

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

5. Glamour.

Mann, Klaus

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G l a m o u r .

(Rachel, Sarah Bernhardt, and others.)

Neither Cleopatra, lovely Lady of Egypt, nor Aspasia, the intelligent beauty of Athens, were in the habit of travelling. The great women of the Italian Renaissance hardly ever left the towns or provinces ruled by their husbands or lovers, and Madame Pompadour believed that the world was dull outside the Court of France. Imposing as was the influence of these grandes dames of the past, their sphere was somewhat limited.

Actresses, of course, always travelled like the gipsies, they moved about constantly in their green waggons, and respectable people used to hide their silver spoons and golden watches whenever the notorious comedians arrived. In the beginning of the 19th. century, however, the situation began to change. The prosperous period of flourishing capitalism commercialized the glamour of the stage, the attraction of beautiful women. A new type of business man, of gambler and exploiter developed: the theatrical agent, the great manager and impresario. And he discovered a gigantic new market: the United States of America.

Europe produced the genius, but America paid for it. The poets and courtesans, the composers, actresses and dancers won their glory in Paris, Vienna, and London, their dollars in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The wealthy young continent hired anyone who had anything to sell, having to offer as a prime attraction, the magic transformation of fame into the more solid substance of gold. Till through the 19th. century beautiful women made the pilgrimage from Europe to the shores of the New World - a motley yet homogeneous crowd; well-advertised graces, highly-paid goddesses, adorning the prosaic landscape of a continent inhabited

by hard working people.

One of the first of these decorative pilgrims was called by her admirers The Smile of Her Century. Fanny Elssler was the last passion of an aging grandseigneur and conservative statesman, Friedrich von Gentz, who belonged to the intimate circle of Prince Metternich and had the reputation of being one of the wittiest and most unfaithful cavaliers of his period. In the case of graceful Fanny Elssler, however, this intellectual Don Juan meant it seriously when he said: "You are the only one I have ever really loved..." She left him, and there were persistent rumours that she sacrificed her elderly wooer for the sake of the adolescent Duke of Reichstadt, Napoleon's son, who was educated in Austria under the dubious auspices of Prince Metternich. This wily diplomat and intriguer deliberately promoted the flirtation between the lovely dancer and the youthful Eagle, calculating that the latter might forget, in her tender arms, his nostalgia and, what was more important, his ambitions toward the heritage of his imperial father. Gentz himself acted as the procurer in this diabolic plot - which, fortunately, was destroyed by Fanny. For she finally revealed to the Duke his glorious past, concealed from him by Metternich, and became, in her turn, a passionate adherent of the Napoleonic cause. So the story runs, at any rate, in Alexandre Dumas' novel Les Mohicans de Paris, with Fanny appearing as Rosenha Engel, and Edmond Rostand drew on the same romantic invention in L'Aiglon. The simple truth is that the Duke of Reichstadt never spoke to Fanny Elssler.

She hardly needed sentimental publicity of this sort. For all the connoisseurs of that period agree that she was a first rate dancer with an appealing and original personality. Rahel Varnhagen

the highly cultured friend of the German romanticists, was among the first to discover Fanny's charms and talent. She wrote Friedrich Gentz, after having seen Mlle. Elssler in Berlin: "She is absolutely perfect in her art." Later, when she had become the celebrated prima ballerina of the Paris Opéra, she was praised, above all, by Théophile Gautier who immortalized her in a charming Portrait published in the Figaro. Nevertheless in the year from autumn 1838 to autumn 1839, her star began to pale, though not yet obviously enough to prevent the American agents from making her flattering offers. She signed a contract in October 1839, and arrived at New York on May 3, 1840. In a happy letter to Théophile Gautier she described her first success at the Park Theatre.

She had intended to tour the United States only for a few weeks, and she stayed more than two years. She was delighted with America because the Americans were delighted with her. Sometimes she asked herself: "Why? Why do they love me so much? Why do they cheer me, praise me, celebrate me, these strange Americans?..." In Paris, as she knew only too well, people were already becoming just a little bit tired of her, but in New York and Philadelphia, in Baltimore, Boston, Richmond and New Orleans she was deluged with applause. The enthusiasm caught on even in remote, half-civilized places such as Cincinnati. Her pas, her capers were greeted with delight in Albany and Utica, she enjoyed herself enormously in Havana, and the New York and Boston public were still wildly in love with her on her return. Whatever she did was a source of admiration: whether she made her royal promenades in a magnificent carriage drawn by four elegant horses (this of course, she would perhaps remind herself, was her agent's idea...); whether she

danced La Sylphide or La Rose Animee or La Bayadere. Her modest repertoire consisted of eight ballets, and every one was a hit. Opulent dinners were given with sweet and endless speeches in her honour. In Philadelphia she was feted by the German colony, in New Orleans by the French. Everywhere she was the center of attraction and the Courrier des Etats-Unis even went so far as to inform its readers that her dancing had stirred up a veritable revolution. This may have seemed to Fanny a courteous exaggeration. Still she could only be amazed and enraptured at the receptions given her in all the salons of the country, even in Boston with its grim and somewhat frightening reputation. In Washington the President of the United States, Mr. Van Buren, honored her recital with his presence, he showed himself most gracious, and on July 15, 1850 - a solemn and unforgettable date! - he gave a party for her at the White House. The gentlemen of the press were smitten too and sent charming reports to the New York Herald, the Morning Herald, and the gallant Courrier des Etats Unis. Only that notorious sheet, The Corsair, tried to intrude a malicious note but public opinion was too definitely in Fanny's favor and the attempt fell flat. People were moved when she recommended, from the stage, the setting up of a fund for aging actors and even gave substantial sums for the cause, not to speak of the amount that the modest Fanny managed to pile up for herself: 742,000 francs, with all expenses paid. She reflects on the wonder and envy of her friends in Paris and Vienna, and thinks wistfully of the fast approaching time when she will be an elderly actress herself. Perhaps, with all that money, she should buy a palace in Baltimore and a theatre in London, as Mlle. Celeste had done after her successful tour of this country. She was a

mediocre chorus girl from the Opera whom Fanny and her circle had never taken seriously, considering her a greedy poule de luxe rather than a good dancer, and it was strange and a little depressing to remember that she too had been admired in America. One wondered whether these delightful Yankees really knew, after all, the difference between a true artiste and an attractive dilétante....Still, Fanny had had a wonderful time here, though now her thoughts were turning again to the Paris boulevards and the Cathedral of old St. Stephen in Vienna. Yes, it would be a mistake to buy a palace in Baltimore. She wanted to go home.

And the lovely, childish and intelligent Smile of her Century smiled goodbye to her many American friends.

Was snobbism the only reason why Americans fell in love with that lovely creature, la gloire de l'Autriche? But ordinary people were fond of her; she was popular with the masses. Fanny's French biographer, Auguste Erhard, calls the phenomenon of her American triumph " a curious chapter in the psychology of crowds." She brought something that seemed very rare, very precious to Americans, something she carried in her weightless feet, at her fingertips, in her dark, smiling eyes. A certain magic atmosphere lay about her, the flavour of Vienna, the Imperial Theatre, the Hofburg, the melodies of Mozart, Haydn, Schubert: all this excitingly intermingled with a faint Parisian perfume, light and at the same time sad, a melancholy and joy which the New World had lost, or not yet achieved....The young nation with so slim a tradition of its own fell in love with the imposing background of this graceful, naive creature: Prince Matternich's diabolic courtesy; the tragic splendor of young Reichstadt's solitude; Baron von Gentz, composing

biting refutations of revolutionary principles and glowing love letters to beloved Fanny; brilliant Théophile Gautier, using the respectable newspaper Figaro as a winged and gallant postillon d'amour for the same courted belle; the couloirs and dressing rooms of the Paris Opéra, full of tremendously wealthy and very lustful elderly gentlemen, kissing with an obscene little giggle the muscular yet tender feet of exhausted ballerinas, while in the background the orchestra plays an enchanting tune by Rossini...Oh, dubious but irresistible charm of that Old World, experienced in crime and love; a world burdened with guilt and spirit, and at the same time wonderfully light; oh, world of songs, sins, and skeptical wisdom - it was its sweet though slightly putrid perfume that Fanny Elssler carried in her bags and clothes - and her own private legend was charmingly interwoven with the great legend of European glamour, the colorful, gay decay of those ancient cities...

People in New York and Richmond, Chicago and Albany paid enormous sums for European legends, especially for smiling legends with pretty legs.

A beautiful woman has an affair with a ruling king; the matter develops to a public scandal - in consequence of which the king loses his crown, the attractive lady runs away, and an American agent promptly offers her a contract. The name of the agent is Edward Willis, the lady called herself Countess Landsfeld but was better known under the name of Lola Montez; the sovereign involved in this romance was King Ludwig I of Bavaria. He was sixty one years old when he saw Lola Montez dancing, in the Munich opera, and openly declared: "I do not know how - I am bewitched..."

She was almost thirty at that time, and an international

celebrity - " in the zenith of her evil fame", as her contemporaries put it. She was of mixed race - born at Limerick, Ireland, as the daughter of an English-Indian officer and a very beautiful mother of Spanish descent -, and she had led a restless, adventurous life. Even her most malignant enemies admitted that she was fatally attractive - while even her most ardent admirers agreed she was a miserable actress and a mediocre dancer. One of them described her as follows:

"Lola Montez was an enchantress. There was about her something provoking and voluptuous which drew you. Her skin was white, her wavy hair like the tendrils of the woodbine, her eyes tameless and wild, her mouth like a budding pomegranate. Add to that a dashing figure, charming feet, and perfect grace. Unluckily, as a dancer she had no talent."

She had a natural weakness for sovereigns and celebrities, and those were in turn fascinated by her as rabbits by a snake. Among her more intimate friends were Tsar Nicholas I and Friedrich Liszt, " the eagle in the soutane". She was a triumph in Paris - the gaudy, effulgent Paris of Louis Philippe. Alexandre Dumas (father) and Théophile Gautier declared that she was " beautiful as a tigress"; her lover, M. Dujarier, had to fight a duel because of her, and was killed. No wonder that the reactionary Bavarian ministers were bitterly opposed to the romantic escapade of their ruler. They openly called Senora Montez "the greatest calamity with which Bavaria could be afflicted." The Jesuits thought her an emissary of the Freemasons. A considerable political activity developed against the " dangerous adventuress" who had become not only a countess but actually the uncrowned Queen of Bavaria, thanks to her royal lover. Especially in Vienna she was persona ingrata, the Ultramontanes loathed her, Metternich regarded her

as a serious political enemy. She had her secret agents and correspondents in various courts of Europe. She was active and shrewd, though not quite shrewd enough. Her position grew more and more precarious. The conservatives considered her a seditious liberal and secret republican and she was, at the same time, violently attacked by the revolutionary students. Finally in 1848 the spirit of rebellion broke into the open and the royal favorite was swept away. She fled to Switzerland - and six weeks later King Ludwig I of Bavaria had to renounce his crown.

Mr. Willis was firmly convinced that the moving and dramatic romance of Lola's life would fascinate the American public. Said the agent: "It's a deal, Ma'am." And the Anglo-Spanish beauty sailed from Southampton, on November 20, 1851. On the same boat, the Humboldt, another famous passenger was crossing the Atlantic; an ardent, militant patriot from one of Europe's smaller nations: we may meet him later. His arrival in New York stirred up still more sensation than the lovely appearance of Lola Montez. Yet the reporters by no means overlooked her. In the New York Tribune of December 6, 1851, we find the following dispatch:

"She (the Countess Landsfeld) states that many bad things have been said about her by the American press, yet she is not the woman she has been represented to be: if she were, her admirers, she believes, would be still more numerous. She expresses herself fearful that she will not be properly considered in New York; but hopes that a discriminating public will judge her after having seen her, and not before."

Lola gave the discriminating public plenty of opportunities to form a direct impression of her personality. She organized receptions to which anyone was admitted, provided that he was able and willing to pay a dollar. Moreover, she presented her own

adventures on the stage. The play was written by a certain C.P.T. Ware, and was entitled Lola in Munich. It was a rather shameless exhibition, indeed, with Ludwig I, the royal lover, appearing on the stage, and Lola's foes, the reactionary ministers, in the role of hypocritical villains. Her calculation that American audiences would be happy to swallow this sort of dramatized gossip is highly revealing of her own character - and of her opinion of the American public. Unfortunately, however, her vulgar speculations proved to be well founded. The show was a success; she performed it at the New York Broadway Theatre, in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre, and later in New Orleans. It was exactly as if the Duchess of Windsor should tour the United States, in 1940, starring in a musical comedy entitled Wally in London....

On her way from New Orleans to San Francisco, Lola made friends with an editor of the San Francisco Whig. His name was Patrick Purdy Hull, and she lost no time in marrying him. He was her third husband, the first two having been insignificant gentlemen, Mr. Thomas James and Mr. George Traffold Heald. The matrimonial idyll with the Whig editor, however, did not last very long. True to her past Lola betrayed her husband with a German physician named Adler - who was thereupon killed in a hunting accident. She suddenly found herself quite alone, without any male companion to fight duels or risk a kingdom for her. The home she made for herself in Grass Valley, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, was perhaps the first she had not shared with a man. As a substitute she kept a little army of animals; pet dogs and birds, goats and sheep, hens, turkeys, and even several pigs.

A mysterious law, however, seemed to dominate her life and

prevent her from settling down as other women do. She was meteoric, erratic by nature, and it was not her fate to spend many happy years in a cozy Californian bungalow. Her house burned down; again she was footloose.

When she came back to the United States - after an adventurous tour around the world, many new scandals, and some new successes - she had nothing to offer to surpass her old Munich sensation of 1848. She acted in various plays - The Eton Boys, The Follies of a Night etc. - ;but Lola in Munich was still her best attraction. Yet it was already turning somewhat stale. Lola realized that the prime of youth had passed. She often felt very tired, remorseful and depressed. "Men have disappointed me," she declared, as men were now a little bored with her. Consequently she tried her luck with supernatural beings. She became a believer in spiritualism.

The ghosts, if not the theatrical agents, advised her to abandon the stage and to begin her second career as a lecturer. She delivered her first public speech at the Hope Chapel, 720 Broadway, on February 3, 1858. Her lectures were very scholarly and rather dull. They were written for her by the Reverend C. Chauncy Burr. For the countess had renounced her interest in magic mysteries, and had become an orthodox adherent of the Methodists. She talked on Beautiful Women, Gallantry, The Heroines of History, The Comic Aspects of Love, Wits and Women in Paris, and Romanism which she considered an almost diabolic principle. She quoted classic parables, Aristotle, the Troubadours, and Benjamin Franklin. The speech about the Comic Aspect of Love was especially depressing. What she had to say concerning Wits and Women in Paris, sounded rather dreary as well. When

she discussed Beautiful Women, she made so bold as to tell her American audiences that "the palm of beauty" must be awarded to English womanhood. She also declared that the Yankees were too mercantile and practical to entertain the old spirit of gallantry. Her speech on Romanism amounted to a rather clumsy attack against the Catholic Church, closing, under the inspiration of the Reverend C.C. Burr, with this somewhat surprising conclusion:

"Well, if that little party which came out in the Mayflower had been Catholics instead of Puritans, if they had brought with them the spirit of Rome instead of the Reformation, and if those who followed them to these shores, had brought the same religion, you would not have been over ten millions of people in this day; then the world would have had neither Steamboats nor Telegraphs. These things are too fast for Rome. She looks back...America does not yet recognize how much she owes to the Protestant principle. It has given the world the four greatest facts of modern times - steamboats, railroads, telegraphs, and the American Republic."

During her last trip to Europe, in the fall of 1858, she lectured in Ireland and England on the Distinction between the English and the American Character. She informed her audience at St. James Hall, in London, that "America looks to the future for her greatness, England to the past," - which is undeniably correct though hardly very original.

The English audiences seemed rather disappointed in her personality. Where was her famous Amazonian audacity? Here was "simply a good-looking lady in the bloom of womanhood, attired in a plain black dress, with easy, unrestrained manners, and speaking earnestly and distinctly, with the slightest touch of a foreign accent that might belong to any language from Bavarian to Irish."

The remark about the "bloom of womanhood" was sheer courtesy on the part of the English critic. For Lola Montez, at that time,

was no longer young, as she was herself quite aware. She considered herself a Magdalen, her exhausted heart filled with the repentance of sin. She noted in her diary:

"What would I not give to have my terrible and fearful experiences given as an awful warning to such natures as my own! (And I have known all that the world has to give - all!)

Lord, have mercy on the weary wanderer, and grant me all I beseech to Thee! Oh, give me a meek and lowly heart!"

The weary wanderer returned to America. But she was hankering now not for earthly wealth and fame, but only for the salvation of her sinful soul. She strove, honestly and sincerely, for "The Good" in which she firmly and naively believed. But where to find it? ...She abandoned her Methodist connection and embraced the Episcopal Church of America. Her spiritual adviser, Dr. F.L. Hawks, who frequently saw her at the Astoria Sanatorium during her last disease, admired the faithful patience with which she bore the dreadful torments of her partial paralysis and the final collapse.

"In the course of a long experience as a Christian minister -" he stated - "I do not think I ever saw deeper penitence and humility...if ever a repentant soul loathed past sin, I believe hers did."

She died on January 17, 1861 - and surely was well received by the Lord, either Catholic, Methodist, or Episcopal. The Omniscient one did not need to ask her: Do you speak the truth, my child? For He knows that in a poor human heart such as hers, falsehood and truth are strangely intermingled. Her striving for a meek and lowly heart: was it a last desperate attempt to be impressive, now that her fading beauty no longer worked? It may be that her religious conversion was influenced in the beginning by frivolous speculation of this sort. Yet, with final decay and death coming closer, her fear and faith grew stronger, and became sincere.

Emotional, irrational human beings such as Lola Montez, the adventuress, cannot clearly grasp the difference between trickery and truth. On her first visit to America, she was shameless in her flattery of American patriotism, the vanity of this young nation. Did she believe all those beautiful phrases? She praised America because she was finished in Europe, and was eager to make money in this country. Yet the experienced lady-friend of sovereigns was perhaps more honest than she herself knew. Certainly she was closer to objective truth than she realized, when she called America "this stupendous asylum of the world's unfortunates, and last refuge of the victims of tyranny and wrongs of the Old World. God grant that it may ever stand as it is now, the noblest column of liberty that was ever reared beneath the arch of heaven."

Such a statement sounds like a cliché in this day and age. Yet we should not forget that it was more original and even daring in the middle of the last century, especially if formulated by the former mistress of a ruling king. It was not yet taken for granted in those days that anyone with a certain reputation sooner or later must make his compulsory trip to the United States. In the Forties and Fifties a journey to the "other world" was still considered a risk and rather an eccentric adventure.

When Rachel, the great French tragédienne, announced her plan of visiting the U.S., tout Paris was startled. The witty chronicler of that memorable trip, Léon Beauvallet, describes the perplexity that prevailed in France over Rachel's daring enterprise.

