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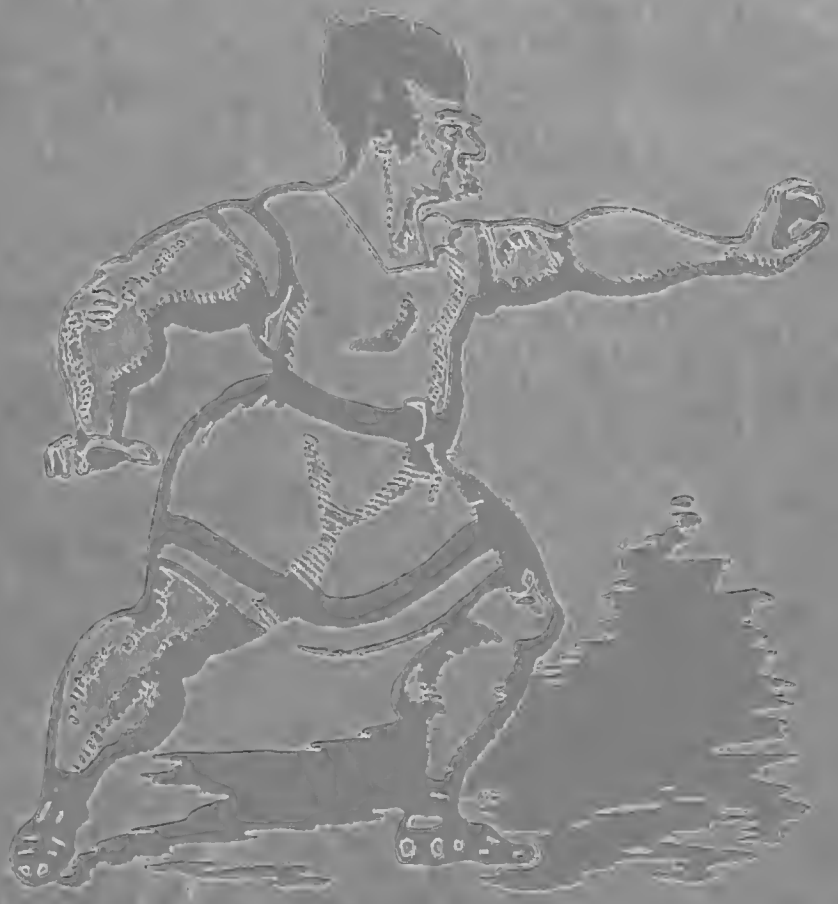

EDWIN FORREST

CATHERINE SINCLAIR

VOL XI

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Wm R. Lawson, State Administrator

San Francisco Theatre Research

Vol. 11

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MONOGRAPHS

XXII EDWIN FORREST

XXIII CATHERINE SINCLAIR

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Lawrence Estavan
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CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

NOTE

Edwin Forrest's story and that of his wife, Catherine Sinclair, form one of the most brilliant and at the same time tragic records in the history of the American stage and of the world. Forrest -- the first American-born actor to be recognized as great -- and Mrs. Sinclair, actress-manager, lived an off-stage drama as exciting and tragic as any they played on the stage. The pitiless spotlight of publicity was ever upon them. Romance, feuds, riots, success and failure and the most scandalous divorce trial of the century were their lot. This monograph presents the whole exciting story against the colorful background of the American Theatre

