The tragedian now had in hand undergoing a process of reconstruction Miss Mitford's turgid tragedy of "Rienzi," another play Macready had tried with ill results and which for many years had been stored away as having no value to the

stage. Mr. Barrett himself rearranged and elided portions of the play, and had the assistance of Mr. Boker in preparing more dramatic speeches for certain scenes. Confident that the play could be given a picturesque treatment that would insure its popularity, Mr. Barrett trusted to the time and romance of the story to please the intelligent, and unhesitatingly invested a large sum in preparations for its production. The play was brought out at Washington the following season. For several days prior to the opening, the actor-manager worked so persistently at rehearsals that he was overcome by nervousness which induced anxiety, and he became apprehensive that the play would fail. But the night of December 13, 1886, witnessed an unqualified triumph for the enterprising artist, the play proving a great spectacular success, his own performance of the Last of the Tribunes commanding enthusiastic applause from the audience, and securing the most flattering commendation from the critics, of whom many were attracted from New York and other cities. Mr. Barrett there inaugurated the most profitable and splendid season of his professional career. "Rienzi" was made the chief, if not the sole, attraction of his engagements during the season of 1886-87, and everywhere attracted enthusiastic audiences of great size. In this season Mr. Barrett drank deeply from the cup of success, and felt the sweet reward of his arduous, painstaking life. His season ended with an engagement for five weeks at Niblo's, during which time "Rienzi" was played to crowded houses nightly. Of this performance the Chicago *Inter Ocean* had this to say :

"It is one form of admirable art to become so closely identified with the material, the external view of a character as entirely to lose the personality of the actor in the make-up of the dressing-room. Such actors there are, Barnay among them. This famous German tragedian can appear each night of the week in a different character, allowing none to bear resemblance to another, his own individuality being lost in all. There could be no greater excellence in practical art than

distinguishes the character impresses of this actor. This accomplishment is a delight and a satisfaction to the natural eye, and is by no means a phase of dramatic description lightly to be estimated. There can be no doubt, however, that this not general nor essential adjunct of the mimetic vocation is much inferior in actual or æsthetic worth to that quality, amounting to an attribute, through which the soul of poetry, the passion, the pathos, the joys, and the sorrows of noble ideas, sublime conceptions are given truthful expression and impressive significance. Emotions are more than forms, idealities are loftier, better than facts. Mr. Barrett has not the art of identification in its physical development; but he has the art of psychical interpretation, of mental revelation so thoroughly mastered that he enables one to look through the outward seeming into the interior truth; and if he does not take on the bodily fact of a character he possesses himself utterly of the spiritual idea and distinctly, completely defines it. This is not to say Mr. Barrett never errs in the exposition of character, it is to say he clearly and unmistakably presents his conception of character; though it is rarely permitted one to discover in the interpretations of this peculiarly inquisitive and scholarly actor evident misapprehensions of motive, purpose, or ideality in dramatic creations. The justification of this view of Mr. Barrett's work lies in his treatment of Rienzi, a character not in the highest sense dramatic. A grave, well-poised demeanor is that of Miss Mitford's hero; an intellectual rather than a physical type of tragedy, a thinker, a philosopher, a sentimentalist, as we see him; active, aggressive, objective only as we understand him. A man of thoughts rather than of deeds, ruling by will more than by energy. And yet Mr. Barrett makes a vividly dramatic picture of this intensely repressed, singular, undemonstrative ideal. Soul leaps through form with all the vigor, all the passion, all the overwhelming sway of a living, portentous truth, and we feel the humanness of the performance. We see the form of Mr. Barrett, undisguised, individual, but we gaze through the familiar presence and look upon