"Rachel in America!

This news astonished at first; excited afterward.

Such a whim was not to be believed. One could almost pardon all her old escapades and understand that of St. Petersburg and Moscow; but a voyage to the other world! Ah! That indeed went beyond the limits of a joke, and the public began to grumble in earnest!

If it had merely grumbled: but it was not content with that!

It was as jealous as a tiger, and wished at any price to avenge itself on this ungrateful Rachel, whom it loved so much, and who again betrayed it! And for whom, grand Dieu! For savages!"

(Léon Beauvallet, Rachel and the New World, 1856.)

Elise Rachel Félix, dite Rachel, had had a very hard time before she gained success. Destined to become the most illustrious French actress before Sarah Bernhardt, she began her career by singing and begging in the streets with her sister Sarah. Daughter of a German Jew who had settled at Lyons and naturalized in France after a long period of tedious wandering, she had to struggle and to go through many a humiliation, even when a few connoisseurs had already discovered her genius. Her voice was considered too harsh. She did not correspond to the rather stale ideal which the conservative audience of the Comédie Française cherished of a classic tragédienne. Phedre and Mary Stuart with a raucous voice? "Ca, alors - c'est trop fort..." grumbled the French bourgeois. They also felt that Rachel's unrestrained gestures expressed more authentic passion than the sacred tradition of the classic theatre allowed. It was almost shocking. But it was magnificent too. Gradually Rachel began to win her long fight with a stubborn public. She was Phedre, was Jeanne d'Arc; was the tragic figure, the lofty heroine - and her voice was the mighty, sweet and majestic voice of Racine and Corneille, rejuvenated, transformed, more giving, more enchanting than ever.

This was victory, and it was not confined to France. The cool English public was also spellbound by Rachel's art. And now, the new test, the thrilling chance of proving, once more, the overwhelming power of her personality - : America ...

When Rachel arrived, in 1856, she was only thirty four years old. Yet she neither felt nor looked like a young woman. Her delicate health was undermined by the hardships of a miserable youth, and the permanent struggles that followed.

She was impressed but at the same time horrified by the amazing city of New York. In Paris it was a delight to stroll along the banks of the Seine; in New York it seemed almost impossible to walk on foot, because of the poor paving. " It is unspeakably tiring to walk even for a single quarter of an hour on these sharp, cutting stones, she complained. And the whole city looked like " a gigantic handbill of a mountebank company." The noise! the ugly, glaring colours! - especially on Broadway, " the Boulevard des Italiens of this place." She found it swarming with quacks, dentists, breeders of learned dogs, exhibitors of branded negresses, wild beast-tamers. One fancied oneself in the fair of an immense village. What a hubbub! what tumult! Cries and laughter, songs and oaths; the yells of the newsboys mixed with the roar of carriages; the trumpets of the charlatans confounded with the bells on the mules who drag eternally on the thousands of railroads which furrow the streets.

And the food was appalling. " Chocolate a la grease, milk a la sheep's brains... Oh! Paris dinners! Where are you!"

No rest, even at night. The delicate artiste was constantly

harassed by mosquitos, " frightful wasps, gigantic crickets...It is the Walpurgis night of the insects!"

All these inconveniences, however, would have been bearable, and Rachel would certainly have accepted them without complaint, if only her success had been satisfactory. But her début at the Metropolitan Theatre was disappointing. The French troupes presented two plays, Les Droits de L'Homme by Prénaray, and Corneille's tragedy Les Horaces. The applause came from the numerous Frenchmen who attended the first performance. "As to the Americans", M. Beauvallet remarks, " one thing is certain, they did not understand a word in the entire piece. During these two acts, a time which seems to them two centuries, these good New-Yorkers were delightfully bored."

Didn't they realize that Rachel's presence in New York meant something like the appearance of a goddess among mortal beings?

"Rachel in America! Why, the Indian tribes themselves should have talked it over in their savage forests! And instead of that, they receive her just as they have received ten, twenty other actresses! - What am I saying! Jenny Lind was received like a queen. And yet, does Jenny Lind's talent, great as it may be, surpass Rachel's?"

The idea of Jenny Lind's overwhelming American successes constantly irritated and angered the tragédienne: she felt a sharp pang when she thought of it. Her friends tried to comfort her. But it was hardly consoling to be told: " What do you expect? Tragedy is not in the American line. These people are business men who lead a hard life, and at night they are tired. What they want to see are gay, pleasant spectacles which make them forget the labors of the day - pantomimes, comic songs, equestrian scenes, feats of strength, pretty dances and pretty danseuses especially, they ask nothing more."

But la grande Rachel unfortunately was neither a pretty dan-

seuse nor a Swedish Nightingale. She was Racine's Phedre, and she was Adrienne Lecouvreur - a role especially written for her by M. Scribe. She presented it at the Metropolitan Theatre, and the audience perked up a little as Rachel and the other ladies of the cast paraded in this play in all their diamonds. She also showed Victor Hugo's Angelo and Mary Stuart by Lebrun. The audiences remained respectfully cool, and the papers polite: the New York Herald even published a review in French - a charming gesture which was very much appreciated by the vedette. Yet she had to admit that most of her ardent hopes were cruelly frustrated.

People in Boston apparently had a little more understanding for the solemn beauty of classic French drama. But the designation of "the Modern Athens", attributed by Americans to that city, was, in Rachel's opinion, a euphemistic exaggeration. When the French company arrived, Boston was in the midst of elections, which was not a little disturbing.

"What a host of placards, letters, bulletins, bills, and catchwords! The naïveté of the candidates is truly admirable, in having their portraits painted in distemper, on huge transparencies, to captivate the voters. Do you understand that? Their portraits!"

The Parisian visitors were annoyed not only by the elections, but also by the presence of American actors in Boston. One of them, Miss Eliza Logan, even went so far as to star in an American version of Adrienne Lecouvreur - with the name misspelled "Lacouvreur" by the American producers. Rachel was highly irritated by the competition as well as by the American habit of distorting foreign names. Why - she asked - was Marguerite Gautier, the tragic heroine of La Dame aux Camélias, constantly and obstinately called "Camille" by

the Americans? And why must they persist in referring to Alexandre Dumas (father) as the author of that play when it was written by Alexandre Dumas (son). As for the American actors who dared to play in the same city with which Rachel was honoring her presence, her judgment was not always so reserved and diplomatic as that of M. Beauvallet who wrote:

"We must permit ourselves to judge the American artists, whose language we do not understand. All we can say about them is, that they produce an enormous effect on their own public. Miss Eliza Fogan, Mr. Keach, and Mr. Warren, all three enjoy a prodigious success.

...There were many features and peculiarities of American life which the visitors considered perplexing or even repulsive.

"Do you know, for instance, in what way Americans applaud the finest things and greatest artists? They whistle. With the Americans, to whistle, to yell, is to applaud.....It is hard to believe the pass to which American impertinence often reaches. At railroad stations as in hotel saloons, it is not unusual to see them, with dirty shoes, and hat on head, brutally stretched on the seats of sofas... It is the custom of every American to have continually in his hand a pen or jack knife, and to whittle famously at the arm of his chair; this is his distinction, his occupation, and his amusement, for it kills both time and tragedy."

"Poor Rachel! Poor child!" - This sympathetic outcry came from the other side of the Atlantic; it was M. Jules Janin, a distinguished critic, who discussed in the Journal des Débats the topic of " Mlle. Rachel and Tragedy in the United States." His article made a rather unfavorable impression on those American " shop-keepers and sons of shop-keepers" whom the Parisian journalist despised. It was the principle of Democracy itself which he blamed for the failure of the tragédienne. How could those greedy plebeians ever grasp the aristocratic charm of Racine's verses? M. Janin noted with unconcealed disgust that the French actress had been asked to sing the "Marseillaise" in public - " that horrible song of exile,

of murder and the scaffold."

This article was widely read in New York, and hardly improved the position of "poor Rachel." Yet she went on performing, first at the Academy of Music, later in Niblo's Garden, on Broadway. She gave thirty one performances in New York and earned 97,395 dollars - which was not so bad though not really impressive if compared with the income of Jenny Lind.

At her last appearance Rachel recited a poem, written for her by M. de Trobiaud and translated into English by an American named Bayard. The ode Rachel to America, ended with the following touching though not quite convincing words:

"No future, from the memory to-day,
Shall dim the picture which I bear away -
Whose charm will follow, where my steps depart,
To guide my efforts and to cheer my heart:
And this is glory henceforth I pursue -
Since you adopt me, to be worthy you."

After this lyrical outburst she left with her company for Philadelphia. They went on touring the country which failed to grasp the sublime message they offered. They made a great many observations and were frequently shocked. Rachel's chronicler noted - in order to give us "an idea of what is understood by democracy on the other side of the water" :

"In the State of New York, in Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts, and in many other northern States, where the Republican Party is in power, slavery has been and remains abolished. Well, it is precisely in those States that colored people are prohibited from entering a place of amusement. In the Slave States, the negroes have a reserved gallery in every theatre. What eternal contradictions! What the deuce can a man take seriously in this country?"

In Charleston, however, where "one cannot walk without setting his foot on a negro", they found the colored people "very polite, always laughing,and they do not seem unhappy at all."

The one who really suffered in Charleston was the French vedette. She was exhausted, and sick, and she finally collapsed in Havana. The Rachel company was disbanded; the gloomy Odyssey of French tragedy in America had reached its end. Beauvallet informed his friends in Paris under the date of February 1856: "Rachel remains an invalid, on the island of Cuba, although not so ill as is reported..."

The severe cold, however, which she had caught traveling on "those impossible American trains" turned out to be more dangerous than even the most pessimistic observers had foreseen. It ended in a consumption from which she died, on January 3, 1858, hardly two years after the closing of her American tour.

Rachel's dreary experiences in "the other world" were considered, for many years to come, a discouraging example for other French actresses. European arrogance failed to realize that the great tragédienne was partly responsible herself for the failure of her undertaking. For those "barbaric Americans" were sensitive enough to feel that the celebrated visitor despised them. They understood that M. Janin's insulting article in the Journal des Débats was more honest and more revealing of the real European attitude than any flattering poem the actress may have recited. Distrust and misunderstanding were mutual. Many of the traveling European artists regarded America as a still half-colonial country, useful chiefly as a gold-mine for themselves. While they scorned the poor manners of Yankee audiences, the Americans, in their turn, laughed at the pretentiousness and greed of their distinguished guests. The surprising fact is that, in spite of concealed or unconcealed tensions of

this kind, some of the European actresses did enjoy a genuine and tremendous popularity in the United States.

The most beloved of them all was Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale. Her American concert tour, cleverly prepared by Phileas Taylor Barnum, the "greatest showman of the world", assumed the character of a national event. It was the first time in history that a serious singer had been advertised and presented on a lavish scale. One may say that thanks to Jenny Lind pure vocal music was discovered as an object for big business enterprise...It was an entirely new racket, and "mighty Barnum" did an amazing job.

Jenny Lind's first recital in Castle Garden, in 1850, was a topic of conversation in New York society for years. People were deeply impressed - not only, and perhaps not above all, by Jenny's voice and smile, but also by P.T. Barnum's genius as a manager. He was a veritable Midas. He had discovered Joice Heth, the reputed colored nurse of Washington, as a stage attraction, and he was responsible for the world-wide glory of Tom Thumb, the most appalling and ingenious of all pygmies. He made a fortune with his Happy Family of learned birds and animals, and another through his management of Jenny Lind.

The risk involved was considerable. Mlle. Lind demanded \$1000 for each concert. Barnum had to deposit \$187,000 in advance with her London bankers - an imposing sum which he raised in Wall Street. His business friends thought him crazy. Did he have any conception what he was in for? He was headed straight for bankruptcy. Why he couldn't possibly take in more than \$3000.00 at a concert --- But mighty Barnum replied with a shrewd smile that

even if he were to lose all his money, he would still be proud to have introduced to the United States a lady whose vocal powers were absolutely unique and whose character was sheer goodness, simplicity, and charity combined. The stockbrokers of course did not know that Barnum had never heard Jenny Lind sing. He signed the astounding contract. His total income from Jenny Lind's American concert tour amounted to 720,000 dollars. Wall Street, as usual, had been wrong.

The arrival of the Swedish Nightingale caused an excitement rarely equaled in the history of America. When she appeared on the platform, the enthusiasm of the audience reached an alarming degree. 5000 people rose to their feet like one man. Her first song was almost drowned in the tempest of acclaim. The silenced nightingale stood helplessly in the midst of the tumult, mouth ajar, with spread arms imploring her cruel admirers to allow her finally to sing ...

People paid fantastic prices to hear her. It was said that in Providence someone had paid \$ 600 for a single seat. This was an exceptional case, to be sure; yet even average citizens were willing to sacrifice considerable portions of their savings to hear this musical phenomenon. Mr. G.G. Foster remarked in his book "New York by Gas Light" (1850):

"It is evident to us that in respect to the concerts of Miss Lind all our present notions of prices must be swept away."

Women wore Jenny Lind gloves, Jenny Lind bonnets, coiffures, shawls and skirts; people bought chairs, sofas, pianos " a la Jenny Lind." The entire nation was impressed by her dignity - she used no rouge -, by her generosity - at least half a dozen of her hundred

and thirty-seven concerts were benefits -, by her charming frankness, her serious, religious mind. Her magnificence as Donna Anna, in Mozart's Don Giovanni and in Meyerbeer's opera "Les Huguenots" was a matter of general knowledge. Yet she abandoned the stage, influenced by an English bishop, Edward Stanley, who considered the theatre sinful. The composer Felix Mendelsohn encouraged her to sing in oratorios. She had a definite predilection for the sons of Israel, which she proved by constantly singing the music of Mendelsohn and Meyerbeer, and by marrying Mr. Otto Goldschmidt from Hamburg. This happened in Boston, on February 5, 1852. Before the wedding, however, she drew up a detailed settlement which guaranteed her exclusive control over her fortune. For she was an astute business woman, notwithstanding all her much-publicized kindness. The London Punch - whose editors were especially devoted to her - jested in a "natural history of the Swedish Nightingale."

"She is the most graceful of all warblers...Her nest is in the wide world's heart, even though the said nest is feathered with the finest bank paper, carrying the very heavy heaviest figures..."

Her nest was also in the hearts of the American people - to use the poetical style of Punch. Even she, however, the well established, charming and beloved Jenny was occasionally the target of naughty jokes, and even this lofty personality was not always spared by American wit. The public, naive and uncultured as it was sometimes reacted against the appalling lack of taste in Barnum's clamorous publicity. There were amusing documents to the effect that many people were irked by the big showman's quackery, and refused to swallow all of his great or petty humbug without stint. One particularly malicious and witty observer of cultural affairs was the

author of Barnum's Parnassus, a poem which appeared in 1850 and was announced as "being - confidential disclosures of the Prize Committee of the Jenny Lind Song. With specimens of the leading American Poets in the happiest Effulgence of their Genius. Respectfully dedicated to the American Eagle."

A duet between Jenny and her mighty manager begins with the following verses:

"Sing, Jenny Lind, for Barnum hears
And listens, too, while both his ears
Drink in the vocal honey;
Sing for the credit of your name!
Sing for your transatlantic fame!
And Barnum's ready money!

She sang, sweet Jenny, long and well!
They piled the stage with fresh bouquets,
She curtsied, and the curtain fell,
And hid her from their raptured gaze.
She disappeared, but Barnum well
The matter ponders in his mind,
And in a fortnight more, the spell
Is woven, and at her hotel
The contract sealed and signed.

Both:
Whatever fall, we stand secure,
Whatever chance, our cards are sure,
For ever shall our fame endure,
For who than we have higher claims,
We spread before the public eye
Two of the few immortal names,
That were not born to die."

Another spiteful number presents Miss Lind on the stage,
"hair torsade a la Grecque, robe of crepe lisse over pink brocade;
she advances to the foot-lights, surveys the audience, and then retreating with an expression of surprise and dismay, breaks out to Mr. Barnum in an Aside:

Such people I never have met
In any respectable place;
To sing to this Plebeian set
Will be an eternal disgrace;

In vain every face I've been reading,
To try and discover, somehow,
The first faintest trace of high breeding,
Or an aristocratic eyebrow.
Ah me! I protest I must shut
My eyes and my senses as well -
There's a man who is eating a nut
With a yellowish sort of a shell..."

There was an undertone of scornful laughter to the constant chorus of admiration accompanying the American tour of the Swedish Nightingale. Those ugly dissonances, however, were to be forgotten by future generations, who recalled only the praises so lavishly given to that matchless genius of song.

Many melodies were sung and were forgotten as time went on - martial songs, and rebellious songs, and the eternal, monotonous, hopeless, and inspiring song of love. There were screams and the grand, insane gestures of despair, and not only in the theatres of Paris and New York. Those celebrated women, the arrogant goddesses of publicity - maniacs of selfishness, intoxicated by their own glamour - hardly realized how many things were happening in earnest, on both sides of the Atlantic, while they sang their great arias, recited their roles, showed their lovely legs - on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, the monarchs fought one another, and made alliances, and broke them, and had to face revolutions. Germany was unified, so was Italy, and France was ruled by a King, and by Presidents, and by an emperor whom they called le petit, and by generals, and then by presidents again. In the United States, meanwhile, one president followed another with reassuring regularity. J.K. Polk or Zachary Taylor, M. Fillmore, Franklin Pierce or

James Buchanan - : it made little difference to those highly-paid graces who represented the charm and glamour of the Old World. American problems and developments were not in their line; they ignored the gradual change of America's social structure. They read in the papers: A new Boom in America! - and they thought: "A contract!..." They read: Panic in Wall Street !! - and preferred to make their next trip to St. Petersburg or Cairo rather than to the U.S. They read: Secession! The Union is dissolved!! - and it meant nothing to them. A Civil War, merely because of those silly negroes who didn't go to the theatres anyway! No more than most people they could not grasp what was at stake in that Civil War...But they understood that America was developing very nicely, in spite of her mysterious and rather dull domestic upheavals. There was money again, plenty of it. Those Americans - the impresarios said in Paris, London, and Berlin - were crazy for fulture and ready to pay for that luxury. In short, the United States seemed on the way to becoming a fairly civilized country. It was not so long before that New York hotels had warned their clients: "No more than five to sleep in one bed! No boots allowed in bed!" But these barbarisms, it seemed, were going out. Experienced travelers reported that the big hotels on Broadway were almost as clean and respectable as a provincial French inn...

Yet the friends and admirers of Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt were startled and even terrified when their idol informed them that she had decided to venture on an American tour. Had she forgotten the gloomy story of Rachel? But Sarah emphatically declared that she did not like to be compared with anyone, not even with Rachel; besides, she had une envie folle de voyager; to see other things, to

breathe another air ...Her friends nodded respectfully.