EDWIN FORREST

1806 - 1872

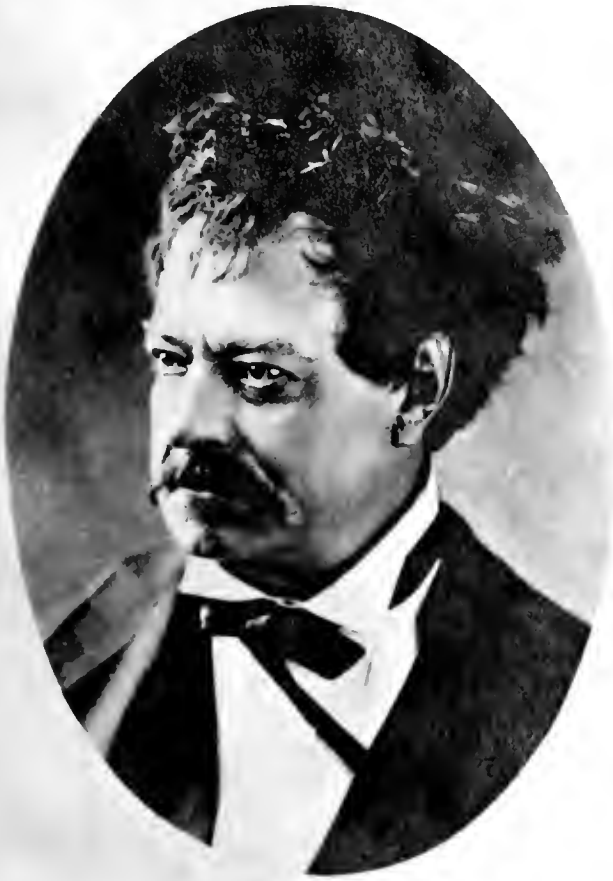

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF MR. DONN HUBERTY

EDWIN FORREST

1806-1872

CHAPTER I

AND THE SHIP DID ROCK!

"McArdle, McArdle! where are you?"
"What is it, sir?"
"Tie her to a rock!"
"Tie what, sir?"
"This cursed ship. Do you hear me? Tie her to a rock."
"But there are no rocks here, sir; we are in the middle of the Pacific Ocean."
"Then run the cursed ship ashore!"

And with a groan the weary man turned his back to the bewildered McArdle and tried again to sleep.*

The year was 1866, the month April, and Edwin Forrest, the renowned actor now in his declining years was en route to California.

Edwin Forrest had refused the first summons to the Golden State but now that his star was definitely on the wane he was willing to brave the long journey in order to conquer new fields. He had evidently pictured San Francisco as a backward settlement where the advent of the great Forrest

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* Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Forrest, p. 112

would be properly appreciated and where the public would be far less critical than in the East.

As with most professional people who have enjoyed the limelight, Forrest refused to admit even to himself that his career was at an end. He was coming to California to delight a drama-starved public and to take advantage of the medicinal waters which he hoped would wash him clean of an illness contracted while a youth in New Orleans.

Much to his surprise and perhaps disappointment, Forrest was to find that the backward settlement was a thriving city which in a short space of time had become theatre-minded and extremely critical. The rumor which preceded Edwin Forrest was anything but flattering to the actor who expected an appreciative following. San Francisco was already familiar with the details of the Forrest divorce scandal. Catherine Sinclair Forrest had lived in their midst and had completely vindicated herself in the mind of the public. The better gossips stated that Forrest had come to California for the express purpose of obtaining a divorce from his wife to whom he was compelled to contribute alimony to the extent of three thousand dollars per year, and in addition he desired to obtain from the California courts permission to remarry, a privilege denied him in the trial held in New York. Whether the excuse was the fame of the medicinal waters, reluctance to give up his place in the theatre, or the permission to make Miss Lillie his lawful wife is a matter of opinion

rather than authentic historical record.

In any event, after a highly successful engagement in Chicago, which restored his confidence and inflated his ego, Edwin Forrest embarked for California with his agent, Joseph McArdle, and his main supporting actor, John McCullough. A steamer from New York carried the party down to Aspinwall where they crossed the Isthmus by train to Panama. Here another vessel was ready to take them north.

Captain Bradbury of the Pacific steamer, who was an admirer of Forrest, tried with his crew to make the journey as pleasant as possible for the famous passenger. Forrest was an unusually poor sailor and felt that someone was to blame because the wild waves rocked the ship and made him uncomfortable.