the luminous soul of the Tribune, feeling with him, suffering or rejoicing in him, a full deep sympathy controlling us, a perfect realization of the character possessing us. This is the height of interpretive art to which Mr. Barrett has brought himself as the reward of a long, wearisome discipline of mind and refinement of spirit. It is the definition of subtle elements that constitutes the highest virtue of character acting. The material portraiture is of lesser worth, possible with many, is rather a native qualification than an artistic acquirement or an intellectual development. The mimic is a natural product, the artist is a careful creation; but above either is the interpreter, who, both actor and artist, has the instincts of the poet and the feeling of the sentimentalist to color and vitalize his work. Mr. Barrett proves in *Rienzi* that he is an interpreter. No better testimony could be offered than is to be found in that scene at the foot of the cathedral stairs when the father, throwing off the authoritative austerity of the Tribune, pleads for his daughter's life and happiness with her young, misguided husband. There is little action, no dramatic display, none of the realism many actors might impart to the scene; but there is a great truth sorrow-laden, a living fact that closes in upon the actor and all that is theatric, and sets fancy in that dim century when Rome rose from her degradation at the call of an enthusiast, and recoiled again into wretchedness from the stern presence of an uncompromising justice. The character of this episode, so unaffected, free from artifice, and yet powerfully full of meaning and significance, illustrates the general bearing of Mr. Barrett's work in these latter days, and establishes his excellence as an actor in the highest sense of the term. '*Rienzi*' is a pleasing, picturesque, beautifully toned and splendidly produced play; but to Mr. Barrett's fine reflection of the chief character is due the great success of the revival."

At this time Edwin Booth was completing what had been announced as his last professional tour of the country. Though he lacked much of the age at which he could,

without other excuse, retire from the stage that yet had artistic claims upon him, Mr. Booth was not entirely in health, and had, moreover, fallen into a melancholy state of mind that rendered him indifferent to theatrical honors. He seemed to have lost all interest in professional work and reputation, being desirous only to seclude himself from the world. In addition to his admiration for Mr. Booth as an actor, Mr. Barrett had strong personal affection for the man, and his quick, friendly sympathies taught him what might be done to reawaken in Mr. Booth the old spirit of earnest ambition. He brought his strong, nervous energy, vigorous health and earnest confidence to bear upon his almost gloomy friend, persuaded him to visit Cohasset, where he engaged daily in revivifying exercise on land and sea, and with the stimulus of Mr. Barrett's hearty, cheerful companionship, Mr. Booth rapidly cast off his melancholy and became quite another man, happier than he had been in years. Still he had little thought of playing again, until Mr. Barrett proposed that they should travel together as stars of a combination of which Mr. Barrett should have the entire management and business direction, leaving Mr. Booth unburdened of care or responsibility beyond the mere work of acting. The plan was approved gratefully by Mr. Booth, and there began an artistic association that gave to the country the most notable touring attraction ever known in the history of the American stage. The season began in Buffalo, in September, 1887, the supporting company being one of judiciously selected people, acting together with great excellence under the unsurpassed stage direction of Mr. Barrett. Such audiences were never known in the theatres of the United States, as patronized Booth and Barrett throughout the season, the unprecedented success of which is defined by the fact that the profit to the tragedians, above all expenses, was a little in excess of \$600,000. Under the stimulus of Mr. Barrett's cheery nature and nervous activity, Mr. Booth recovered his old buoyancy of mind, entered spiritedly into his work, found

pleasure in exercises and recreations he had shunned in recent years, and, despite the months of arduous travel, ended the season stronger in body and happier in mind than he began it. The original intention of the tragedians was not to continue the association, which was merely an experiment of high artistic enterprise. But popular pressure, the importunities of managers, and their own mutual enjoyment of the relation, conspired to change certain of Mr. Barrett's personal plans, and before the close of the first season, arrangements were perfected for another year of the Booth-Barrett combination. This second season began in due form, the contemplated tour embracing new and more extended territory, though, of course, the important cities were revisited. There was no abatement of popular interest, theatres were thronged everywhere as before, and most flattering results were achieved, not only in financial gain, but also in the great merit of the dramatic representations. One formidable event of the season was the journey to San Francisco, to open the new California Theatre, April 13, 1889. This was accomplished most triumphantly, the western reception being an ovation of such enthusiastic character, that the distinguished tragedians were fully compensated for the fatigues of the long journey. Nevertheless, it became distressingly apparent that excessive travel was wearing upon the constitutional forces of Mr. Booth, and ill-health returned upon him. It was the intention to play various parts of the extreme west after the close of the San Francisco engagement; but at the end of three weeks, notwithstanding the immense monetary sacrifice they must make in so doing, the tragedians determined to bring their season to a summary close and return east for rest and recuperation. Mr. Booth retired to the sea-shore, intending to pass his vacation quietly. Mr. Barrett at once sailed for Germany to enjoy a restorative season among its famous watering-places.