All of them knew, of course, as well as she did, that the main reason for her sudden decision was a serious quarrel with the management of the Comédie Française. M. Perrin, the powerful chief of that institute, had protested against her disturbing eccentricities. He disapproved of her many and exhausting hobbies. Her passion for painting and sculpture, M. Perrin felt, was likely to distract her from her theatrical work. Did the stage not offer her enough laurels to rest on? She was too ambitious, and had a craze for originality. There was, for instance, that wild habit of hers of flying around in balloons. She adored champagne luncheons at an altitude of 8,500 feet - a very unusual sort of fun which her boss considered undignified as well as dangerous. He finally lost his temper when Sarah's pilot friend had a minor accident and landed late at night in the suburbs, from where the diva had to take a slow train back to the city. The situation ended with a rupture and even a trial between the actress and the management of the Théâtre Français.

This was a serious matter and rather a disastrous situation, even for Sarah Bernhardt. The agent Jarrett, who had already made her two offers for American tours, timed the third one very cleverly - three days after her resignation from the State Theatre. She accepted, and M. Jarrett promptly informed the American impresario Henry Abbey, who sailed immediately for Paris. Neither Sarah nor her managers wanted to lose time. She was in a hurry to leave Paris...

Everything went very rapidly; a few hasty though effective farewell-scenes; a few kisses for Maurice, her little son with the unknown father; some outbursts of fury about malicious articles

ridiculing her voyage - and she embarked , on October 15, 1880, on the vessel Amérique. She spent the first hours of the journey hysterically laughing and crying by turns in her luxurious state-room which was lavishly decorated with her initials. Finally she appeared on deck in a fantastic costume de voyage; and proceeded " to save the life" of an elderly lady who almost broke her neck by almost falling down a steep staircase. The lady turned out to be Mrs. Lincoln, the President's widow, another occasion for tears and giggles and tremendous excitement on the part of Sarah. Her life - she felt - was full of mysterious and significant surprises. For was it not an actor who had caused the President's death? And now an actress of all people prevented his mourning widow from re-joining her beloved husband in a better world...Sarah was deeply impressed by so queer and tragic a coincidence.

The American public, thanks to Mr. Abbey's shrewd propaganda, was familiar with various perplexing features of Sarah Bernhardt's amazing character and career. People expected a personage half-monstrous, half divine. Everybody knew she was extremely thin- like a ghost, a dream -, and witty New Yorkers repeated the Parisian joke about the " empty carriage" which arrives at the Comédie Française, and out gets Sarah Bernhardt...Dreadful stories circulated concerning her macabre eccentricities, her perverse and cruel tastes. She tortured her pet dogs, played with snakes and young tigers, and - worst of all - had the lugubrious habit of sleeping in a coffin. She even had herself photographed lying there - envelopped in a long, immaculate shroud, in the attitude of a corpse - eyes closed, arms crossed over her breast, decorated with white flowers, a wreath and palms, and with a candle burning on the table beside her. This was in preparation for the day when she would be placed for

her last sleep in that hard and narrow bed of ebony, lined with white satin. All this sounded sinister indeed. On the other hand, rumours attributed to her almost God-like qualities. For apparently she was able to do and to achieve anything she wanted. She was not only the greatest actress of the country but also a distinguished sculptress. Her marble group Après la Tempête attracted the attention of connoisseurs in the Paris Salon of 1876. And her voice was absolutely irresistible: it was Victor Hugo himself who had coined the poetical designation of the Golden Voice - la Voix d'Or -: the fabulous Victor Hugo, most illustrious poet of the century, who had kneeled to Sarah Bernhardt and exclaimed: "Merci! Merci!", when she acted in his play Guy Blas. He wrote verses for her on a skull, and after the first performance of his drama Hernani, honored her with these lines:

"Madame: You have been great and charming; you have moved me - me, an old fighter, and one part, when the public whom you had enchanted cheered you, I wept. This tear which I shed because of you and for you, is at your feet, where I place myself. Victor Hugo."

This eloquent little note was accompanied by a small box containing a fine chain bracelet from which hung one diamond drop.

Her fame was dazzling, irritating, stupendous. When still young she was able to say: "My celebrity has grown annoying for my enemies, a little too clamorous for my friends." And Alexandre Dumas, son, quoted one of his friends as having said on his death-bed: "I am happy to die, for at least I won't have to listen anymore to all that talk about Sarah Bernhardt..."

All details of her past and present life were puzzling and exciting. She was a Jewess by origin, and yet a faithful adherent of the Catholic Church. She was baptized only as a girl of thirteen,

and when she entered the convent of Grands-Champs, she had to abandon the name of Sarah. She was called Rosine by the religious sisters, but when she left the convent she was Sarah again.

She was merely half French - as was Rachel -, her mother being of Dutch descent; nevertheless she emphasized constantly and belligerently her feelings of French patriotism. Wherever she went, she appeared as the official emissary of France, l'ambassadrice de la Patrie, stirring up the patriotic ecstacy of French colonies all over the world. In Copenhagen, just a few months before her American tour, she insulted the Prussian Minister who tried to toast her at a gala supper. During the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, she was beside herself with chauvinism, ran an ambulance, and went so far as to refuse pity to the wounded unless they were French uniform. Before the war started, however, she had vehemently condemned it as an "infamy which protected, excused, and glorified shameful crimes." Utterances of this sort even led to a breach with a general of her acquaintance. Her mother and her pretty aunt Rosine sojourned in Germany during the war, gambling at Bad Homburg ...

People were bewildered by so many contradictions. They forgot, or failed to realize, that in an extraordinary case such as Sarah Bernhardt's, most of the matters and feelings which have importance in the lives of other men and women, are merely accidental, or rather are nothing but a pretext, the casual accompaniment to the one dominating aim: the performance, the show. For she was an actress, and nothing else. She was neither patriotic nor pacifistic; neither Catholic nor Jewish. The novelist Henry James gives the clue to her personality in speaking of the heroine of The Tragic Muse:

"Her character was simply to hold you by the particular spell: any other - the good-nature of home, the relation to her mother, her friends, her lovers, her debts, the practice of virtues or industries or vices - was not worth speaking of: They were the fictions and shows; the representation was the deep substance."

It was an actress who arrived at New York, on the chilly morning of October 27, 1880, welcomed by a frozen Hudson, a wan, pinkish sun struggling against the mist, and by many little boats haudily decorated with the French colours. It was an actress who wept with happiness when she found among the countless letters, telegrams and cables a message from her young son Maurice. It was an actress who fainted when she had to shake too many hands: "Vite, de l'air! Pauvre jeune femme! Otez-lui son chapeau, son corset!....Elle n'en porte pas..."

How wonderfully arranged, how cleverly staged seems every detail of this American tour! The first great scene took place at the Albemarle Hotel where the diva had headquarters. The drawing room of her vast suite was decorated with busts of Racine, Moliere, and Victor Hugo, and lavishly furnished with pillows and palms, to remind the celebrated guest of her own voluptuous home in Paris. Sarah, however, overlooking all these beauties piled up in her honor, locked herself into her bed room which she barricaded with heavy chairs. She was having her crise de nerfs. Jarrett implored her to open the door, to address at least a few friendly words to the visitors and reporters who were jammed in the drawing room. But the diva coolly replied that she wanted to sleep. She did have that miraculous ability to sleep for an hour, or only for a

few minutes, in the midst of her guests, or in her dressing room while awaiting her cue. She commanded sleep as Napoleon did - which, by the way, was by no means the only resemblance between the militant actress and that theatrical soldier. For a full hour she reposed on the floor of her boudoir, while the visitors in the drawing room waited, then she called her maid: "Félicie! ... Une robe blanche!" And then, the entrée - the grand, the well-prepared entrée. Like a queen, a goddess, she appears among her humble guests - graciously smiling, serene, beautifully costumed, frail and yet majestic.

Those boys from the American press, however, are tough fellows, as everyone knows, and not easily intimidated. The inquisition began at once: What is your favorite role, M'am? What is your favorite dish? Jarrett declared, "Oatmeal",- although Sarah had no idea what it was. All the journalists gotted down Oatmeal: in a few hours the entire continent, from coast to coast, would receive the thrilling news. The next one inquired: "Are you jewisheatholiceprotestantmohammedanboudhisatheistic or deist?" She did not understand at first, then replied with brassy determination: "Catholic." Finally she tore to pieces a picture drawn by one of the artists present of her. The cartoon appeared in next day's paper, with some nasty remarks on the ill-temepered model. Sarah was disgusted with American newspaper men. Later in Europe, she exchanged her dreary and burlesque experiences with one of her most ardent admirers, Oscar Wilde, who had also been harassed by reporters during his stay in America. "Bad manners make a journalist" remarked Oscar, and he explained to his friend Sarah: "Americans

are not uncivilized, as they are so often said to be, they are de-civilized ...One reporter impudently interrogated me as to the temperature preferred for my tub and said that he had been told that I always had the water lightly colored with triple essence of ver-bena."

After the grotesque prologue at Albemarle's, one breath-taking incident followed another. The customs-officers acted as the chorus of the next great ensemble scene. They were only doing their duty of course when they examined Mademoiselle Bernhardt's 42 huge trunks piled up at the Booth Theatre. The actress, however, regarded such behavior as a personal insult, a deplorable lack of tact and courtesy, in fact as an abominable crime. She raved with fury when the officials dug "with their dirty hands" among her precious and fragile gowns and coats, gloves, shoes, laces, hats, furs, feathers, silk and linen. Her anger passed beyond all limits of decency when two elderly women entered the scene, - "hideous creatures," she called them, "ghastly witches", but they were actually two dressmakers who served as experts to evaluate the wardrobe of arriving actresses. The two "malicious monsters" were very much impressed by the diva's treasures, and especially admired a glamorous costume, all trimmed with pearls, which she wore in la Dame aux Camélias. According to her own report, however, the "Experts" grew very excited about so much elegance and refinement, and implored the authorities to forbid the import of such sinful luxury; for it would mean too cruel a competition to them, the American dressmakers: "All our patrons will ask for clothes as beautiful as these, once they have seen them!" The Golden Voice

shrilled with fury. She would certainly have produced another most terrific crise de nerfs had not one of her friends got the brilliant idea of asking her to inspect the new Brooklyn Bridge. Apparently she was really impressed by the greatness and sober beauty of that huge construction. "Isn't it magnificent," she exclaimed, again and again. "Isn't it wonderful and encouraging to think that human beings were able to create this solid miracle!" She seemed honestly thrilled to learn that the bridge could hold ten street cars full of people, and a hundred carriages besides...In an unpredictable emotional way this most selfish, introverted creature, Sarah Bernhardt, was impressionable. She could burn for an idea, for an artistic or technical achievement- provided, of course, that there was an audience to watch her ecstasy.

The annoying affair with the customs-officers dragged on for several days, Finally the Board of Customs claimed 7000 dollars deposit to the hands of an attorney. Sarah promptly sued the American authorities. She was very fond of trials. The atmosphere of a court room was almost as exciting as an opening night ...

The first performance at the Booth Theatre, on November 8, was an impressive event. Sarah had chosen Adrienne Lecouvreur for her American debut- the very play that Scribe had written for that other French-Jewish genius, la Rachel , who had failed to conquer New York. Sarah, la divine, was more successful. The Golden Voice triumphed. After the show, the people besieged the Albemarle Hotel: she had to greet the cheering throng again and again, from the balcony.

There is no doubt that Sarah owed her success in part to her

scandalous reputation. People rushed to the theatre to see the "Monster of the Apocalypse", and were pleasantly surprised to find a human being with a moving voice and expressive gestures. Young girls were not allowed to go to the theatre when "that evil demon" was playing and clergymen zealously warned their congregations against this creature sent from the rotten Old World to spoil the purity of the New. Mothers called meetings to discuss "how to defend ourselves against Sarah Bernhardt, who has come to corrupt our sons." No wonder that these worthy matrons were aflutter. Aside from the rumors, a plague of scurrilous literature on Sarah Bernhardt had spread over this country, pamphlets for instance with such promising titles as "The Love-affairs of Sarah Bernhardt", in which the actress was accused of having seduced in turn the Tsar, Napoleon III and Pius IX. Another literary concoction dealt with the "four sons" which the sinful vedette had ostensibly born to four different fathers, a hairdresser, Napoleon III, the Pope, and a fellow condemned to death for parricide.

This was all very funny, and M. Jarrett considered it fine publicity; in Chicago he even went so far as to send 200 dollars to a bishop who had preached against "that wicked woman" -: "In appreciation of the swell propaganda you've kindly made for us", wrote the impudent agent. Nevertheless, this uproar of puritanism, this constant turmoil around Sarah's provocative personality, had disturbing consequences as well. M. Jarrett hardly laughed when the Methodist in a Sunday issue - the circulation of which amounted to 200,000 copies - bitterly attacked not only Mlle. Bernhardt but also the corrupt society of London. The Methodist was deeply

shocked by the fact that aristocratic English ladies had received "an actress and courtesan who had a son but no husband". The immediate effect of this article was that all respectable homes in New York, Boston, Philadelphia closed their doors to Mlle. Bernhardt.

Yet she was received by some people whom she considered more important than the four hundred; After her last performance in New York - it was a matinee of "La Dame aux Camélias", and a wild success-, she paid a visit to Thomas Edison at his residence in Menlo Park. Her special train was decorated with flowers and the French colors, as usual. Mrs. Edison welcomed her at the door. It was night, but "the glittering electric light gave the impression of effulgent morning." Mr. Edison was somewhat reticent at first: "He probably took me for just another of those publicity-crazy foreign actresses," Sarah naively remarks. They made friends, however, after half an hour. He explained her his telephonic discoveries and his amazing phonograph. She was enchanted, keenly interested, and understood everything he said. He had the most wonderful blue eyes, and in short was "a delightful and timid scholar." She was also moved by his profound love of Shakespeare. He had a definite resemblance, she felt, falling back on that well-worn French compliment with Napoleon. But Napoleon, of course, was "the genius of destruction", while Edison seemed to her the "genius of creation." This startling observation was the last jewel that she offered to the journalists, who had followed her to Menlo Park, as they followed her, observant and malicious shadows, wherever she went.

More or less witty cartoons of Sarah Bernhardt were published

in all American papers. Artists tried to be funny about the fact of her speaking French, about her thin figure, her bad temper, her many lovers, her greed, her success, her peculiar habit of throwing things into people's faces. Her distorted portrait appeared on huge posters, carried in the streets, advertising certain commodities or localities. Huge letters announced: "Sarah, my dear, you are thin, but drink DELBECK and be happy!" All sorts of business enterprises used the celebrated name. "Bernhardt Fish Balls, only 10 cents!" Or: "Carter's Liver Bitters will make you EAT!" - and the picture of a haggard woman with the features of that well-known skeleton, Sarah Bernhardt.

What annoyed her most was the fact that the French public was informed of all this humiliating humbug. The Parisian papers ironically remarked: "Even on her most beautiful days of triumph, Sarah gains in America the same kind of success as, some time ago, Tom Thumb, that amusing dwarf." And the journalists added with a certain malice: "Apparently it costs something to make a million!"

She knew perfectly well that she was not far from making a fool of herself. Yet she could not resist a chance for new publicity. Sometimes she bitterly regretted her weakness - for instance, in the grotesque and agonizing case of the big whale. This huge creature belonged to a tiny man, Mr. Henry Smith, a shrewd and obstinate fellow. He jumped on Mlle. Bernhardt's carriage when she arrived at Boston, and implored her to see the whale. It was a living whale, Mr. Smith promised - still breathing, and a most impressive animal...

And God created great whales - says Genesis. The one that Mr. Smith had in tow and that Sarah inspected was an ordinary whale - not the great fish that swallowed up Jonah, not Leviathan the

piercing, crooked serpent, the dragon of the sea. It was not Moby Dick, the White Whale, Godlike and appalling. It was merely a remote and humble cousin of Leviathan, a perfectly normal and ordinary whale, yet Sarah was fascinated by its size and mythological dignity. She took a walk on its back which was covered with glazed frost. Twice she fell down full length on its spine. Then Mr. Smith persuaded her to pull a piece of the shattered whale bone from the mouth of the wounded monster - a sliver of the bone that goes into the creation of women's corsets. When she arrived at New Haven, a few days later, she was received by men carrying huge posters: "Come and see the enormous cetacean which Sarah Bernhardt killed by tearing out its whalebone for her corsets. These are made by Madame Lily Noe, who lives...etc." Another poster announced that the dead whale was at least "as flourishing" as when it was alive.

This went definitely too far. Sarah fainted, screamed, cried, and raved. When Henry Smith dared to visit her at the hotel, the pugnacious lady threatened him with her notorious whip. She wanted to cancel her dates, to return to Europe; Jarrett had to remind her severely of her contracts.

At the next stopping place - Hartford - the whole comedy was repeated: the horrible parade of posters, impudent Mr. Smith's visit at the hotel, Sarah's tears and screams. And all this happened again at the next stop and the one after that. Mr. Smith, merciless though polite, followed the diva wherever she went, and with him went the whale. Mr. H. Smith was a chubby little gentleman, square all over, wearing a fur cap pulled down over his eyes, and an enormous diamond in his cravat. He had an unctuous,

yet very firm way of talking. Mlle. Bernhardt threw flowers, powder-puffs, glasses, metallic instruments and curses into his face. Mr. Smith said: " I'm sorry you don't like me, Ma'am. I hate to see you in such a state. But you should realize that I'm not bothering you for my own sake. It is only for the sake of the whale. He needs publicity, you see."

The whale became a nightmare, an obsession with Sarah Bernhardt. The dead monster persecuted her into her dreams. She was chased, haunted, tormented by the whale. He was her bad conscience, the appalling symbol of her humiliation. She was the victim, the deer; Mr. Smith and his monstrous fish were the hunters. The victim's spirit was broken. She groaned: 'How have I deserved this?' Mr. Smith said unctuously: " I'm desolate, Ma'am. It must be- for the whale ..." He sent her bouquets. She wept.

She finally escaped by going to Montreal, where she was received with frenzied enthusiasm. The usual chorus of Vive la France had in this formerly French city an especially passionate, even aggressive tenor. The station was illuminated with lamps carried by bears - an original idea which amused and at the same time frightened the Golden Voice. A young man named Louis Fréchette recited an endless poem, A Sarah Bernhardt. It was freezing cold. La patronne - as the members of the troupe called her, with a mixture of malice and veneration - escaped, once more, to one of her well-tested fainting fits. The immediate consequence was a sort of panic among the people. They saw their idol staggering, falling- and, hysterical and silly as masses are, they seemed willing to trample her down. A tall young fellow carried her away in his powerful

arms; but when she woke up, at the Windsor Hotel, he had disappeared.