On one of the Sundays on board, through the connivance of Captain Bradbury and McCullough, Forrest, who hated bigoted churchmen and everybody else who disagreed with him, was exposed to a ranting preacher whom they had commissioned to save the sinful actor's soul. This the missionary proceeded to do with a sermon in English of one hour's length followed by a half hour's discourse in Kanaka, a Sandwich Island dialect. Those who had set this trap for the irate traveler stayed out of his sight until his wrath had cooled and he saw the humor of the situation. When the attacks of seasickness were not too severe, the Captain's cabin was the scene of

jovial gatherings with Forrest, a superb storyteller, entertaining his companions with firsthand information of his many triumphs.

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

The ship that carried Edwin Forrest and his fellow-travelers through the Golden Gate docked in San Francisco on the third of May 1866. Tom Maguire, the irrepressible impresario had spared no effort to give the celebrated actor a reception befitting his position in the theatre. Eager crowds were waiting at the pier to catch a glimpse of the former husband of Catherine Sinclair, who in earlier days had come to San Francisco under a cloud of scandal and had remained to win the respect of the citizens and add glamour to the theatre. Some had applauded Forrest in the East but the greater part of his welcoming was prompted by curiosity. Here was America's leading tragedian whose life was filled with scarlet pages. Apart from the fact that Edwin Forrest had no equal in the theatre there was the lusty animal -- vital, impulsive, and energetic. Men were impressed by his force and superior bearing; women pictured Edwin Forrest as their knight in shining armor who would sweep them off their feet and into a land of beauty and make-believe. In 1860 they called it charm but in our day the term that would justly fit Forrest is sex appeal. Critics, convinced by the rumor that Forrest was through, were anxious to make comparisons and if possible deflate the actor's ego. They were amply rewarded,

for the Edwin Forrest that San Francisco saw was a broken man who had grown old before his time, and while the fire was still in his voice his physical bearing had been retarded by his illness. The theatre had changed with the times but Forrest stubbornly remained the same. His methods were outmoded.

Manager Maguire had improved his Opera House at the cost of six thousand dollars shortly before the actor arrived. His intention was to reap a golden harvest with Edwin Forrest as bait. Maguire was a clever showman and even in those days publicity expertly handled brought its reward. Forrest was ushered into the city amid the blare of trumpets, fanfare and practically everything except a twenty-one gun salute. He was serenaded, a popular outdoor sport of the period, and as a climax the best seats were sold at public auction.

> "It has been many years since the choice of seats to a public theatrical or musical entertainment has been offered at public auction in San Francisco, but the arrival of so distinguished an actor and so famous a man as Edwin Forrest induced Mr. Maguire to open the box sheet at public competition.
>
> "Messrs. Cobb and Sinton, the well-known real estate auctioneers, were chosen to dispose of them, and the time set for yesterday. A very large gathering was in attendance, so numerous that the sale was adjourned to the Academy of Music, on Pine Street. This announcement sent the whole crowd in procession southward, and the passing of so large a body of well-known and respected citizens through Montgomery Street naturally swelled the throng, and when General Cobb was prepared to open the sale, the whole of the parquette, dress and family circles of the Academy were filled by anxious crowds--some drawn by curiosity, others with the intention

to purchase. General Cobb opened the afternoon's business in his usual felicitous manner, making known the terms of sale, and paid quite a patriotic and eloquent tribute to Mr. Forrest and his national reputation. The auditorium seemed a sea of heads, and when he announced the offer of the choice of the first seat, and as each bidder increased his price, rounds of applause followed. The rivalry for this seemed to be between but a few individuals, and the 50's and 25's as they were announced, created quite an excitement. The first seat was finally knocked down to R.J. Tiffany, Esq., hatter, Washington Street, an old friend of Mr. Forrest, and for some years engaged in a managerial capacity. His bid was $500.00 and the announcement was received with applause. In selling this seat General Cobb displayed his well-known talents as an auctioneer drawing advance on each bid with great tact and delicacy. After this the sale progressed with rapidity.