In the two seasons these tragedians presented superb productions of "Julius Cæsar," "Othello" and "Merchant of

Venice," besides playing "King Lear," "Hamlet," "Macbeth" and other classic works. Never before did an actor assume the responsibility that bore upon Mr. Barrett in these memorable two years. To the sufficiently trying duties of the actor he added the burdensome obligations of general manager and the exacting cares of stage director, his remarkable mental resources and exhaustless energies enabling him to triumph splendidly in the discharge of an undertaking that would have dismayed another man. New phases of his great talent were developed by this experience, and he gave further and abundant proofs of his extraordinary abilities.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THOUGH the chapters of Lawrence Barrett's life here offered to the public are restricted to a professional view, they are necessarily cursory, brief glimpses of a career that is rich in exceptional interest, and hardly less romantic than that of Edmund Kean, to which, in many particulars, it bears resemblance. Much inevitably has been omitted that would have delighted the reader, especially the many illustrative anecdotes that have as important place in the analysis of character as the record of adversities encountered and obstacles overcome. In explanation of such shortcomings it is enough to say this little work is not a biography, and the writer has not had that coöperation with his subject without which a comprehensive personal history is impossible. What is believed to be a judicious admiration of Mr. Barrett in his public sphere has been the guiding spirit of a memorial that will not be unwelcome to thousands who share that admiration. No actor has deserved better of the public, for none other has held to higher purposes, and none has done so much to dignify the stage or advance and beautify its art. The admonition of Polonius to Laertes was adopted into the professional creed of Lawrence Barrett:

To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Faithful to the laudable ambition of his youth, true to the ideal of his deep, sympathetic intelligence, he has been at once a servant and patron of his art-profession, of incalculable benefit and honor to the stage of this country. To his

wisdom, moral force and artistic enterprise, as much as to any other influences that can be named, is due the high standard of the American stage in comparison with that of older art-serving countries. The knowledge acquired in foreign travel and through close friendly intercourse with the best minds of the United States and Europe he has applied to the enriching of his profession; so that students of the drama have no better preceptor, indeed, no safer intellectual guide than this eminent actor.

What remains to be said touches the future work of the tragedian. Just returned from a health benefiting rest among the German spas, Mr. Barrett is about to begin a season that promises to be exceptionally notable. Ripe in intellect, rich in experience, well matured in judgment, he has yet all the buoyance of spirit, all the ardent professional zeal, and the enterprising confidence of his younger days. Instead, therefore, of retiring upon his ample fortune, or hugging prosperity close by risking little, trusting to acquired reputation to sustain him in old lines of established plays, Mr. Barrett reappears in his character of friend of the American drama. He enters heartily and with enthusiasm into a new production, involving a greater financial outlay and a more ambitious purpose than any that hitherto engaged his care. To Mr. William Young, the poet-dramatist, author of "Pendragon," falls the honor of this enviable attention. In his new and semi-historical tragic drama, "Ganelon," Mr. Barrett thinks he has secured the greatest play ever written for the American stage, superb in passion, magnificent in opportunities for impressive spectacular display. The plot is one of peculiar fascination and deep interest, and has its singular poetic strength in the irresistible stress of circumstances by which a Frank is forced into the same base treachery that gave his ancestor to infamy and death. The historic Ganelon, one of Charlemagne's officers, betrayed the Christians to the Saracens at Roncevalles, and for his treachery was torn to pieces by four horses. Love and revenge are the conspiring motives to the great catastrophe of

Mr. Young's play, in which the frenzied hero repeats the ancestral treason, and, repentant, slays himself for his baseness. The period and the strong national contrasts allow resplendent stage pictures, in costumes, in trappings, and in scenic surroundings, of which opportunities the fullest advantage has been taken. Some very novel devices are in readiness for trial, and one of these, presenting the illusion of a vast army in actual motion, will startle and bewilder spectators of its mechanical triumph. The music with which the play is enriched is the work of a celebrated composer, and was written in harmony with the character and spirit of the tragedy. Some idea of the magnitude of Mr. Barrett's preparation may be derived from the fact that an expense of \$30,000 has been incurred, that being the largest sum of money ever invested in a legitimate stage production in this country. "Ganelon" will be produced in Chicago October 7, and with it Mr. Barrett will begin a new professional enterprise that has as its object the annual production of a new play of sterling quality. With the exception of Edwin Forrest, Mr. Barrett is the only tragedian who has directed his genius to the upbuilding of a native drama of literary dignity and enduring character. The extent of his efforts in this direction, and the artistic success of them entitle him to preëminent distinction as the conservator and promoter of the best fruits and noblest results of the American theatre as a temple of art and mind. The name and fame of Lawrence Barrett will be the honored heritage of long posterity.