He showed up again, however, the next morning, - a perfect chevalier, very handsome, elegant and charming. He brought violets to the patronne, who was charmed with his beautiful manners and attractive figure. She told him: "You've saved my life, Monsieur." He blushed: "Don't mention it, Ma'am." Both of them smiled, but at this moment Jarrett rushed into the room. He was very pale. Sarah could grasp only snatches of his excited whispering: "Detectives...Murder...New Orleans...No chance to get away..." The young man shuddered, his face turned white, and now it was Sarah who had to prop him up, but only for a few seconds - then he regained his expression of gallantry. Before he left he demanded: "When you learn who I am, Madam, don't think of the man who was fortunate enough to save your life! Swear to me you won't!" Whis- pered the Golden Voice: "Je vous le jure, Monsieur."

Later she was informed of his execution, but obstinately re- fused to hear any details concerning his crime or punishment. In her memory he remained the handsome and gallant young gentleman who had protected her when she was in danger.

For days Sarah Bernhardt was depressed because of this sinister and romantic incident. Finally she cheered up again thanks to the holy indignation of the Bishop of Montreal, who shouted against that immoral plays, "Adrienne Lecouvreur", and against frivolous modern France altogether.

All the more responsive were the Montreal students who filled the gallery of the theatre night after night. They sent pigeons

from the balcony to the stage, leaving poetical messages and flowers which were graciously accepted by the Golden Voice. The singing of the "Marseillaise", at the opening night had the character of a violent political demonstration. The Governor of Canada, however, the Marquis de Lorne, son-in-law of Queen Victoria responded cleverly and with dignity to this provocation. He was the first to rise at the opening of the French anthem and when it was over he promptly made an imperious gesture to the orchestra commanding the musicians to play God Save the King.

And Sarah Bernhardt's eventful tour through America continued - this prosperous, fatiguing pilgrimage which a minor though observant member of the company, Mlle. Marie Colombier, called "notre roman comique a travers l'Amérique."

In Chicago they stopped at the Palmer House, that "vast barracks of iron and marble", and la patronne was very pleased with Mr. Palmer's gracious and thoughtful manners. She enjoyed herself more in Chicago than at any other place on the tour. Her sense of well-being was slightly disturbed, however, by a visit to the slaughter-houses. She watched the gigantic butchery with horror and delight, spellbound and terrified by the endless bellow of agony, the sickening smell of blood. She almost fainted, yet could not leave, captivated by that primitive and shocking drama of death. "It was quite an experience", she admitted later, thrilled though somewhat exhausted. "Une impression tout a fait hoffmannesque..." How typically French it is, this sophisticated yet naive comparison of the most prosaic, most ghastly spectacle with the German romanticist, E.T.A. Hoffmann, who represented to cultured Frenchmen

the very essence of ghoulisn fantasy.

They travelled from town to town, from city to city, in their special train - three Pullman cars, carrying the 42 trunks, the impresarios and secretaries, the malcontent actors, the servants, the hairdressers, and la patronne - always greedy for money, hankering for success, avid for more adventures, more action; restless, erratic, whimsical, cruel, lovely, feline, inscrutable, and primitive.

They played "La Dame aux Camélias", and "Frou-Frou", and "La Princesse George" by Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo's "Hernani", and Racine's "Phedre". It pained them to be obliged to have the orchestra play the quadrille of Offenbach's "Belle Helene" during the intermission of "Phedre". The members of the troupe complained about the poor American food, their miserable salaries, the exhausting traveling, and the lack of sleep. Marie Colombier, whom Sarah regarded as an old and faithful friend, wrote malicious letters to the Paris papers behind the back of her patronne, describing the tour as a failure.

This statement, however, is refuted by the very figures given by Marie Colombier in her book "Voyages avec Sarah Bernhardt en Amérique". "Sarah came to America with the sole purpose of making dollars," this insidious friend remarks, and she adds, with a kind of embittered admiration: "And she got them all right. 600,000 francs for 100 performances is not bad at all."

Indeed, it seems rather good - and it goes to prove that the Golden Voice had crowded houses almost everywhere. There were, of course, some unfortunate exceptions. In Springfield, Mass., for

instance, people did not like "Camille", and the cool reception they gave the French company was like an icy shower after the triumph at Montreal. In Mobile, Alabama, they had to perform in a miserable barn, the only theatre in the town being taken by the actor Barrett. The wings fell down on the players' heads while Marguerite Gautier was having dinner gaily with her friends, in "Camille"; little negro lads in the audience roared with laughter, the curtain had to fall, M. Jarrett was obliged to pay back the entrance money to the half-amused, half-disappointed crowd and la patronne went through another crise de nerfs.

Her impression of Baltimore was one of "deadly cold hotels, an icy theatre, and very beautiful women." Of Philadelphia she said: "I did not like this very fine city." She was saddened there by the news of Gustave Flaubert's death - : "mon ami Gustave Flaubert, the writer who was most zealously concerned with the beauty of our language." Boston, she states, belongs to the women- and she quotes the legend of the female who was the first human being to set foot on Boston's soil. The Boston ladies are "puritan with intelligence, independent with grace." They are almost all spinsters- if we believe Sarah's reports- seeking a substitute for matrimonial happiness in scholarships and athletics.

A terrific flood almost prevented the troupe from reaching New Orleans. The raging water endangered the crossing of the Bay of St. Louis; but Sarah bribed the engine driver with \$ 2.500 to risk the impossible. The undermined bridge broke down just a few seconds after the train had gone over it. The Golden Voice arrived at New Orleans in excellent humour. She liked the city though it

was poor and dirty. "The French are bad colonists", she remarked. "St. Louis, too, is in a deplorable state." Yet it made her happy to hear the coachman at the station speaking his French argot, with a charming little Marseille accent.

Hundreds of negroes were drowned in the flood, while others could not be persuaded to leave the ruins of their huts, washed away by the merciless onslaught of the water. "L'eau s'en aller," they mumbled. "Maison trouvée...Moi refaire..." Sarah was deeply touched.

A miserable place, this Nouvelle-Orléans; but gifted with an infinite charm. It rained continually-; "but there was sun in the eyes of the inhabitants." Moreover she found there a great deal of the kind of excitement that was as vital to her as air. Several colored children were killed by crocodiles, and Sarah played with the idea of taking a few of those monsters along, as a new attraction for her macabre boudoir in Paris. She was also highly amused by the unusual experience of her hairdresser, M. Ibé, who had a habit of spending the night in the theatre, sleeping in the huge trunk that held the company's wigs. One night all the wigs began to slide mysteriously and heave and with horror he recognized the creatures that were sharing his hairy couch: two enormous serpents...La patronne laughed heartily when she heard it.

Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis, Louisville; Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Indianapolisin St. Joseph they drank "the best beer of the world." Somewhere in Illinois they had to stop the train because of the heavy snow, and they amused themselves by playing with snow-balls...Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo...:

everywhere the enchanting and provocative song of the Golden Voice.

In St. Louis, she agreed to exhibit her jewels in the windows of an astute jeweller, who considered this publicity for his store important enough to present the diva with a valuable gold cigarette holder, as "humble thanks for her generosity." This minor commercial enterprise, however, was to have unforeseen consequences of a rather disturbing nature. For a gang of boys had been inspired by the dazzling exhibition to plan a large-scale robbery. Somewhere between St. Louis and Cincinnati, M. Jarrett discovered a fellow hidden under one of the Pullman cars. The frightened Irish lad confessed everything, and revealed the whole conspiracy. He had been supposed to take the last car off the train, since it was here that Sarah usually traveled, enjoying the changing views from the open platform. The pals of the little criminal were waiting at a certain spot, not far away, and intended to "finish" the foreign lady. The special train rushed back to St. Louis where a little army of detectives was hired. A freight train preceded the Pullmans when they set out again for Cincinnati. The gangsters were caught and arrested. Their leader, a boy by the name of Albert Wirtz, was hung. He was 25 years old, and of Belgian origin. Sarah did not like the idea of his being executed, being on principle opposed to capital punishment. Yet she had attended four executions, one in London, one in Spain, and two in Paris. The last criminal whose agony she had watched, was a young anarchist whom she knew. He died bravely, with the cry: "Vive l'anarchie!" He was a goodlooking youth. So was Albert Wirtz. And then she

thought of that powerful Adonis who had saved her life in Montreal. 'I bring bad luck' she meditated. 'It seems dangerous to save my life, or to discuss anarchy with me, or to steel my jewels ...' Yet it gave her a lustful shudder to imagine all those handsome lads, hanging on a gallows, or awaiting, chained on a block, the gruesome blow of the guillotine...

Rochester, Utica, Syracuse, Albany, Troy, Worcester, Providence, Newark...In the smaller towns they spent the nights in the Pullman cars which were more comfortable than the hotels. They went to Washington, and Sarah found it depressing, " of an irritating sadness." She was not received by the President. In Philadelphia, where they stopped for the second time, they had to face the competition of " mighty Barnum" who filled the city with a hundred gaudy cars, elephants, heralds in red uniforms, innumerable flags and posters. and the clamor of Wagnerian tunes.

Marie Colombier claims that the farewell performances of the Bernhardt troupe in New York were failures. Jarrett arranged a special matinée for artists and journalists to overcome the public apathy. Sarah played "La Princesse George", and counted a hundred and thirty bouquets in her dressing room, among them a very beautiful one from the great Italian actor Salvini. She also assures us in her Mémoires that she had to make fourteen curtain calls after the last performance of " Camille". She was asked to say a few words, and whispered: " I can't speak; but I can tell you: thank you! thank you! with all my heart!" Marie Colombier remarks that Sarah's flowers at her "représentation d'adieu" consisted of one bouquet from her own company. Only a few people appeared at the boat to see the diva off. It was a definite anti-climax, compared

with the turmoil of her arrival.

One man, however, proved faithful to the last. This was Henry Smith, the fellow with the whale. He waited for Sarah in her stateroom and even tried to present her with some worthless jewels. The Golden Voice shouted: "Get out of here! Crook! Brute! Son of a ...! I want you to die - soon, and in awful pain! "

This was the last utterance of the Golden Voice in the United States.

Her first words on her return in France, were addressed to her young son Maurice, whom the American ministers and club ladies had multiplied to four. Maurice - mon bonheur! ma joie! mon tout! plus cher que tout! He welcomed his famous mother at Le Havre.

Said the famous mother: "How tall you are, little Maurice!"

And the son, blushing like a little girl:

"I can't help it, maman."

In America people had greeted her with "Vive la France"; in France she was received with "Vive Sarah Bernhardt." But there were other sounds, nasty insinuations, the ugly whisper of slander and mockery. She could take it; she was able to answer, to parry malignant talk; for she was very strong - stronger now than ever. There can be no doubt that the first American tour had a very definite affect on her development. The success in the New World soothed her vanity as an actress and strengthened her self-confidence, profoundly shaken by the fiasco at the Comédie and it is no mere coincidence that the first volume of her autobiography ends

with her triumphant return from the United States. With a sort of proud pedantry she gives the exact business balance of the entire tour: It lasted seven months, she played in 50 cities, giving 156 performances - "La Dame aux Camélias" 65 times, "Frou-Frou" 41 times, etc.-; the total income of the tour was 2,667,600 francs, or an average of 17,100 francs for each performance. To these imposing figures she adds nothing but a few haughty and inspired sentences, to the effect that she is now free, strong, independent; she has liberated herself from the chains of the Comédie Française, of Paris, France, her friends and her family; the world is open to her, eagerly expecting her to come, to be seen, and to conquer. There had been a time when she desired to die young. But now she exclaims arrogantly: "I resolved to live. I resolved to be the great artiste that I longed to be."

This fragmentary autobiography is bristling, of course, with fantastic lies, shameless exaggerations and boasts. Her vanity sometimes assumes the alarming character of a pathological delusion of grandeur. Most of the general statements she makes about herself are based on obvious misunderstandings or deliberate falsifications, and the title of the book is in itself an error or a pretentious lie. "Ma double Vie..." Why and in what respect was her life "double"? Her life had only one direction, one aim, one content: the performance and its success. There was nothing else. She is also untruthful or mistaken when she states, and frequently repeats: "Life has taught me that if one is to be somebody, it can only be after death." This may be true for certain creative spirits, but it becomes an absurdity in the case of

an actress who lives for and by the present moment alone, and whose posthumous fame is nothing but the pallid reflection of the spell once exerted on her contemporaries.

It is all the more startling therefore to discover, among so many errors and distortions, a sentence of indubitable and almost terrifying honesty. When Sarah decided to live for a very long time and to become the great artiste that she longed to be, she reports that she felt " a great malicious joy thinking of the infernal displeasure of my enemies."

She was hated by many. Her temperament was such that any challenge intensified her will to resist, increased her strength, doubled her ambition. She was abused by critics, colleagues, agents, by vulgar antisemites, sometimes even by the public. When her popularity seemed about to pale, she created a new role, and in a triumph greater than any before, forced the public to her feet again.

She regarded the world as a huge theatre, arranged by a clever master builder and divine manager with the outspoken purpose of creating a worthy stage for the great Sarah. It was clear that the essential function and mission of mankind was to listen to the Golden Voice. In Brazil and Australia, in Spain and Mexico, in St. Petersburg, San Francisco, and Buenos Aires, people longed to see her, to praise her, to fall in love with her, to pay fabulous sums for the marvellous spectacle of her gestures. She considered the United States a fairly good country because its people fulfilled, with ever-lasting patience and ever-increasing enthusiasm, the one duty of their existence : - to gaze in admiration at Sarah,

la divine. She came to the U.S. again in 1887, after an extensive tour through South and Central America, and in 1891 she started at the Garden Theatre in New York a tour around the world, which lasted two years. Her visit to New York in 1896 coincided with that of Eleonora Duse, who was considered her only dangerous rival. Sarah remarked: " She may be a great actress, but she certainly is no great Artiste -", which is about the most absurd thing one possibly could say about her. The Golden Voice, however, proved to be stronger than Duse's over-discreet, aristocratic art. Eleonora failed, Sarah came out victorious.

Even during the intervals between her starring tours, however, the American public was kept informed of her scandals and successes abroad. Sarah Bernhardt-fans in New York, Boston, or Chicago knew about her new home on the Boulevard Pércire in Paris - a veritable palace which cost the little fortune of 215,000 francs. The more money she made the more extravagant she became. She was constantly harassed by the most embarrassing debts, especially when she had her own theatres. Then came the startling romantic love affair and marriage. This was a whirlwind affair that bewildered even her intimate friends. She declared: " What I have decided must be done." Her choice was exceedingly handsome and rather insignificant; a young Greek by the name of Aristide Damala who had been the "leading juvenile" of her company. He was vain and lazy, and she was madly in love. Marriage with la patronne had never entered his head; she had to struggle for his love and hand; she was nearly 38, he was 27. People in Melbourne and Madrid, in Vienna and Kansas City envied him: Lucky fellow! How very happy he must be!

But he was extremely unhappy. He left her, and led an adventurous, exhausting life in Africa. When he finally returned to Paris, he was hopelessly addicted to drugs. He died in 1889, and Sarah wept. He was the only one, she declared, that I have really loved... She sometimes signed her letters as Veuve Damala. At that time she was living with the playwright and novelist Richepin.

The whole world was amused and disgusted with the clamorous scandal provoked by a filthy book, entitled "Mémoires de Sarah Bernhardt." The author was Sarah's old friend and colleague, Marie Colombier, who had abandoned the stage and become a professional journalist. The pornographic concoction which she presented as Sarah's "Mémoires", were a masterpiece of abject yet skillful perfidy. She portrayed her former friend as a vicious, profoundly abnormal and thoroughly perverted creature. The general uproar that ensued was bad enough; but Sarah made it worse by running into Marie's apartment, armed with a whip and a dagger, and accompanied by her son Maurice and her lover Richepin. The Golden Voice, beside herself with fury, shouted, cursed, threatened - while Richepin amused himself by slitting the hangings and ripping up the sofas with a penknife. La patronne joined him, and turned everything in the apartment upside down, not sparing precious glasses and beloved souvenirs. Marie Colombier succeeded in escaping, trembling with fear... Within half an hour the incredible story was all over Paris and that same night the correspondent of the New York Herald cabled 6000 words about the tragi-comic incident over the ocean.

Her legend became more and more fabulous: she travelled over the countries and continents of the world like a half-mythological

personality. The remark coined in connection with Victor Hugo - that he was a madman obsessed with the idea of being Victor Hugo - is even more appropriate here. Sarah Bernhardt was haunted by the mania of being Sarah Bernhardt.

She made other American tours in 1900 and in 1905. Then in 1912 she appeared again, but as a ghost, a wan spectre making excited, jerking gestures on the screen: the undisputed queen of the theatre had become one of the first movie stars. This was in Adolph Zukor's importation of the four-reel French film, "Queen Elizabeth", starring Sarah Bernhardt. It was the first long "feature" to be advertised and presented on a grand scale. The success exceeded all expectations, and had far-reaching consequences. Mr. Zukor had tried to interest the Motion Pictures Patents Company, but met with a cool refusal. So he himself risked the costly experiment - which netted him 60,000 dollars. Encouraged by this sensational hit, he decided to found The Famous Players in Famous Plays Company. The motion pictures which, up to that time, had been considered a cheap entertainment for fairs and lunaparks, suddenly acquired, through Sarah Bernhardt's collaboration, the dignity of a real art. "This is my only chance to become immortal," she said smiling when asked to act in the film.

What a strange, half-embarrassing, half-moving experience - to see her on the screen, in a Film Museum! Her melodramatic and yet fidgety movements are grotesque, impossible. And yet, sometimes, in a peculiar pose, a surprising smile, her genius comes through. Suddenly she seems no longer the pale and pathetic shadow, but is the Queen, transforms herself into Elizabeth. And then -

the amazing, ridiculous and yet breath-taking scene of her death! It is a royal death, indeed - carefully prepared, solemnly performed. All the lords and ladies gathered around their mistress, respectfully await the supreme moment of her agony. She stands upright, erect, proudly facing a pile of pillows, especially arranged for this grand occasion - the death of Queen Elizabeth. Finally - her court is already becoming a little impatient - she raises both arms, opens her mouth in a silent lament, and then tumbles, falls like a cut tree. She is dead, but only temporarily: in a few seconds she is on her feet again, she smiles, and takes a coy bow.

No wonder that this queer work of art was so moving to Americans. No wonder, too that the eminent French film critic and director Louis Delluc wrote of Sarah Bernhardt: " When one sees her in "Mothers of France" or in Tristan Bernard's Jeanne Doré one cannot help but feel that this superb companion of Racine is not really at home in the shadowy, uncertain world of the screen."

We are told that she fainted when she saw herself in Camille . Nevertheless she continued to act for the motion pictures. For a while, she even played with the bold idea of adapting the Iliad for the screen. She risked an Adrienne Leuouvreur picture as her own production, and in "Mothers of France" promoted pro-French propaganda in America during the World War. Sarah Bernhardt who so often had acted as the emissary of her country, finally sent her expressive shadow to act for the cause of France. Claude Farrere knew perfectly well what he was talking about, when he said: "There is no one who has done more than she has to defend and illustrate

our national genius in other countries."