"The premiums on the last seats sold, to Mr. Deeth, were announced as donations to the San Francisco Benevolent Society. Today, Messrs. Cobb and Sinton will renew the sale of seats at 12 M., the premium on the first ten to be donated to the Catholic Orphan Asylum, and that on the following ten to the Protestant Orphan Asylum--thus making the auction one of interest to all."*

HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL

"Ay, is it so?
Then wakes the power which in the age of iron
Bursts forth to curb the great, and raise the low.
Mark, where she stands, around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn Church!
Set but a foot within that holy ground,
And on thy head--yes, though it were a crown--
I launch the curse of Rome."

The powerful scene from the fourth act of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's Richelieu, in which the Cardinal defends

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* Daily Alta California, May 12, 1866.

Julie from the unwelcome advances of an aged King, always brought volumes of applause as delivered by Edwin Forrest. Supporting Forrest in his initial performance on May 14, 1866 in San Francisco was a brilliant cast headed by John McCullough and with Mr. Forrest's "adopted daughter," Miss Lillie, as Julie. One critic commented that even as Cardinal Richelieu, Forrest's scenes with his adopted daughter were a trifle more than play acting.

The advance publicity by Maguire succeeded in drawing a large crowd which according to the Bulletin was "large and fashionable" and the Daily Alta California "very large and exceedingly fashionable." With the box-office receipts at $3,213.50 Maguire had scored again. However, he was to discover that after the last of the thirty-five performances, the monetary returns would not give him cause for a congratulatory mood.

The critic of the Daily Alta California of May 15, 1866 states:

> "No living actor had attained equal eminence in the role and the whole embodiment proved the greatest histrionic effort ever witnessed in our midst.
>
> "His reception was hearty and his response gentlemanly and dignified. He was frequently warmly applauded and at the close of the fourth act called before the curtain. At the close of the play he was called out in response to an exceedingly pertinent acknowledgment of the compliment paid him."

The Daily Bulletin's dramatic critic admitted May 15, 1866:

> "He looked the glorious old cardinal in every

> lineament of face and form. In some more impassioned passage--for instance where he invokes the awful majesty of the Church to protect virtuous maidenhood against kingly lust--he was grandly and almost terribly impressive."

With Richelieu behind him Forrest was reassured that his power was not wanting. The new generation in the East was too stupid to appreciate the better forms of theatre arts. Here in the West the public had no time for foolish fads in acting. He was to find that the theatre of the West was in step with Broadway and that Richelieu was accepted more for his past laurels than for his performance as the wily prime minister. Richelieu was repeated on the following two nights and Maguire promised the public ninety-nine appearances starring Edwin Forrest. In addition the showman assured the public that seats could be purchased four days in advance and that there would be no more auctioning. The prices for admission set by the management would be: reserved seats $1.50; dress circle and parquette, $1.00, and gallery 50 cents. The Daily Bulletin, which was continually complaining about the high cost of entertainment, states on May 27, 1866:

> "The prices of admission that were raised so high at the commencement of the engagement that they had the effect of obstructing attendance, damming back popular current, as it were, were no sooner levelled to the desire and pockets of the people than the eager crowd poured in and filled every possible corner and nook of observation, from pit to gallery."

Inasmuch as the advent of a star of Forrest's reputation was a long awaited event during that period, it would seem that the prices quoted were exceptionally reasonable. A

trip to the theatre was an occasion that had been planned for many weeks.

Applause was to Forrest his meat and drink. At one time someone had discouraged too generous applauding and had attempted to quiet the audience when it rose and demonstrated. The veteran actor protested with the remark:

> "Applause is the reward of the artist; it is his due, and any one who would rob him of it is a pickpocket."*

The offender thus put in his place never repeated the offense against the star of his public.

A PAGE FROM SHAKESPEARE

> "Ay, every inch a king: When I do stare, see how the subject quakes?
> I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause? Adultery?"**

Virginius followed Richelieu as Forrest's next offering to San Franciscans. Then King Lear, the role in which easterners had agreed almost unanimously that he stood forth without a rival. Forrest's own exalted opinion of his Lear was expressed in a conversation with some friends when one of them complimented him with the remark:

> "'Mr. Forrest, I never in my life saw you play Lear as well as you did tonight.'
>
> "Whereupon the veteran actor almost indignantly replied, rising slowly and laboriously from his chair to his full height.
>
> "'Play Lear, what do you mean, sir? I do not

---

* Lawrence Barrett, Life of Edwin Forrest, p. 101.
**King Lear, Act. 4, Scene VII.

> play Lear. I play Hamlet, Richard, Shylock, Virginius, if you please; but by God, sir! I am Lear!'"*

In spite of unfavorable weather King Lear paid dividends to the extent of $1,918.00. The San Francisco press was compelled to agree with the Eastern critics that Edwin Forrest was at his best in the role of Lear. The Alta California of May 22, 1866 gave its critic the opportunity to state:

> "The curse was delivered with a power never equalled by any actor. The intensity of passion, terrific anger and the outburst of rage, all so natural, completely absorbed the attention of the audience, who realized its immensity by a shrinking awe, as if the anathemas were hurled against them rather than at the actors on the mimic stage."

The critic evidently sensed the fact that Forrest always played his scenes to the audience rather than to his supporting cast. Being Forrest, the actor worked for applause and the play, as a unit, "be damned."

The critic of the Evening Bulletin (May 22, 1866) was highly impressed by Forrest's rendition of Lear:

> "A superb piece of acting...He looked the uncrowned King in every feature; expressed the solemn majesty of suffering in every tone of his voice, in every motion of his body. His simulation of age was masterly; there was no whimpering senility--no maudlin grief. The passage in which the poor old man cursed his unnatural daughters was given with a power that was terrible in its intensity. Mr. Forrest was equally effective in the scene where he questioned the elements."

---

* Lawrence Barrett, Life of Edwin Forrest, p. 157.

The play was frequently interrupted by bursts of applause on the part of the audience but when Forrest completed the passage where he implored the Gods to make his daughter barren, the audience could be restrained no longer to mere hand-clapping. The actor was forced to step out of character, much to his pleasure, and express his gratification in the traditional theatrical manner of humble submission to his dear public.

> "It may be so, my lord.
> Hear nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
> Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
> To make this creature fruitful!
> Into her womb convey sterility!
> Dry up in her the organs of increase;
> And from her derogate body never spring
> A babe to honour her! If she must teem
> Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
> And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
> Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
> With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
> Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
> To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
> How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child! Away, away." *

With this the audience rose in a body to cheer the King Lear who lived on the stage through Edwin Forrest.

With the plaudits of the public still ringing in his ears, Forrest began his June engagement. The actor's third effort was Macbeth, and the comment:

> "The aisles were thronged, the lobby crowded to excess; the stairs to the parquette were taken possession of, and even ladies were forced to stand during the performance. It was an ovation, the like of which has never been extended

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* King Lear, Act 1, Scene IV.

> to an actor in our city. What can a critic write of a performance of which he could snatch but a brief view by raising himself on tip-toe, to gaze over the heads of the vast gathering before him? Owing to the uncomfortable pressure we were unable to witness but a short portion of the enaction of the dagger scene and the conclusion of the act. To say that this most trying portion of the tragedy was a masterly effort pays but a poor compliment to the talent of the great impersonator. It was a perfect picture of vacillating doubt and incertitude which the scene invited.
>
> "The transition from the cowardly self-shrinking of the murderer to the self-possessed host, was a marked effort, artistic to a degree."*

Regarding Othello and according to the Evening Bulletin of May 24, 1866:

> "In the more impassioned passages Mr. Forrest was grandly, almost fearfully, impressive. He looked the infuriated Moor to the life. His form quivered with emotion; his voice thundered forth in accents that shook the house. We forgot the actor in the subject, and saw not the artist, but incarnate jealousy, rage, despair. His transitions from the furious to the gentle --from the maddened husband to the doting lover --were wonderful in their quickness and completeness."