She began her career under Napoleon III, and she lived to witness the Treaty of Versailles. She was of that majestic and tenacious line of great women of the 19th. century, like the Empress Eugenie and Cosima Wagner, surviving the triumphs of rivals, the intrigues of enemies, the insults of critics and flatberies of fools. At the age of seventy she lost a leg, as a result of a long and painful disease, but with that indestructable spirit that had marked her entire life she continued to play the young Duke of Reichstadt and Hamlet, Prince of the Danes. She saw America join her beloved France, she received the American boys in the streets of Paris, she saw Woodrow Wilson welcomed as a Messiah by the exhausted peoples of Europe. She retained her energy and ambition to the last, and when the physicians prohibited her from leaving her house, she received the film photographers in her bedroom. And when she finally died - for even her trained and tenacious body consisted of flesh and blood-, she could say: I have nothing to regret. I have done my best.

We can see her solemn departure, the last ceremony of her amazing life. She withdraws slowly, ascending in a balloon which seems slightly old-fashioned but is gaily decorated with the colors of France and innumerable newspaper clippings. She takes her last charming bows to the earthly public, and then arrives, fresh and eager, at the heavenly theatre, with a contemptuous glance for the colleagues and rivals she finds gathered there: I'll steal the show! - Fanny Elssler! - She didn't really have an affair with the Duc of Reichstadt, but I was the Duke. I was L'Aiglon, and the

wooden leg didn't disturb me in the leastLola Montez - a pathetic dilletante, lecturing on Heroines of History - but I was a heroine, and history will remember my name....And who is this funny little nightingale, if you please? - Jenny Lind ...Bon soir, chere Madame, enchantée de faire votre connaissance...Yet I feel rather sorry for you. It must be very dull to be a nightingale. I was an eagle, a tigress, and my Golden Voice was more powerful, more dangerous, more exciting than all your celebrated art...Et voice Rachel...tiens tiens tiens, ma pauvre petite Rachel - you look terribly sad. You had a pretty bad time in America, didn't you? Half-empty houses, not much applause. Well, when I played at the Garden Theatre...And how very clumsy of you, chere amie, to die so young. Why did you catch that cold, in an American train? Why I spent months in Pullman cars and managed to live - well, to live almost forever... I had special trains at my disposal, of course...

She missed her old friend Jarrett: he was probably in purgatory - which served him right. Was it absolutely necessary for him to die in Buenos-Aires when she was playing there? - But who was this short little fellow with the big diamond in his cravat? "It can't be true!" But it really was Henry Smith, and nestled to him like a pet dog was his horrid fish, Leviathan from the depth - the ghastly monster, the whale. Sarah was already looking for something to throw at the brute, but suddenly she was sobered and comforted by a sonorous voice. It was St.Peter who said: "Je suis a vos pieds, Madame!" With his well-kept beard and benign smile, he had a definite resemblance to old Victor Hugo.

As to the Supreme Manager, He had placed Himself on a blinding throne of light. 'A very effective arrangement', thought Sarah. 'I must remember this - it is most ingeniously staged.' But then she recognized, in spite of all this dazzling phosphorescence, the gracious and lofty sign of the Lord: He wanted her to begin...His gesture reminded her of that noble Governor of Montreal ordering the orchestra to play the British anthem. But she had no time to remember now: it is time to begin.

And she begins...

She rises, spreads out her arms. Then she tries, very carefully, her Golden Voice - : yes, it is the same old one, the ever-new one - the experienced Magic Flute, the irresistible instrument. It is still the chime, the angry thunderstorm, the jubilation, the gentle whisper, the raucous lament, the tremendous, infinite song of love.

She is still Sarah bernhardt - the divine Sarah; Sarah, the enchanting, the incredible and unforgettable. She is tainted with all the hideous, tasteless luxury of her period- dressed up like an ancient idol, gaudy as a peacock, armoured like a warrior; overloaded with feathers, jewels, scarfs, brocades, bracelets, flowers; bedizened like a horse in the circus; a prodigious figure, un monstre sacré. And yet she has the timeless beauty of Egyptian statues, she is the Goddess of the Theatre, striding the stage like the solemn players of the Greek tragedy - grave, majestic, almost threatening.

There she is, matchless Sarah - stretching and racking her trained body in the grand poses of passion, of despair, of lust,

fury, fear, and frenzy; mouth ajar, a gaping hole as in certain ancient masks; the fiery eyes narrowed with ecstacy -: oh, these lovely, piercing eyes of Sarah Bernhardt! The painted, artificial face, bearing the marks of beauty operations like a soldier's face proud under its martial scars; her inhuman, effulgent face, tossing as in agony, lifted up with indescribable triumph.

Incomparable Sarah, bursting into amazing gestures as into screams; brutal and refined, possessed by a creative hysteria, and gifted with an astounding vitality; royal and appalling - sometimes almost numb with dignity, and at other moments shocking with obscene little laughs. She swings gaily her wooden leg; she dances, intoxicated with vanity and pride; she produces, a triumphant wreck, all her cunning tricks and often-tried feats; she parades, insane with coquetry, in the view of her paling colleagues, well-meaning St. Peter, and the Supreme Manager, who hides His inscrutable smile behind a glittering cloud.

The angels, an insatiable audience, move their wings, producing a silvery little noise. This means applause - the only command Sarah Bernhardt is able to grasp and to follow. Cheered by the cherubs, unforgotten by the mortal inhabitants of the earth, she continues in eternity her gorgeous show.

G l a m o u r .

~~Rehearsal~~ (Sarah Bernhardt, and others.)

Neither Cleopatra, lovely Lady of Egypt, nor Aspasia, the intelligent beauty of Athens, were in the habit of travelling. The great women of the Italian Renaissance hardly ever left the towns or provinces ruled by their husbands or lovers, and Madame Pompadour believed that the world was dull outside the Court of France. Imposing as was the influence of these grandes dames of the past, their sphere was somewhat limited.

Actresses, of course, always travelled like the gipsies, they moved about constantly in their green waggon, and respectable people used to hide their silver spoons and golden watches whenever the notorious comedians arrived. In the beginning of the 19th. century, however, the situation began to change. The prosperous period of flourishing capitalism commercialized the glamour of the stage, the attraction of beautiful women. A new type of business man, of gambler and exploiter developed: the theatrical agent, the great manager and impresario. And he discovered a gigantic new market: the United States of America.

Europe produced the genius, but America paid for it. The poets and courtesans, the composers, actresses and dancers won their glory in Paris, Vienna, and London, their dollars in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The wealthy young continent hired anyone who had anything to sell, having to offer as a prime attraction, the magic transformation of fame into the more solid substance of gold. Till through the 19th. century beautiful women made the pilgrimage from Europe to the shores of the New World - a motley yet homogeneous crowd; well-advertised graces, highly-paid goddesses, adorning the prosaic landscape of a continent inhabited

by hard working people.

They arrived, on sailing boats, then on old-fashioned steamers; heralded by publicity agents; hailed by a curious mob; armed with amazing hats, never-dreamed-of gloves, photos of European royalties with autographed dedications, Chinese pet dogs and sensational perfumes; surrounded by the sultry mysteries of their past, bearing with modest pride the dubious glory of their well-known scandals as a saint bears her halo, mildly glittering. They received journalists and shocked clergymen; they drew crowded houses in Philadelphia and Charleston, enthralled poets, high school boys and hotel owners; annoyed Boston society ladies. They were reckless and boisterous; obsessed with cupidity and lust; sparkling with dynamic vitality, piratical ambition. Theirs was a gaudy beauty, an almost truculent charm.

And now? A century - some decades afterwards, what does remain of all their striking glamour? - A gallery of pallid beauties, dim and numb; still charming though, with that crease of a faint, coquettish smile around the colorless lips: still seductive, in a blurred, hazy way. The flowers once decorating their portraits have long faded; have become dry and rustling like old paper- like the dated newspaper clippings telling **their** mawkish stories, repeating a dead, affected language the flatteries and abuses once heaped upon those dazzling amazons. Now, they look reticent and discreet as forgotten relatives in a dusty family album- never-heard-of aunts, late cousins **who** never found a husband.

Look at her! - she must have been rather pretty. Her name is

Fanny Elssler. How ridiculous she is, and how sweet! - with all her curls, ruches, lace-trimmings. And her pathetic smile! - how brittle, worn-out, remote. Once, however, she was called by her admirers The Smile of her Century.

The yellowed newspaper clippings, framing her picture as a withered garland, inform us that Mademoiselle Elssler used to be the most graceful girl of Vienna, a celebrated danseuse, the last passion of an aging grandseigneur and conservative statesman, Friedrich Gentz, who belonged to the intimate circle of Prince Matternich. Later she became the prima ballerina of the Paris Opera, and then went to the United States, in May, 1840. The clippings tell us the forgotten story of her ebullient successes: she was deluged with applause in New York and Philadelphia, in Baltimore, Boston, Richmond and New Orleans; the enthusiasm caught on even in remote, half-civilized places such as Cincinnati. Whatever she did was a source of admiration: whether she made her royal promenades in a magnificent carriage drawn by four elegant horses (this, of course, was her agent's idea;) whether she danced La Sylphide or La Rose Animée or La Bayadère. In Washington the President of the United States, Mr. Van Buren, honored her recital with his presence, he showed himself most gracious, and on July 15, 1850, he gave a party for her at the White House. She had intended to tour the United States only for a few weeks, and she stayed more than two years. She was delighted with America because the Americans were delighted with her...

How depressing it is to become absorbed in the frozen loveliness of her features! Are we still able to recognize - to appreciate that indescribable quality - that mysterious something

she carried in her weightless feet, at her fingertips, in her dark, smiling eyes? - that magic atmosphere which made her presence so precious and delightful to Americans? The young nation with so slim a tradition of its own fell in love with the imposing background of this graceful creature : the flavor of Vienna, the Imperial Theatre, the Hofburg, the melodies of Mozart, Haydn, Schubert; all this excitingly intermingled with a faint Parisian perfume, light and at the same time sad, a melancholy and joy which the New World had lost, or not yet achieved... Oh, dubious but irresistible charm of that Old World, experienced in crime and love! A world burdened with guilt and spirit, a world of songs, sins and skeptical wisdom - it was its sweet though slightly putrid fragrance that Fanny Elssler carried in her bags and clothes - and her own private legend was charmingly interwoven with the great legend of European glamour, the colorful, gay decay on those ancient cities...

It is over, past ... No perfume any more, no glittering beauty, no song. The Smile of a Century - extinguished like the flickering light of a candle. Nothing remains but a dusty portrait - that dingy remnant of a splendor long passed away ...

Let us turn the pages of our album filled with memories! Who is this? Poor thing, she looks rather gloomy in her plain black dress. She is a lecturer as one can easily see. For she stands on a platform, the hair taut and dark over the delicate oval of her face- all austere dignity and solemn concentration. This is the Hope Chapel, on Broadway, in New York. The picture is dated February 3, 1858. The name of the speaker is Countess Landsfeld, alias Lola Montez.

Lola Montez....: wasn't she the great adventuress of the Fourties? The notorious belle who had a famous affair with a ruling king? The sovereign involved in this romance was Ludwig I of Bavaria. He was sixty years old when he saw Lola dancing, in the Munich opera, and openly declared: " I don't know how - I am bewitched ..."

What does she seek in the Chapel? And where did she acquire that bleak dignity she shows on this dreary picture?

What a saddening story! - murky and involved... She was of mixed race - born at Limerick, Ireland, as the daughter of an Anglo-Indian officer and a very beautiful mother of Spanish descent -, and she led a restless, impetuous life. Even her most malignant enemies admitted that she was fatally attractive - while even her most ardent admirers agreed she was an abominable actress and a mediocre dancer. Contemporaries called her an " enchantress", and grew rhapsodic in praising her ivory skin, her tameless eyes, her wavy hair " like the tendrils of the woodbine", her mouth "like a budding pomegranate." - "Add to that a dashing figure, charming feet, and perfect grace..."

She must have been a rather breath-taking creature, indeed. Sovereigns and celebrities were fascinated by her as rabbits by a snake. She was a triumph in Paris - the gaudy, effulgent Paris of Louis Philippe. Alexandre Dumas (father) declared that she was "beautiful like a tigress". Her lover had to fight a duel because of her, and was killed. Her royal friend, Ludwig I, gave her the title of a Countess; thanks to him, she actually became the uncrowned queen of Bavaria.

What a dizzy career! She had secret agents and correspondents in various courts of Europe. No wonder that the reactionary Bavarian ministers were bitterly opposed to the romantic escapade of their ruler. They openly called Senora Montez " the greatest calamity with which Bavaria could be afflicted." The Jesuits thought her an emissary of the Freemasons. Especially in Vienna she was persona ingrata: Metternich regarded her as a serious political enemy. She was active and shrewd, though not quite shrewd enough. Her position grew more and more precarious. The conservatives considered her a seditious liberal; at the same time she was violently attacked by the revolutionary students. Finally in 1848 the spirit of rebellion broke into the open, and the royal favorite was swept away. She fled to Switzerland- and six weeks later King Ludwig I of Bavaria had to renounce his crown.

Her record as a political courtesan was rather signal when she arrived in New York. The little wreath of journalistic flowers adorning her portrait, is rich with rhapsodic descriptions of her lovely appearance, meticulous quotations of her daring or hypocritical sayings. We snatch at random one of the dispatches - the New York Tribune of December 6, 1851:

She (the Countess Landsfeld) states that many bad things have been said about her by the American press, yet she is not the woman she has been represented to be: if she were, her admirers, she believes, would be still more numerous. She expresses herself fearful that she will not be properly considered in New York; but hopes that a discriminating public will judge her after having seen her, and not before.

A discriminating public had plenty of opportunities to form a discreet impression of her personality. She organized receptions

to which anyone was admitted, provided that he was willing and able to pay a dollar. Moreover, she presented her own adventures on the stage. The dramatized gossip was written by a certain C.P.T. Ware, and was entitled Lola in Munich - a rather shameless exhibition, indeed, with Ludwig I, the royal lover, appearing on the stage, and Lola's foes, the reactionary ministers, in the role of villains. It was exactly as if the Duchess of Windsor were to tour the United States, in 1940, starring in a musical comedy called Wally in London ...

The dated reports tell us about her triumphs in many an American city, and how she managed to make friends, on her way from New Orleans to San Francisco, with an editor of the San Francisco Whig. His name was Patrick Purdy Hull, and she lost no time in marrying him. This matrimonial idyll, however, did not last very long. True to her past Lola betrayed her husband with a German physician - who was thereupon killed in a hunting accident. She suddenly found herself quite alone, without any male companion to fight duels or risk a kingdom for her. The home she made for herself in Grass Valley, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, was perhaps the first she had not shared with a man. As a substitute she kept a little army of animals; pet dogs and birds, goats and sheep, hens, turkeys, and even several pigs.

A mysterious law, however, seemed to dominate her life and prevent her from settling down as other women do. She was meteoric, erratic by nature, and it was not her fate to spend happy years in a cozy California bungalow. Her house burned down; again she was footloose.

The way from the Western idyll to the lecture hall in New York, led around the world, via Australia, India, and Europe, and through many adventures the marks of which we recognize in her face. Lola, when she came back to the United States, had to realize that the prime of youth had passed. She felt depressed and remorseful. "Men have disappointed me," she declared, as men seemed now a little bored with her. Consequently she tried her luck with supernatural beings. She became a believer in spiritualism.

The ghosts, if not the theatrical agents, advised her to abandon the stage and to begin a second career as a lecturer. Her lectures were very scholarly and rather dull. They were written for her by the Reverend C. Chauncy Burr. For the countess had renounced her interest in magic mysteries and had become an orthodox adherent of the Methodists. She talked on Beautiful Women, Gallantry, The Heroines of History, The Comic Aspects of Love, Wits and Women in Paris, and against the Catholic Church which she considered an almost diabolic institution. She quoted classic parables, Aristotle, the Troubadours, and Benjamin Franklin. The speech about the Comic Aspect of Love was particularly depressing. What she had to say concerning Wits and Women in Paris, sounded rather dreary as well.

After a last trip to Ireland and England - where she also delivered lectures - the weary wanderer returned to America, once more. But she was hankering now not for earthly wealth and fame, but only for the salvation of her sinful soul. She strove, honestly and sincerely, for "The Good" in which she firmly and naively believed. Her spiritual adviser, Dr. F. L. Hawks, who frequently

saw her at the Asteria Sanatorium during her last disease, admired the faithful patience with which she bore the torments of her partial paralysis and the final collapse: " In the course of a long experience as a Christian minister, I do not think I ever saw deeper penitence and humility...If ever a repentant soul loathed past sin, I believe hers did."

She died on January 17, 1861.

Her striving for a meek and lowly heart: was it a last desperate attempt to be impressive, now that her fading beauty no longer worked? It may be that her religious conversion was influenced in the beginning by frivolous speculations. Yet, emotional, irreal human beings such as Lola Montez, the adventuress, cannot clearly grasp the difference between trickery and truth. With final decay and death coming closer, her fear and faith grew stronger, and became almost sincere...

What melancholy problems puzzle our mind while we keep looking at the lurid portrait of this penitent, whose vehement charm once endangered a kingdom...

Another page! A new portrait! We are avid for gayer impressions...

Here, this one is beautiful and imposing, though not really gay. She resembles a Greek goddess, majestically erected in the picturesque drapery of her gown. And there, on another picture, in the pompous costume of the XVIth Century, the royal face framed by the high, stiff collar, gorgeously trimmed with jewels, she strikes you through her queen-like attitude. Whether in the mask of Phedre or in the magnificent disguise of Elizabeth, Queen of

England - she always remains Rachel, the most illustrious French tragedienne before Sarah Bernhardt: the lofty heroine, the sweet and mighty voice of Racine and Corneille, rejuvenated, transformed, more giving, more enchanting than ever.

Yes, she too has a prominent place in that glamorous guest book we are perusing. Elise Rachel Felix, dite Rachel, was the first actress to represent the French genius overseas - though she was the daughter of a German Jew who had settled at Lyons and was naturalized in France. Rachel had had a very hard time before she gained success. She began her career by singing and begging in the streets with her sister Sarah. She had to struggle and to go through many a humiliation, even when a few connoisseurs had already discovered her genius. Her unrestrained gestures expressed more authentic passion than the sacred tradition of the classic theatre allowed. It was almost shocking. But it was overwhelming too. Gradually Rachel began to win her long fight with a stubborn public. Her tour through the United States was supposed to crown impressively her career.

Tout Paris was startled when the great tragédienne announced her plan of visiting America. The witty chronicler of that memorable trip, Léon Beauvallet, describes the perplexity that prevailed in France over Rachel's daring enterprise.

"Rachel in America!

This news astonished at first; excited afterward.