For some unknown reason the majority of critics will invariably disguise a celebrity's shortcomings with a scattering of well-chosen lines of praise and a slight sprinkling of hints that things might have been different if, etc. Had the great star Edwin Forrest been John Zilch or Tom Jones there would have been no hesitancy on the part of the reviewers of the drama to say in print what they thought in private. In

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* Daily Alta California, June 2, 1866.

Richelieu and King Lear, Edwin Forrest, in spite of his antiquated elocutionary manner, had no equal; but in plays other than those of William Shakespeare, his method of approach was ridiculous in the changing theatre. Deftly hidden in flowery comment appeared the statements:

> "Some points of pre-eminent excellence, many more that are indifferently essayed and inadequately expressed." *

> "Our people have not gone crazy over him...His old faults of style...We caught, now and then, echoes of the mannerisms of the Bowery Theatre days. We thought we detected something of the old rant, the old stage stride, the old gurgling sound in the throat." **

Forrest began to sense that although the audiences were applauding, he was not receiving the proper appreciation in return for his efforts. With the press seemingly against him and his malady asserting itself with violent attacks of rheumatism, the actor decided to terminate his engagement with Macbeth. Naturally for Forrest, he was irritable because of criticism and hostile to everything in general, including the climate. He had heard the rumor that meddlesome gossips had dared to question his private life and his association with his protégée, the charming ingénue, Miss Lillie. Lawrence Barrett, whose biography pays some attention to the California trip, gives an idea of Forrest's harsh temper in the following incidents:

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* The Morning Call, May 27, 1866.

** Evening Bulletin, May 24, 1866.

"The property-man, bringing him the cup which held the sponge with blood for his face and hands in Macbeth was harshly asked, 'What is this?' 'Blood, sir,' replied the terrified man. 'Blood,' thundered Forrest, examining the pinkish color of the liquid, 'what an ass you must be not to know the color of blood, in a country where they kill a man a day!' and he dashed the innocent fluid to the floor.

"The trying changes of the climate increased his gouty and rheumatic troubles, and added to his moroseness. One day, being asked if his rheumatism was no better, he replied, 'How can a man get better in a land where they have a climate every fifteen minutes?'"*

ENGAGEMENT CLOSED

Forrest's illness had become so acute that he decided, in view of the unfavorable publicity he had received, he would discontinue his San Francisco engagement for the time being. In thirty-five appearances he had played before more than sixty thousand people, for which he received $20,000 in gold. A writer in the Daily Alta California of June 25, 1866 innocently made the suggestion that the actor "ought to give some of his earnings for a local charitable endowment." The hint only increased Forrest's irritability and needless to say was completely ignored.

In view of the fact that the actor had lost ground in the East following his sensational divorce from Catherine Sinclair and that his methods of acting were outmoded, his failure to make a comeback is not surprising.

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* Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Forrest, p. 116.

The public at large and even most of the critics chose to remember Edwin Forrest's past laurels rather than to crush his efforts by naming faults.

MINE BY ADOPTION

With the close of the Forrest divorce case, Edwin Forrest was denied the right to remarry. The long arm of justice against him, he could choose but one alternative, that of a common law wife. Due to mid-Victorian respectability and the fact that Forrest could not afford more unfavorable publicity, this means of enjoying marital bliss was out of the question.

Before his arrival in California, Forrest had developed an ardent interest in Miss Lillie, a charming ingénue many years his junior. She appeared with Forrest in San Francisco and his interest was such that in many cases the star was known to give the actress scenes in which they appeared together. Never before had Edwin Forrest considered a fellow player important enough to prompt such an action. Miss Lillie became Forrest's adopted daughter and no father could have evinced a more tender interest in a child, or displayed a more constant and watchful solicitude toward his offspring. The public was more amused than annoyed with this doting old man who had found such love in his declining years.

Edwin Forrest, accompanied by his adopted daughter, Miss Lillie, left San Francisco to find relief for his rheumatic pains at one of California's natural springs. His

zealous effort was to rid himself of the disease that had been the root of his physical difficulties and to regain his power and lost youth. He arrived at one of the geyser resorts on the Fourth of July. His condition was more serious than he had anticipated. It was only with difficulty and the assistance of his valet that he was able to ascend to the saddle for his daily ride of one mile to the Indian Spring Bath, where the hot muddy water was said to possess curative values. This treatment was followed by drinks of cold water, and exercises for his right arm. He adhered with rigor to his daily routine and was encouraged by a slight improvement in health after the first month at the geysers. In September he continued with baths at the White Sulphur Springs at Napa. Here he benefited so noticeably that he was able to write to his old friend, James Oakes:

> "Here I am still enjoying the salubrious air of the mountains on horseback and afoot, and bathing in waters from the hot and cold springs which pour their affluent streams on every hand. My health is greatly improved, and my lameness is now scarcely perceptible. In a few weeks more I shall return to San Francisco to finish my engagement, which was interrupted by my late indisposition. My present intention is not to return to the East until next spring, for it would be too great a risk to encounter the rigors of a winter there which might prove disastrous. You are aware that the winter in San Francisco is much more agreeable than the summer, and after my professional engagement there I shall visit Sacramento, and some of the tropics. I am determined to come back to you in perfect health. How I should like to take a tramp with you into the mountains this blessed day! I can give you no reasonable idea of the weather here. The skies are cloudless, save with rare and roseate shadows; not a drop of

> rain, and yet no drought, no aridity; the trees are fresh and green and the air as exhilarating as champagne."

YES, MY DARLING DAUGHTER

The San Francisco Chronicle of August 11, 1866, said:

> "...He puts in an appearance every morning about eight o'clock at the breakfast table in the company of his protégée....He seems very much attached to his adopted daughter....Under her father's tuition, Miss Lillie is studying French, and daily puzzles her brain trying to conjugate the Gallic verbs, while her tutor is luxuriating in his cleansing bath endeavoring to regain lost youth."

The strange part of the so-called adoption of Miss Lillie by Edwin Forrest is that the daughter did not share in the Forrest estate after the actor's death. Legal adoption would have called for at least a share of the Forrest property and a remembrance for decency's sake. However, Miss Lillie became an actress of creditable repute as well as the daughter of a famous star. She basked in the actor's reflected glory and enjoyed his love and companionship.

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

Whether Edwin Forrest had ever intended to fulfill the remainder of his San Francisco engagements is a matter of conjecture. In his letter to James Oakes, the actor had expressed the happy anticipation of a return to San Francisco together with a short tour of California. However, the unfavorable publicity and gossip had in many respects served to

sour Forrest in his enthusiasm for the Golden State. In any event his friends and admirers who looked forward to his return to the San Francisco stage were to meet with disappointment, as were the people of Sacramento and other towns who had expected Forrest in the theatre.

He returned to San Francisco in October 1866 for the purpose of effecting a release from his agreement with manager Maguire, and to arrange for passage to the East on the next steamer. Apparently Maguire was none too anxious to hold Forrest to his contract as the agreement was speedily dissolved. Forrest gave two reasons for his decision to return East: first, that his physician had advised him that the climate of San Francisco would bring on a recurrence of his illness; secondly, that his sister Caroline was seriously ill which necessitated his return to the East Coast. The curious public wondered if the severe winters of the eastern states could possibly be friendly to rheumatics or if his sister Caroline, who had been ill for a long time, could have reestablished herself in the actor's affections.