Such a whim was not to be believed. One could almost pardon all her old escapades and understand that of St. Petersburg and Moscow; but a voyage to the other world! Ah! That indeed went beyond the limits of a joke, and the public began to grumble in earnest!

If it had merely grumbled: but it was not content with that! It was as jealous as a tiger, and wished at any price to avenge it-

self on this ungrateful Rachel, whom it loved so much, and who again betrayed it! And for whom, grand Dieu! For savages!"

The narrow-minded suspicion of the Parisian mob was to be refuted, of course, by the effusive reception America had in store for this lovely and lofty guest? But why, then, does Rachel try to hide, with a proud and timorous gesture, the newspaper clippings - those undeniable trophies of her transatlantic success?

The shameful truth is that her American tour was no triumph but a permanent tribulation. Either Rachel was actually in poor form, with her delicate health undermined by the hardships of a miserable youth; or else the American public of 1856 was not yet capable of appreciating her refined art and beauty. However, her debut at the Metropolitan Theatre was disappointing. The sparse applause came from the Frenchmen who attended the first performance. "As to the Americans," M. Beauvallet remarks, "one thing is certain, they did not understand a word of the entire piece." (Rachel starred in Corneille's tragedy *Les Horaces*.) "During these two acts, a time which seems to them two centuries, these good New-Yorkers were delightfully bored."

She played Racine's *Phedre*, and Adrienne Lecouvreur - a role especially written for her by M. Scribe. She presented it several times, and the audience perked up a little as Rachel and the other ladies of the cast paraded in this play in all her diamonds. She also showed Victor Hugo's Angelo and Mary Stuart by Lebrun. The audiences remained respectfully cool, and the papers coolly polite. People in Boston proved only a trifle more impressionable than the New York public had been; and audiences in other parts of the

country seemed even less understanding.

In the beginning, Rachel had been impressed, though slightly horrified, by American cities - particularly by the amazing city of New York. It looked to her like " a gigantic handbill of a mounteback company." The noise! The ugly, glaring colors! - especially on Broadway, " the Boulevard des Italiens of this place." She found it swarming with quacks, dentists, breeders of learned dogs, exhibitors of branded negresses, wild beast-tamers. One fancied oneself in the fair of an immense village. What a hubbub! What tumult! Cries and laughter; songs and oaths; the yells of newsboys mixed with the roar of carriages; the trumpets of the charlatans confounded with the bells on the mules who drag eternally on the thousands of railroads which furrow the streets.

Her aversion of American peculiarities naturally increased as her success diminished. The food was absolutely appalling: " Chocolate à la grease, milk à la sheep's brain...Oh! Paris dinners! Where are you!" - No rest, even at night. The delicate artiste was constantly harassed by mosquitos, " frightful wasps, gigantic crickets...It is the Walpurgis nights of the insects!"

How many perplexing, even repulsive features in American life!

"Do you know, for instance, in what way Americans applaud the finest things, and greatest artists? They whistle. With the Americans, to whistle, to yell, is to applaud... It is hard to believe the pass to which American impertinence often reaches. At railroad stations as in hotel saloons, it is not unusual to see them, with dirty shoes, and hat on head, brutally stretched on the seats of sofas...It is the custom of every American to have continually in his hand a pen or jack knife, and to whittle famously at the arm of his chair; this is his distinction, his occupation, and his amusement, for it kills both time and tragedy."

She was exhausted, and sick, and she finally collapsed in Havana. The Rachel company was disbanded; the gloomy Odyssey of

French tragedy in America had reached its end- but not yet the fatal consequences which this Transatlantic adventure was going to have for the unfortunate vedette. For the severe cold she had caught traveling on " those impossible American trains" turned out to be very nasty. It ended in a consumption from which she died, on January 3, 1858, hardly two years after the closing of her American tour. It is as though the chilly reception she was to meet in the United States had killed her...

A waft of bitterness and frustration touches us from her portrait. She had been loved in Paris, admired in London and St. Petersburg; why, then, did she have to fail in America?

European arrogance failed to realize that the great tragedienne was partly responsible herself for the failure of her undertaking. For those " barbaric Americans" were sensitive enough to feel that the celebrated visitor despised them. Many of the traveling European artists in that time regarded America as a still half-colonial country, useful chiefly as a gold-mine for themselves. While they scorned the poor manners of Yankee audiences, the Americans, in their turn, laughed at the pretentiousness and greed of their distinguished guests. The surprising fact is by no means that some of those European celebrities failed, but rather that, in spite of concealed or unconcealed tensions of this kind, some of them did enjoy a genuine and tremendous popularity in the United States.

Rachel and her friends had presumed that the sheer presence of so illustrious a person in New York would mean something like the appearance of a goddess among mortal beings. M. Beauvallet exclaimed:

"Rachel in America! Why, the Indian tribes themselves should have talked it over in their savage forests! And instead of that, they receive her just as they have received ten, twenty other actresses! - What am I saying! Jenny Lind was received like a queen. And yet, does Jenny Lind's talent, great as it may be, surpass Rachel's?"

Jenny Lind ... Are we still able to imagine the irresistible spell this simple name used to wield? Can we still understand the tremendous excitement caused by the arrival of the Swedish Nightingale? Her American concert tour, cleverly prepared by Phileas Taylor Barnum, the "greatest showman of the world", assumed indeed the character of a national event. It was the first time in history that a serious singer had been advertised and presented on a lavish scale. One may say that thanks to Jenny Lind pure vocal music was discovered as an object for big business enterprise...it was an entirely new racket, and "mighty Barnum" did an amazing job. The risk involved was considerable: Mlle. Lind demanded \$1000 for each concert; Barnum had to deposit \$187,000 in advance with her London bankers. But the great showman knew that he could take a chance. His instinct for sensational entertainment was infallible. He had discovered Joice Heth, the reputed colored nurse of Washington, as a stage attraction, and he was responsible for the world-wide glory of Tom Thumb, the most appalling and ingenious of all pygmies. He made a fortune with his Happy Family of learned birds and animals, and he was going to make another through his management of Jenny Lind.

In our gallery of vedettes the portrait of Jenny Lind is one of the most treasured items. It shows her in the moment when she appeared on the platform, at her first New York concert. The

gifted painter succeeded in giving us a drastic picture of the frenzied enthusiasm receiving her. 5000 people rose to their feet like one man - or rather, like a single monster roaring with admiration, frantic with that frightening sort of love which almost looks like hatred by the alarming degree of its intensity. A colossal giant produces with 5000 individual voices a hollow noise - threatening and dreadful. It drowns, mercilessly, Jenny Lind's first song - a sweet and simple little melody. The silenced nightingale, losing her grip on the situation, stands helplessly in the midst of the raving tumult, mouth ajar, with spread arms imploring her cruel admirers to allow her finally to sing...

She was worshipped, idolized by the American public. People paid fantastic prices to hear her, or rather to gloat upon her legendary figure. Stories circulated concerning her charming frankness, her active kindness, her serious, religious mind. People were pleased that she married during her stay in this country - although the gentleman of her choice was no American but one Mr. Goldschmidt from Hamburg. Before the wedding - which took place in Boston, on February 5, 1852 - she drew up a detailed settlement which guaranteed her exclusive control over her considerable fortune.

Even she, however, the well established, beloved Jenny was occasionally the target of naughty jokes, and even this lofty personality was not always spared by American wit. The public sometimes reacted against the appalling lack of taste of Barnum's clamorous publicity. Among the innumerable reports testifying to Mlle. Lind's popularity, there are some insidious documents which prove, more or less amusingly, that many people were irked by the

big showman's quackery, and refused to swallow all of his great or petty humbug without stint. Our album, colorful and comprehensive as it is, fortunately keeps the taunt as well as the praises. Not without a malicious smirk we discover lyrical productions such as Barnum's Parnassus, a lengthy poem which appeared in 1850 and was announced as "being - confidential disclosures of the Prize Committee of the Jenny Lind Song. Respectfully dedicated to the American Eagle."

A duet between Jenny and her mighty manager begins with the following verses:

Sing, Jenny Lind, for Barnum hears
And listens, too, while both his ears
Drink in the vocal honey;
Sing for the credit of your name!
Sing for your transatlantic fame!
And Barnum's ready money!

She sang, sweet Jenny, long and well!
They piled the stage with fresh bouquets,
She curtsied, and the curtain fell,
And hid her from the raptured gaze.
She disappeared, but Barnum well
The matter ponders in his mind,
And in a fortnight more, the spell
Is woven, and at her hotel
The contract sealed and signed.

Both:
Whatever fall, we stand secure,
Whatever chance, our cards are sure,
For ever shall our fame endure,
For whothan we have higher claims,
We spread before the public eye
Two of the few immortal names,
That were not born to die.

For ever shall our fame endure...: Was he quite mistaken, that anonymous jester? Barnum's name is not yet forgotten, and people still remember Jenny Lind. But how stale, how academic became her glory, once so effulgent, sparkling with music and life.

All her magnificence withered, mortified by the passing years, gradually dying as her audience died - elderly men and women who had been moved, delighted by her glorious voice. Ah, her masterly trills! - her sweet piano and triumphant forte! - the sweeping impact of her inspired song

How many illustrious names we find as we turn over the leaves of our gloomy glamour-book, - and how many plaintive faces! What a ghastly procession of celebrated phantoms! La Patti, La Melba - performing matchless feats with their quavering voices, darting their astounding colorature into cloudless skies like fountains flinging up silvery water... Eleonora Duse, enthralling with her enigmatic smile, the sacerdotal gestures of her transparent hands, the mysterious sadness of her eyes and voice; loathing publicity but always focussing public interest- surrounded by the murky glory of her phthises and her involved romance with Gabriele D'Annunzio.... Anna Pawlowna, performing the immortal agony of a mythologic swan ... Nijinsky, muscular demigod, challenging with incredible jumps the laws of gravitation, raptured by the sacrilegious triumphs of his own technique - until he lost his mind with his weight and thought himself a horse doomed to leap in eternity; for the cruel gods had struck him with madness...

All of them came to this country - enchanting and scandalizing, cheered and criticized, harassed by reporters, rivals and admirers, hunting dollars and glory, catching colds in draughty hotel lobbies and dressing rooms, suffering from insomnia in Pullman cars ... They still keep a shady existence on some yellowing leaves dedicated to their memory.

But here is one who seems strikingly different - though her portraits, very many of them, parade in intimate neighborhood with the pictures of other late stars. This fascinating silhouette - slender, elastic, pulsing with dynamic nervousness-, whose is it? She wants to spring from the paper - avid for life, more of it, another seventy years. She begins to fidget, to move; her painted lips form syllables, words - beautiful French phrases, elegant and winged. What a voice! A golden voice! - La Voix d'Or...

Sarah Bernhardt- effulgent, radiant as ever; irritable as ever: for she seems slightly angry at her friends and admirers surrounding her in her Paris home as the court-flunkeys surround their queen. The apartment-- sumptuous and sultry, in the hideous style of the late XIXth. Century - is overcrowded with palm-trees in huge vases, brocade draperies, Chinese fans, tremendous mirrors lavishly framed in gold, and imposing marble busts, partly created by Mlle. Bernhardt herself, partly representing her portrait.

She looked like an elegant demon, in her black, tight gown, the eyes glowing morbidly in the paleness of her expressive face. She said sharply: " And why, if I may ask, should I not go to the United States? Do you consider me not good enough for the Yankees?" She darted ominous glances- while the nonplussed friends tried to convince her that they had never dreamed of so absurd an idea. On the contrary, Sarah rather was too good for the Americans, according to the hasty asseverations of her flunkeys. Besides, she should think of her very delicate health. Had she forgotten the gloomy story of Rachel? But Sarah emphatically declared that she did not like to be compared with anyone, not even with Rachel. She grew rather hectic and made wide, dramatic gestures, as she announced, in a sudden fit of rhapsodic ecstasy, that she had une envie folle de voyager; to see other things, to

breathe another air ...Her friends nodded respectfully.

All of them knew, of course, as well as she did, that the main reason for her sudden decision was a serious quarrel with the management of the Comédie Française. M. Perrin, the powerful chief of that institute, had protested against her disturbing eccentricities. He disapproved of her many and exhausting hobbies. Her passion for painting and sculpture, M. Perrin felt, was likely to distract her from her theatrical work. Did the stage not offer her enough laurels to rest on? She was too ambitious, and had a craze for originality. There was, for instance, that wild habit of hers of flying around in balloons. She adored champagne luncheons at an altitude of 8,500 feet - a very unusual sort of fun which her boss considered undignified as well as dangerous. He finally lost his temper when Sarah's pilot friend had a minor accident and landed late at night in the suburbs, from where the diva had to take a slow train back to the city. The situation ended with a rupture and even a trial between the actress and the management of the Théâtre Français.

This was a serious matter and rather a disastrous situation, even for Sarah Bernhardt. The agent Jarrett, who had already made her two offers for American tours, timed the third one very cleverly - three days after her resignation from the State Theatre. She accepted, and M. Jarrett promptly informed the American impresario Henry Abbey, who sailed immediately for Paris. Neither Sarah nor her managers wanted to lose time. She was in a hurry to leave Paris...

Everything went very rapidly; a few hasty though effective farewell-scenes; a few kisses for Maurice, her little son with the unknown father; some outbursts of fury about malicious articles

ridiculing her voyage - and she embarked , on October 15, 1880, on the vessel Amérique. She spent the first hours of the journey hysterically laughing and crying by turns in her luxurious state-room which was lavishly decorated with her initials. Finally she appeared on deck in a fantastic costume de voyage; and proceeded " to save the life" of an elderly lady who almost broke her neck by almost falling down a steep staircase. The lady turned out to be Mrs. Lincoln, the President's widow, another occasion for tears and giggles and tremendous excitement on the part of Sarah. Her life - she felt - was full of mysterious and significant surprises. For was it not an actor who had caused the President's death? And now an actress of all people prevented his mourning widow from re-joining her beloved husband in a better world...Sarah was deeply impressed by so queer and tragic a coincidence.

The American public, thanks to Mr. Abbey's shrewd propaganda, was familiar with various perplexing features of Sarah Bernhardt's amazing character and career. People expected a personage half-monstrous, half divine. Everybody knew she was extremely thin- like a ghost, a dream -, and witty New Yorkers repeated the Parisian joke about the " empty carriage" which arrives at the Comédie Française, and out gets Sarah Bernhardt...Dreadful stories circulated concerning her macabre eccentricities, her perverse and cruel tastes. She tortured her pet dogs, played with snakes and young tigers, and - worst of all - had the lugubrious habit of sleeping in a coffin. She even had herself photographed lying there - envelopped in a long, immaculate shroud, in the attitude of a corpse - eyes closed, arms crossed over her breast, decorated with white flowers, a wreath and palms, and with a candle burning on the table beside her. This was in preparation for the day when she would be placed for

her last sleep in that hard and narrow bed of ebony, lined with white satin. All this sounded sinister indeed. On the other hand, rumours attributed to her almost God-like qualities. For apparently she was able to do and to achieve anything she wanted. She was not only the greatest actress of the country but also a distinguished sculptress. Her marble group Après la Tempête attracted the attention of connoisseurs in the Paris Salon of 1876. And her voice was absolutely irresistible: it was Victor Hugo himself who had coined the poetical designation of the Golden Voice - la Voix d'Or -: the fabulous Victor Hugo, most illustrious poet of the century, who had knelt to Sarah Bernhardt and exclaimed: "Merci! Merci!", when she acted in his play Guy Blas. He wrote verses for her on a skull, and after the first performance of his drama Hernani, honored her with these lines:

"Madame: You have been great and charming; you have moved me - me, an old fighter, and one part, when the public whom you had enchanted cheered you, I wept. This tear which I shed because of you and for you, is at your feet, where I place myself. Victor Hugo."

This eloquent little note was accompanied by a small box containing a fine chain bracelet from which hung one diamond drop.

Her fame was dazzling, irritating, stupendous. When still young she was able to say: "My celebrity has grown annoying for my enemies, a little too clamorous for my friends." And Alexandre Dumas, son, quoted one of his friends as having said on his death-bed: "I am happy to die, for at least I won't have to listen any more to all that talk about Sarah Bernhardt..."

All details of her past and present life were puzzling and exciting. She was a Jewess by origin, and yet a faithful adherent of the Catholic Church. She was baptized only as a girl of thirteen,

and when she entered the convent of Grands-Champs, she had to abandon the name of Sarah. She was called Rosine by the religious sisters, but when she left the convent she was Sarah again.

She was merely half French - as was Rachel -, her mother being of Dutch descent; nevertheless she emphasized constantly and belligerently her feelings of French patriotism. Wherever she went, she appeared as the official emissary of France, l'ambassadrive de la Patrie, stirring up the patriotic ecstacy of French colonies all over the world. In Copenhagen, just a few months before her American tour, she insulted the Prussian Minister who tried to toast her at a gala supper. During the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, she was beside herself with chauvinism, ran an ambulance, and went so far as to refuse pity to the wounded unless they were French uniform. Before the war started, however, she had vehemently condemned it as an "infamy which protected, excused, and glorified shameful crimes." Utterances of this sort even led to a breach with a general of her acquaintance. Her mother and her pretty aunt Rosine sojourned in Germany during the war, gambling at Bad Homburg ...

People were bewildered by so many contradictions. They forgot, or failed to realize, that in an extraordinary case such as Sarah Bernhardt's, most of the matters and feelings which have importance in the lives of other men and women, are merely accidental, or rather are nothing but a pretext, the casual accompaniment to the one dominating aim: the performance, the show. For she was an actress, and nothing else. She was neither patriotic nor pacifistic; neither Catholic nor Jewish. The novelist Henry James gives the clue to her personality in speaking of the heroine of The Tragic Muse:

"Her character was simply to hold you by the particular spell: any other - the good-nature of home, the relation to her mother, her friends, her lovers, her debts, the practice of virtues or industries or vices - was not worth speaking of: They were the fictions and shows; the representation was the deep substance."

It was an actress who arrived at New York, on the chilly morning of October 27, 1880, welcomed by a frozen Hudson, a wan, pinkish sun struggling against the mist, and by many little boats haudily decorated with the French colours. It was an actress who wept with happiness when she found among the countless letters, telegrams and cables a message from her young son Maurice. It was an actress who fainted when she had to shake too many hands: "Vite, de l'air! Pauvre jeune femme! Otez-lui son chapeau, son corset!....Elle n'en porte pas..."

How wonderfully arranged, how cleverly staged seems every detail of this American tour! The first great scene took place at the Albemarle Hotel where the diva had headquarters. The drawing room of her vast suite was decorated with busts of Racine, Molière, and Victor Hugo, and lavishly furnished with pillows and palms, to remind the celebrated guest of her own voluptuous home in Paris. Sarah, however, overlooking all these beauties piled up in her honor, locked herself into her bed room which she barricaded with heavy chairs. She was having her crise de nerfs. Jarrett implored her to open the door, to address at least a few friendly words to the visitors and reporters who were jammed in the drawing room. But the diva coolly replied that she wanted to sleep. She did have that miraculous ability to sleep for an hour, or only for a

few minutes, in the midst of her guests, or in her dressing room while awaiting her cue. She commanded sleep as Napoleon did - which, by the way, was by no means the only resemblance between the militant actress and that theatrical soldier. For a full hour she reposed on the floor of her boudoir, while the visitors in the drawing room waited, then she called her maid: "Félicie! ... Une robe blanche!" And then, the entrée - the grand, the well-prepared entrée. Like a queen, a goddess, she appears among her humble guests - graciously smiling, serene, beautifully costumed, frail and yet majestic.

Those boys from the American press, however, are tough fellows, as everyone knows, and not easily intimidated. The inquisition began at once: What is your favorite role, M'am? What is your favorite dish? Jarrett declared, "Oatmeal",- although Sarah had no idea what it was. All the journalists jotted down Oatmeal: in a few hours the entire continent, from coast to coast, would receive the thrilling news. The next one inquired: "Are you jewishcatholicprotestantmohammedanboudhisatheistic or deist?" She did not understand at first, then replied with brassy determination: "Catholic." Finally she tore to pieces a picture drawn by one of the artists present of her. The cartoon appeared in next day's paper, with some nasty remarks on the ill-tempered model. Sarah was disgusted with American newspaper men. Later in Europe, she exchanged her dreary and burlesque experiences with one of her most ardent admirers, Oscar Wilde, who had also been harassed by reporters during his stay in America. "Bad manners make a journalist" remarked Oscar, and he explained to his friend Sarah: "Americans

are not uncivilized, as they are so often said to be, they are de-civilized ...One reporter impudently interrogated me as to the temperature preferred for my tub and said that he had been told that I always had the water lightly colored with triple essence of ver-bena."

After the grotesque prologue at Albemarle's, one breath-taking incident followed another. The customs-officers acted as the chorus of the next great ensemble scene. They were only doing their duty of course when they examined Mademoiselle Bernhardt's 42 huge trunks piled up at the Booth Theatre. The actress, however, regarded such behavior as a personal insult, a deplorable lack of tact and courtesy, in fact as an abominable crime. She raved with fury when the officials dug "with their dirty hands" among her precious and fragile gowns and coats, gloves, shoes, laces, hats, furs, feathers, silk and linen. Her anger passed beyond all limits of decency when two elderly women entered the scene, - "hideous creatures," she called them, "ghastly witches", but they were actually two dressmakers who served as experts to evaluate the wardrobe of arriving actresses. The two "malicious monsters" were very much impressed by the diva's treasures, and especially admired a glamorous costume, all trimmed with pearls, which she wore in la Dame aux Camélias. According to her own report, however, the "Experts" grew very excited about so much elegance and refinement, and implored the authorities to forbid the import of such sinful luxury; for it would mean too cruel a competition to them, the American dressmakers: "All our patrons will ask for clothes as beautiful as these, once they have seen them!" The Golden Voice

shrilled with fury. She would certainly have produced another most terrific crise de nerfs had not one of her friends got the brilliant idea of asking her to inspect the new Brooklyn Bridge. Apparently she was really impressed by the greatness and sober beauty of that huge construction. "Isn't it magnificent," she exclaimed, again and again. "Isn't it wonderful and encouraging to think that human beings were able to create this solid miracle!" She seemed honestly thrilled to learn that the bridge could hold ten street cars full of people, and a hundred carriages besides...In an unpredictable emotional way this most selfish, introverted creature, Sarah Bernhardt, was impressionable. She could burn for an idea, for an artistic or technical achievement- provided, of course, that there was an audience to watch her ecstasy.

The annoying affair with the customs-officers dragged on for several days, Finally the Board of Customs claimed 7000 dollars deposit to the hands of an attorney. Sarah promptly sued the American authorities. She was very fond of trials. The atmosphere of a court room was almost as exciting as an opening night ...

The first performance at the Booth Theatre, on November 8, was an impressive event. Sarah had chosen Adrienne Lecouvreur for her American debut- the very play that Scribe had written for that other French-Jewish genius, la Rachel , who had failed to conquer New York. Sarah, la divine, was more successful. The Golden Voice triumphed. After the show, the people besieged the Albemarle Hotel: she had to greet the cheering throng again and again, from the balcony.

There is no doubt that Sarah owed her success in part to her

scandalous reputation. People rushed to the theatre to see the "Monster of the Apocalypse", and were pleasantly surprised to find a human being with a moving voice and expressive gestures. Young girls were not allowed to go to the theatre when "that evil demon" was playing and clergymen zealously warned their congregations against this creature sent from the rotten Old World to spoil the purity of the New. Mothers called meetings to discuss "how to defend ourselves against Sarah Bernhardt, who has come to corrupt our sons." No wonder that these worthy matrons were aflutter. Aside from the rumors, a plague of scurrilous literature on Sarah Bernhardt had spread over this country, pamphlets for instance with such promising titles as "The Love-affairs of Sarah Bernhardt", in which the actress was accused of having seduced in turn the Tsar, Napoleon III and Pius IX. Another literary concoction dealt with the "four sons" which the sinful vedette had ostensibly born to four different fathers, a hairdresser, Napoleon III, the Pope, and a fellow condemned to death for particide.

This was all very funny, and M. Jarrett considered it fine publicity; in Chicago he even went so far as to send 200 dollars to a bishop who had preached against "that wicked woman" -: "In appreciation of the swell propaganda you've kindly made for us", wrote the impudent agent. Nevertheless, this uproar of puritanism, this constant turmoil around Sarah's provocative personality, had disturbing consequences as well. M. Jarrett hardly laughed when the Methodist in a Sunday issue - the circulation of which amounted to 200,000 copies - bitterly attacked not only Mlle. Bernhardt but also the corrupt society of London. The Methodist was deeply

shocked by the fact that aristocratic English ladies had received "an actress and courtesan who had a son but no husband". The immediate effect of this article was that all respectable homes in New York, Boston, Philadelphia closed their doors to Mlle. Bernhardt.

Yet she was received by some people whom she considered more important than the four hundred; After her last performance in New York - it was a matinee of "La Dame aux Camélias", and a wild success-, she paid a visit to Thomas Edison at his residence in Menlo Park. Her special train was decorated with flowers and the French colors, as usual. Mrs. Edison welcomed her at the door. It was night, but "the glittering electric light gave the impression of effulgent morning." Mr. Edison was somewhat reticent at first: "He probably took me for just another of those publicity-crazy foreign actresses," Sarah naively remarks. They made friends, however, after half an hour. He explained her his telephonic discoveries and his amazing phonograph. She was enchanted, keenly interested, and understood everything he said. He had the most wonderful blue eyes, and in short was "a delightful and timid scholar." She was also moved by his profound love of Shakespeare. He had a definite resemblance, she felt, falling back on that well-worn French compliment with Napoleon. But Napoleon, of course, was "the genius of destruction", while Edison seemed to her the "genius of creation." This startling observation was the last jewel that she offered to the journalists, who had followed her to Menlo Park, as they followed her, observant and malicious shadows, wherever she went.

More or less witty cartoons of Sarah Bernhardt were published

in all American papers. Artists tried to be funny about the fact of her speaking French, about her thin figure, her bad temper, her many lovers, her greed, her success, her peculiar habit of throwing things into people's faces. Her distorted portrait appeared on huge posters, carried in the streets, advertising certain commodities or localities. Huge letters announced: "Sarah, my dear, you are thin, but drink DELBECK and be happy!" All sorts of business enterprises used the celebrated name. "Bernhardt Fish Balls, only 10 cents!" Or: "Carter's Liver Bitters will make you EAT!" - and the picture of a haggard woman with the features of that well-known skeleton, Sarah Bernhardt.

What annoyed her most was the fact that the French public was informed of all this humiliating humbug. The Parisian papers ironically remarked: "Even on her most beautiful days of triumph, Sarah gains in America the same kind of success as, some time ago, Tom Thumb, that amusing dwarf." And the journalists added with a certain malice: "Apparently it costs something to make a million!"

She knew perfectly well that she was not far from making a fool of herself. Yet she could not resist a chance for new publicity. Sometimes she bitterly regretted her weakness - for instance, in the grotesque and agonizing case of the big whale. This huge creature belonged to a tiny man, Mr. Henry Smith, a shrewd and obstinate fellow. He jumped on Mlle. Bernhardt's carriage when she arrived at Boston, and implored her to see the whale. It was a living whale, Mr. Smith promised - still breathing, and a most impressive animal...

And God created great whales - says Genesis. The one that Mr. Smith had in tow and that Sarah inspected was an ordinary whale - not the great fish that swallowed up Jonah, not Leviathan the

piercing, crooked serpent, the dragon of the sea. It was not Moby Dick, the White Whale, Godlike and appalling. It was merely a remote and humble cousin of Leviathan, a perfectly normal and ordinary whale, yet Sarah was fascinated by its size and mythological dignity. She took a walk on its back which was covered with glazed frost. Twice she fell down full length on its spine. Then Mr. Smith persuaded her to pull a piece of the shattered whale bone from the mouth of the wounded monster - a sliver of the bone that goes into the creation of women's corsets. When she arrived at New Haven, a few days later, she was received by men carrying huge posters: "Come and see the enormous cetacean which Sarah Bernhardt killed by tearing out its whalebone for her corsets. These are made by Madame Lily Noe, who lives...etc." Another poster announced that the dead whale was at least "as flourishing" as when it was alive.

This went definitely too far. Sarah fainted, screamed, cried, and raved. When Henry Smith dared to visit her at the hotel, the pugnacious lady threatened him with her notorious whip. She wanted to cancel her dates, to return to Europe; Jarrett had to remind her severely of her contracts.

At the next stopping place - Hartford - the whole comedy was repeated: the horrible parade of posters, impudent Mr. Smith's visit at the hotel, Sarah's tears and screams. And all this happened again at the next stop and the one after that. Mr. Smith, merciless though polite, followed the diva wherever she went, and with him went the whale. Mr. H. Smith was a chubby little gentleman, square all over, wearing a fur cap pulled down over his eyes, and an enormous diamond in his cravat. He had an unctuous,

yet very firm way of talking. Mlle. Bernhardt threw flowers, powder-puffs, glasses, metallic instruments and curses into his face. Mr. Smith said: " I'm sorry you don't like me, Ma'am. I hate to see you in such a state. But you should realize that I'm not bothering you for my own sake. It is only for the sake of the whale. He needs publicity, you see."

The whale became a nightmare, an obsession with Sarah Bernhardt. The dead monster persecuted her into her dreams. She was chased, haunted, tormented by the whale. He was her bad conscience, the appalling symbol of her humiliation. She was the victim, the deer; Mr. Smith and his monstrous fish were the hunters. The victim's spirit was broken. She groaned: 'How have I deserved this?' Mr. Smith said unctuously: " I'm desolate, Ma'am. It must be- for the whale ... " He sent her bouquets. She wept.

She finally escaped by going to Montreal, where she was received with frenzied enthusiasm. The usual chorus of Vive la France had in this formerly French city an especially passionate, even aggressive tenor. The station was illuminated with lamps carried by bears - an original idea which amused and at the same time frightened the Golden Voice. A young man named Louis Fréchette recited an endless poem, À Sarah Bernhardt. It was freezing cold. La patronne - as the members of the troupe called her, with a mixture of malice and veneration - escaped, once more, to one of her well-tested fainting fits. The immediate consequence was a sort of panic among the people. They saw their idol staggering, falling- and, hysterical and silly as masses are, they seemed willing to trample her down. A tall young fellow carried her away in his powerful

arms; but when she woke up, at the Windsor Hotel, he had disappeared.

He showed up again, however, the next morning, - a perfect chevalier, very handsome, elegant and charming. He brought violets to the patronne, who was charmed with his beautiful manners and attractive figure. She told him: "You've saved my life, Monsieur." He blushed: "Don't mention it, Ma'am." Both of them smiled, but at this moment Jarrett rushed into the room. He was very pale. Sarah could grasp only snatches of his excited whispering: "Detectives...Murder...New Orleans...No chance to get away..." The young man shuddered, his face turned white, and now it was Sarah who had to prop him up, but only for a few seconds - then he regained his expression of gallantry. Before he left he demanded: "When you learn who I am, Madam, don't think of the man who was fortunate enough to save your life! Swear to me you won't!" Whispered the Golden Voice: " Je vous le jure, Monsieur."

Later she was informed of his execution, but obstinately refused to hear any details concerning his crime or punishment. In her memory he remained the handsome and gallant young gentleman who had protected her when she was in danger.

For days Sarah Bernhardt was depressed because of this sinister and romantic incident. Finally she cheered up again thanks to the holy indignation of the Bishop of Montreal, who shouted against that immoral plays, " Adrienne Lecouvreur", and against frivolous modern France altogether.

All the more responsive were the Montreal students who filled the gallery of the theatre night after night. They sent pigeons

from the balcony to the stage, leaving poetical messages and flowers which were graciously accepted by the Golden Voice. The singing of the "Marseillaise", at the opening night had the character of a violent political demonstration. The Governor of Canada, however, the Marquis de Lorne, son-in-law of Queen Victoria responded cleverly and with dignity to this provocation. He was the first to rise at the opening of the French anthem and when it was over he promptly made an imperious gesture to the orchestra commanding the musicians to play God Save the King.

And Sarah Bernhardt's eventful tour through America continued - this prosperous, fatiguing pilgrimage which a minor though observant member of the company, Mlle. Marie Colombier, called "notre roman comique à travers l'Amérique."

In Chicago they stopped at the Palmer House, that "vast barracks of iron and marble", and la patronne was very pleased with Mr. Palmer's gracious and thoughtful manners. She enjoyed herself more in Chicago than at any other place on the tour. Her sense of well-being was slightly disturbed, however, by a visit to the slaughter-houses. She watched the gigantic butchery with horror and delight, spellbound and terrified by the endless bellow of agony, the sickening smell of blood. She almost fainted, yet could not leave, captivated by that primitive and shocking drama of death. "It was quite an experience", she admitted later, thrilled though somewhat exhausted. "Une impression tout à fait hoffmannesque..." How typically French it is, this sophisticated yet naive comparison of the most prosaic, most ghastly spectacle with the German romanticist, E.T.A. Hoffmann, who represented to cultured Frenchmen

the very essence of ghoulish fantasy.

They travelled from town to town, from city to city, in their special train - three Pullman cars, carrying the 42 trunks, the impresarios and secretaries, the malcontent actors, the servants, the hairdressers, and la patronne - always greedy for money, hankering for success, avid for more adventures, more action; restless, erratic, whimsical, cruel, lovely, feline, inscrutable, and primitive.

They played "La Dame aux Camélias", and "Frou-Frou", and "La Princesse George" by Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo's "Hernani", and Racine's "Phèdre". It pained them to be obliged to have the orchestra play the quadrille of Offenbach's "Belle Hélène" during the intermission of "Phèdre". The members of the troupe complained about the poor American food, their miserable salaries, the exhausting traveling, and the lack of sleep. Marie Colombier, whom Sarah regarded as an old and faithful friend, wrote malicious letters to the Paris papers behind the back of her patronne, describing the tour as a failure.

This statement, however, is refuted by the very figures given by Marie Colombier in her book "Voyages avec Sarah Bernhardt en Amérique". "Sarah came to America with the sole purpose of making dollars," this insidious friend remarks, and she adds, with a kind of embittered admiration: "And she got them all right. 600,000 francs for 100 performances is not bad at all."

Indeed, it seems rather good - and it goes to prove that the Golden Voice had crowded houses almost everywhere. There were, of course, some unfortunate exceptions. In Springfield, Mass., for

instance, people did not like "Camille", and the cool reception they gave the French company was like an icy shower after the triumph at Montreal. In Mobile, Alabama, they had to perform in a miserable barn, the only theatre in the town being taken by the actor Barrett. The wings fell down on the players' heads while Marguerite Gautier was having dinner gaily with her friends, in "Camille"; little negro lads in the audience roared with laughter, the curtain had to fall, M. Jarrett was obliged to pay back the entrance money to the half-amused, half-disappointed crowd and la patronne went through another crise de nerfs.

Her impression of Baltimore was one of "deadly cold hotels, an icy theatre, and very beautiful women." Of Philadelphia she said: "I did not like this very fine city." She was saddened there by the news of Gustave Flaubert's death - : "mon ami Gustave Flaubert, the writer who was most zealously concerned with the beauty of our language." Boston, she states, belongs to the women- and she quotes the legend of the female who was the first human being to set foot on Boston's soil. The Boston ladies are "puritan with intelligence, independent with grace." They are almost all spinsters- if we believe Sarah's reports- seeking a substitute for matrimonial happiness in scholarships and athletics.

A terrific flood almost prevented the troupe from reaching New Orleans. The raging water endangered the crossing of the Bay of St. Louis; but Sarah bribed the engine driver with \$ 2.500 to risk the impossible. The undermined bridge broke down just a few seconds after the train had gone over it. The Golden Voice arrived at New Orleans in excellent humour. She liked the city though it

was poor and dirty. "The French are bad colonists", she remarked. "St. Louis, too, is in a deplorable state." Yet it made her happy to hear the coachman at the station speaking his French argot, with a charming little Marseille accent.

Hundreds of negroes were drowned in the flood, while others could not be persuaded to leave the ruins of their huts, washed away by the merciless onslaught of the water. "L'eau s'en aller," they mumbled. "Maison trouvée...Moi refaire..." Sarah was deeply touched.

A miserable place, this Nouvelle-Orléans; but gifted with an infinite charm. It rained continually-; "but there was sun in the eyes of the inhabitants." Moreover she found there a great deal of the kind of excitement that was as vital to her as air. Several colored children were killed by crocodiles, and Sarah played with the idea of taking a few of those monsters along, as a new attraction for her macabre boudoir in Paris. She was also highly amused by the unusual experience of her hairdresser, M. Ibé, who had a habit of spending the night in the theatre, sleeping in the huge trunk that held the company's wigs. One night all the wigs began to slide mysteriously and heave and with horror he recognized the creatures that were sharing his hairy couch: two enormous serpents...La patronne laughed heartily when she heard it.

Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis, Louisville; Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Indianapolisin St. Joseph they drank "the best beer of the world." Somewhere in Illinois they had to stop the train because of the heavy snow, and they amused themselves by playing with snow-balls...Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo...:

everywhere the enchanting and provocative song of the Golden Voice.

In St. Louis, she agreed to exhibit her jewels in the windows of an astute jeweller, who considered this publicity for his store important enough to present the diva with a valuable gold cigarette holder, as "humble thanks for her generosity." This minor commercial enterprise, however, was to have unforeseen consequences of a rather disturbing nature. For a gang of boys had been inspired by the dazzling exhibition to plan a large-scale robbery. Somewhere between St. Louis and Cincinnati, M. Jarrett discovered a fellow hidden under one of the Pullman cars. The frightened Irish lad confessed everything, and revealed the whole conspiracy. He had been supposed to take the last car off the train, since it was here that Sarah usually traveled, enjoying the changing views from the open platform. The pals of the little criminal were waiting at a certain spot, not far away, and intended to "finish" the foreign lady. The special train rushed back to St. Louis where a little army of detectives was hired. A freight train preceded the Pullmans when they set out again for Cincinnati. The gangsters were caught and arrested. Their leader, a boy by the name of Albert Wirtz, was hung. He was 25 years old, and of Belgian origin. Sarah did not like the idea of his being executed, being on principle opposed to capital punishment. Yet she had attended four executions, one in London, one in Spain, and two in Paris. The last criminal whose agony she had watched, was a young anarchist whom she knew. He died bravely, with the cry: "Vive l'anarchie!" He was a goodlooking youth. So was Albert Wirtz. And then she

thought of that powerful Adonis who had saved her life in Montreal. 'I bring bad luck' she meditated. 'It seems dangerous to save my life, or to discuss anarchy with me, or to steel my jewels ...' Yet it gave her a lustful shudder to imagine all those handsome lads, hanging on a gallows, or awaiting, chained on a block, the gruesome blow of the guillotine...

Rochester, Utica, Syracuse, Albany, Troy, Worcester, Providence, Newark...In the smaller towns they spent the nights in the Pullman cars which were more comfortable than the hotels. They went to Washington, and Sarah found it depressing, " of an irritating sadness." She was not received by the President. In Philadelphia, where they stopped for the second time, they had to face the competition of " mighty Barnum" who filled the city with a hundred gaudy cars, elephants, heralds in red uniforms, innumerable flags and posters. and the clamor of Wagnerian tunes.

Marie Colombier claims that the farewell performances of the Bernhardt troupe in New York were failures. Jarrett arranged a special matinée for artists and journalists to overcome the public apathy. Sarah played "La Princesse George", and counted a hundred and thirty bouquets in her dressing room, among them a very beautiful one from the great Italian actor Salvini. She also assures us in her Mémoires that she had to make fourteen curtain calls after the last performance of " Camille". She was asked to say a few words, and whispered: " I can't speak; but I can tell you: thank you! thank you! with all my heart!" Marie Colombier remarks that Sarah's flowers at her "représentation d'adieu" consisted of one bouquet from her own company. Only a few people appeared at the boat to see the diva off. It was a definite anti-climax, compared

with the turmoil of her arrival.

One man, however, proved faithful to the last. This was Henry Smith, the fellow with the whale. He waited for Sarah in her stateroom and even tried to present her with some worthless jewels. The Golden Voice shouted: "Get out of here! Crook! Brute! Son of a ...! I want you to die - soon, and in awful pain! "

This was the last utterance of the Golden Voice in the United States.

Her first words on her return in France, were addressed to her young son Maurice, whom the American ministers and club ladies had multiplied to four. Maurice - mon bonheur! ma joie! mon tout! plus cher que tout! He welcomed his famous mother at Le Havre.

Said the famous mother: "How tall you are, little Maurice!"

And the son, blushing like a little girl:

"I can't help it, maman."

In America people had greeted her with "Vive la France"; in France she was received with "Vive Sarah Bernhardt." But there were other sounds, nasty insinuations, the ugly whisper of slander and mockery. She could take it; she was able to answer, to parry ~~malignant~~ talk; for she was very strong - stronger now than ever. There can be no doubt that the first American tour had a very definite effect on her development. The success in the New World soothed her vanity as an actress and strengthened her self-confidence, profoundly shaken by the fiasco at the Comédie and it is no mere coincidence that the first volume of her autobiography ends

with her triumphant return from the United States. With a sort of proud pedantry she gives the exact business balance of the entire tour: It lasted seven months, she played in 50 cities, giving 156 performances - "La Dame aux Camélias" 65 times, "Frou-Frou" 41 times, etc.-; the total income of the tour was 2,667,600 francs, or an average of 17,100 francs for each performance. To these imposing figures she adds nothing but a few haughty and inspired sentences, to the effect that she is now free, strong, independent; she has liberated herself from the chains of the Comédie Française, of Paris, France, her friends and her family; the world is open to her, eagerly expecting her to come, to be seen, and to conquer. There had been a time when she desired to die young. But now she exclaims arrogantly: "I resolved to live. I resolved to be the great artiste that I longed to be."

This fragmentary autobiography is bristling, of course, with fantastic lies, shameless exaggerations and boasts. Her vanity sometimes assumes the alarming character of a pathological delusion of grandeur. Most of the general statements she makes about herself are based on obvious misunderstandings or deliberate falsifications, and the title of the book is in itself an error or a pretentious lie. "Ma double Vie..." Why and in what respect was her life "double"? Her life had only one direction, one aim, one content: the performance and its success. There was nothing else. She is also untruthful or mistaken when she states, and frequently repeats: "Life has taught me that if one is to be somebody, it can only be after death." This may be true for certain creative spirits, but it becomes an absurdity in the case of

an actress who lives for and by the present moment alone, and whose posthumous fame is nothing but the pallid reflection of the spell once exerted on her contemporaries.

It is all the more startling therefore to discover, among so many errors and distortions, a sentence of indubitable and almost terrifying honesty. When Sarah decided to live for a very long time and to become the great artiste that she longed to be, she reports that she felt " a great malicious joy thinking of the infernal displeasure of my enemies."

She was hated by many. Her temperament was such that any challenge intensified her will to resist, increased her strength, doubled her ambition. She was abused by critics, colleagues, agents, by vulgar antisemites, sometimes even by the public. When her popularity seemed about to pale, she created a new role, and in a triumph greater than any before, forced the public to her feet again.

She regarded the world as a huge theatre, arranged by a clever master builder and divine manager with the outspoken purpose of creating a worthy stage for the great Sarah. It was clear that the essential function and mission of mankind was to listen to the Golden Voice. In Brazil and Australia, in Spain and Mexico, in St. Petersburg, San Francisco, and Buenos Aires, people longed to see her, to praise her, to fall in love with her, to pay fabulous sums for the marvellous spectacle of her gestures. She considered the United States a fairly good country because its people fulfilled, with ever-lasting patience and ever-increasing enthusiasm, the one duty of their existence : - to gaze in admiration at Sarah,

la divine. She came to the U.S. again in 1887, after an extensive tour through South and Central America, and in 1891 she started at the Garden Theatre in New York a tour around the world, which lasted two years. Her visit to New York in 1896 coincided with that of Eleonora Duse, who was considered her only dangerous rival. Sarah remarked: " She may be a great actress, but she certainly is no great Artiste -", which is about the most absurd thing one possibly could say about her. The Golden Voice, however, proved to be stronger than Duse's over-discreet, aristocratic art. Eleonora failed, Sarah came out victorious.

Even during the intervals between her starring tours, however, the American public was kept informed of her scandals and successes abroad. Sarah Bernhardt-fans in New York, Boston, or Chicago knew about her new home on the Boulevard Pércire in Paris - a veritable palace which cost the little fortune of 215,000 francs. The more money she made the more extravagant she became. She was constantly harassed by the most embarrassing debts, especially when she had her own theatres. Then came the startling romantic love affair and marriage. This was a whirlwind affair that bewildered even her intimate friends. She declared: " What I have decided must be done." Her choice was exceedingly handsome and rather insignificant; a young Greek by the name of Aristide Damala who had been the "leading juvenile" of her company. He was vain and lazy, and she was madly in love. Marriage with la patronne had never entered his head; she had to struggle for his love and hand; she was nearly 38, he was 27. People in Melbourne and Madrid, in Vienna and Kansas City envied him: Lucky fellow! How very happy he must be!

But he was extremely unhappy. He left her, and led an adventurous, exhausting life in Africa. When he finally returned to Paris, he was hopelessly addicted to drugs. He died in 1889, and Sarah wept. He was the only one, she declared, that I have really loved... She sometimes signed her letters as Veuve Damala. At that time she was living with the playwright and novelist Richepin.

The whole world was amused and disgusted with the clamorous scandal provoked by a filthy book, entitled "Mémoires de Sarah Bernhardt." The author was Sarah's old friend and colleague, Marie Colombier, who had abandoned the stage and become a professional journalist. The pornographic concoction which she presented as Sarah's "Mémoires", were a masterpiece of abject yet skillful perfidy. She portrayed her former friend as a vicious, profoundly abnormal and thoroughly perverted creature. The general uproar that ensued was bad enough; but Sarah made it worse by running into Marie's apartment, armed with a whip and a dagger, and accompanied by her son Maurice and her lover Richepin. The Golden Voice, beside herself with fury, shouted, cursed, threatened - while Richepin amused himself by slitting the hangings and ripping up the sofas with a penknife. La patronne joined him, and turned everything in the apartment upside down, not sparing precious glasses and beloved souvenirs. Marie Colombier succeeded in escaping, trembling with fear... Within half an hour the incredible story was all over Paris and that same night the correspondent of the New York Herald cabled 6000 words about the tragi-comic incident over the ocean.

Her legend became more and more fabulous: she travelled over the countries and continents of the world like a half-mythological

personality. The remark coined in connection with Victor Hugo - that he was a madman obsessed with the idea of being Victor Hugo - is even more appropriate here. Sarah Bernhardt was haunted by the mania of being Sarah Bernhardt.

She made other American tours in 1900 and in 1905. Then in 1912 she appeared again, but as a ghost, a wan spectre making excited, jerking gestures on the screen: the undisputed queen of the theatre had become one of the first movie stars. This was in Adolph Zukor's importation of the four-reel French film, "Queen Elizabeth", starring Sarah Bernhardt. It was the first long "feature" to be advertised and presented on a grand scale. The success exceeded all expectations, and had far-reaching consequences. Mr. Zukor had tried to interest the Motion Pictures Patents Company, but met with a cool refusal. So he himself risked the costly experiment - which netted him 60,000 dollars. Encouraged by this sensational hit, he decided to found The Famous Players in Famous Plays Company. The motion pictures which, up to that time, had been considered a cheap entertainment for fairs and lunaparks, suddenly acquired, through Sarah Bernhardt's collaboration, the dignity of a real art. "This is my only chance to become immortal," she said smiling when asked to act in the film.

What a strange, half-embarrassing, half-moving experience - to see her on the screen, in a Film Museum! Her melodramatic and yet fidgety movements are grotesque, impossible. And yet, sometimes, in a peculiar pose, a surprising smile, her genius comes through. Suddenly she seems no longer the pale and pathetic shadow, but is the Queen, transforms herself into Elizabeth. And then -

the amazing, ridiculous and yet breath-taking scene of her death! It is a royal death, indeed - carefully prepared, solemnly performed. All the lords and ladies gathered around their mistress, respectfully await the supreme moment of her agony. She stands upright, erect, proudly facing a pile of pillows, especially arranged for this grand occasion - the death of Queen Elizabeth. Finally - her court is already becoming a little impatient - she raises both arms, opens her mouth in a silent lament, and then tumbles, falls like a cut tree. She is dead, but only temporarily: in a few seconds she is on her feet again, she smiles, and takes a coy bow.

No wonder that this queer work of art was so moving to Americans. No wonder, too that the eminent French film critic and director Louis Delluc wrote of Sarah Bernhardt: " When one sees her in "Mothers of France" or in Tristan Bernard's Jeanne Doré one cannot help but feel that this superb companion of Racine is not really at home in the shadowy, uncertain world of the screen."

We are told that she fainted when she saw herself in Camille. Nevertheless she continued to act for the motion pictures. For a while, she even played with the bold idea of adapting the Iliad for the screen. She risked an Adrienne Levouvreur picture as her own production, and in "Mothers of France" promoted pro-French propaganda in America during the World War. Sarah Bernhardt who so often had acted as the emissary of her country, finally sent her expressive shadow to act for the cause of France. Claude Farrère knew perfectly well what he was talking about, when he said: "There is no one who has done more than she has to defend and illustrate

our national genius in other countries."

She began her career under Napoleon III, and she lived to witness the Treaty of Versailles. She was of that majestic and tenacious line of great women of the 19th. century, like the Empress Eugenie and Cosima Wagner, surviving the triumphs of rivals, the intrigues of enemies, the insults of critics and flatteries of fools. At the age of seventy she lost a leg, as a result of a long and painful disease, but with that indestructable spirit that had marked her entire life she continued to play the young Duke of Reichstadt and Hamlet, Prince of the Danes. She saw America join her beloved France, she received the American boys in the streets of Paris, she saw Woodrow Wilson welcomed as a Messiah by the exhausted peoples of Europe. She retained her energy and ambition to the last, and when the physicians prohibited her from leaving her house, she received the film photographers in her bedroom. And when she finally died - for even her trained and tenacious body consisted of flesh and blood-, she could say: I have nothing to regret. I have done my best.

We can see her solemn departure, the last ceremony of her amazing life. She withdraws slowly, ascending in a balloon which seems slightly old-fashioned but is gaily decorated with the colors of France and innumerable newspaper clippings. She takes her last charming bows to the earthly public, and then arrives, fresh and eager, at the heavenly theatre, with a contemptuous glance for the colleagues and rivals she finds gathered there: I'll steal the show! - Fanny Elssler! - *They called you the Smile of your century -* ~~She didn't really have an affair with the~~ Duc of Reichstadt, but I was the Duke. I was L'Aiglon, and the *which means a rather dull flattery, indeed... But I am le dernier cri,*

the last scream of an epoch ---
~~wooden leg didn't disturb me in the least~~Lola Montez - a pathetic dilettante, lecturing on Heroines of History - but I was a heroine, and history will remember my name...And who is this funny little nightingale, if you please? - Jenny Lind ...Bon soir, chère Madame, enchantée de faire votre connaissance...Yet I feel rather sorry for you. It must be very dull to be a nightingale. I was an eagle, a tigress, and my Golden Voice was more powerful, more dangerous, more exciting than all your celebrated art...Et voici Rachel...tiens tiens tiens, ma pauvre petite Rachel - you look terribly sad. You had a pretty bad time in America, didn't you? Half-empty houses, not much applause. Well, when I played at the Garden Theatre...And how very clumsy of you, chère amie, to die so young. Why did you catch that cold, in an American train? Why I spent months in Pullman cars and managed to live - well, to live almost forever... I had special trains at my disposal, of course...

She missed her old friend Jarrett: he was probably in purgatory - which served him right. Was it absolutely necessary for him to die in Buenos-Aires when she was playing there? - But who was this short little fellow with the big diamond in his cravat? "It can't be true!" But it really was Henry Smith, and nestled to him like a pet dog was his horrid fish, Leviathan from the depth - the ghastly monster, the whale. Sarah was already looking for something to throw at the ~~brute~~, but suddenly she was sobered and comforted by a sonorous voice. It was St.Peter who said: "Je suis à vos pieds, Madame!" With his well-kept beard and benign smile, he had a definite resemblance to old Victor Hugo.

And Signora Duse? Tragic Eleonora? Was she still busy, down there? Still bewitching, enthralling, fooling people with her phoney innocence, her aristocratic shyness, the delicate gestures of her celebrated hands? 'I know your tricks, Eleonora,' Sarah thought, - without malice: rather with the detached respect of an expert. 'Oh, how familiar I am with all your poses! I may even say that I have influenced them. Since I was colourful and radiant, you had to emphasize the contrary: you were pale, reserved - always mysterious, always suffering, shrouded in dark scarfs and in your interesting melancholy. It worked - up to a certain degree... You gave a fairly good performance, in your own little manner. Some people thought you were almost as good as I am; I suppose there were some fools among your hysterical women admirers who said you were even better than Sarah Bernhardt... What a joke!... Well, this really competent audience here shall decide who is better - Sarah or Eleonora. For we may expect you here pretty soon - :I can hear you caughing, down there. It's chilly in the United States, I know. What an icy wind in St. Louis! And in Pittsburgh it may be even worse... I feel sorry for you. You look wretched, ma pauvre. I am afraid this is your last tour, chère amie: it ends at Pittsburgh of all places. I used to be exceedingly successful there... Never mind. Why do you shake your head in this desperate way? Why do you scream like this? Yes, I know it is bitter... Our last scene, Eleonora, we must play alone, without any audience. The background is rather gloomy - this empty hotel room, and outside the dusty city, the City of Steel. Be brave, Eleonora! I know how you feel. I know everything about you and your lonely agony.) I am your rival, your sister.

- See you soon, Eleonora. A bientôt.'

As to the Supreme Manager, He had placed Himself on a blinding throne of light. 'A very effective arrangement', thought Sarah. 'I must remember this - it is most ingeniously staged.' But then she recognized, in spite of all this dazzling phosphorescence, the gracious and lofty sign of the Lord: He wanted her to begin...His gesture reminded her of that noble Governor of Montreal ordering the orchestra to play the British anthem. But she had no time to remember now: it is time to begin.

And she begins...

She rises, spreads out her arms. Then she tries, very carefully, her Golden Voice - : yes, it is the same old one, the ever-new one - the experienced Magic Flute, the irresistible instrument. It is still the chime, the angry thunderstorm, the jubilation, the gentle whisper, the raucous lament, the tremendous, infinite song of love.

She is still Sarah bernhardt - the divine Sarah; Sarah, the enchanting, the incredible and unforgettable. She is tainted with all the hideous, tasteless luxury of her period- dressed up like an ancient idol, gaudy as a peacock, armoured like a warrior; overloaded with feathers, jewels, scarfs, brocades, bracelets, flowers; bedizened like a horse in the circus; a prodigious figure, un monstre sacré. And yet she has the timeless beauty of Egyptian statues, she is the Goddess of the Theatre, striding the stage like the solemn players of the Greek tragedy - grave, majestic, almost threatening.

There she is, matchless Sarah - stretching and racking her trained body in the grand poses of passion, of despair, of lust,

fury, fear, and frenzy; mouth ajar, a gaping hole as in certain ancient masks; the fiery eyes narrowed with ecstasy -: oh, these lovely, piercing eyes of Sarah Bernhardt! The painted, artificial face, bearing the marks of beauty operations like a soldier's face proud under its martial scars; her inhuman, effulgent face, tossing as in agony, lifted up with indescribable triumph.

Incomparable Sarah, bursting into amazing gestures as into screams; brutal and refined, possessed by a creative hysteria, and gifted with an astounding vitality; royal and appalling - sometimes almost numb with dignity, and at other moments shocking with obscene little laughs. She swings gaily her wooden leg; she dances, intoxicated with vanity and pride; she produces, a triumphant wreck, all her cunning tricks and often-tried feats; she parades, insane with coquetry, in the view of her paling colleagues, well-meaning St. Peter, and the Supreme Manager, who hides His inscrutable smile behind a glittering cloud.

The angels, an insatiable audience, move their wings, producing a silvery little noise. This means applause - the only command Sarah Bernhardt is able to grasp and to follow. Cheered by the cherubs, unforgotten by the mortal inhabitants of the earth, she continues in eternity her gorgeous show.