In order to avoid the public and its "damned opinions" Forrest spent his remaining days in Yosemite Valley enjoying the beauties of nature. He returned to San Francisco and sailed for the East October 19 to face a rigorous eastern winter and bitter disappointment.

In order to appease the public for the injustice Forrest had committed by his hasty departure, and probably to

relieve his own conscience, the critic of The Morning Call, October 21, 1866 made the following comment:

> "Public expectation has been baulked by Mr. Forrest's course in leaving California so suddenly. He left for New York on the steamer of Friday last. When he commenced his late engagement at the Opera House, his physical disability to play any but a few in his range of characters was painfully apparent; but the public, regarding him as famous, and hoping that our genial climate and the medicinal waters of our valleys would restore his impaired health, were tolerant of his infirmities. They expected by and by he would give them a touch of his old time quality as an actor. They have been disappointed; and Mr. Forrest carries East with him the proceeds of an engagement that was wholly unsatisfactory to the public, and the patronage of which was due only to the fact that he had been a great actor 'in his time.' It is unfortunate that he has left us with an unfavorable impression unremoved--that he had not played for but one short week, if for no other purpose than to convert the sentiment of commiseration for his departed glory into one of enthusiastic realization of his greatness as an actor, and his worthiness to fill the proud place be claims--the head of the American Stage. He must he ever grateful, however, to Californians for their liberality toward him; and to California's climate for putting him in a state of sanitary repair."

Forrest refused to admit to himself that he was through. His "never say die" spirit urged him to work in spite of physical handicaps. He traveled and endured hardships on drafty stages and in cold hotel rooms. As if in an effort to recapture his youth, he covered the territory where he had struggled in younger days. His fate was that of the discarded star who must be on the boards barnstorming small towns rather than give up. Even the reporters of the small town papers lampooned him and gave broad hints that the old

driveler should have left the stage long ago. Tears came to his eyes when he found that the height of the platform from which he used to leap out of the arms of Pythias had necessarily been reduced from three feet to three inches. His cherished plays in which he had moved audiences to unabashed weeping were rapidly becoming comedy as performed by Edwin Forrest. Heavy make-up failed to conceal an old man in a youthful role reading scenes to an ingénue who could have been his daughter.

His sister Caroline, whose illness had presumably been responsible for his trip East, passed away in 1869 three years after his visit to the West Coast. Two years later the remaining member of the family, a sister Eleanore, died leaving Forrest alone with his bitter disappointments. Even at this late date his wife, Catherine Sinclair, offered to return to comfort him in his old age and to replace Miss Lillie in his affections, but Forrest refusing to admit that he could have been wrong, would have nothing to do with her.

THE FINAL CURTAIN

In 1871, with a third-rate supporting cast in an unpopular theatre, Forrest invaded New York with Richelieu and King Lear. The critics of the day saw him as Lear himself. dishonored and wounded. He repeated the roles in Boston in the spring of 1872 when he was stricken with pneumonia. As if in a dramatic climax of Richelieu and with the words "So ends it all," the final curtain fell and the star was carried from

the stage. After a short period the actor recovered sufficiently to give a few readings but never returned to the stage. He appeared in Boston a few days before his death in the capacity of a dramatic reader. During the night of December 12, 1872 Forrest succumbed to a stroke of apoplexy at his home in Philadelphia. He died as he had lived -- in a dramatic climax.

CHAPTER II

BIRTH OF A PATRIARCH

Edwin Forrest, the first American-born actor of the star rank, was born March 9, 1806 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father, William Forrest, was a Scotchman by birth and of less than moderate means. Forrest's mother, Rebecca Lauman, was of sturdy German stock who believed that a woman's place was in the home rearing a large family. The Forrests were simple folk whose world was divided between work, the home, and church. The family considered the theatre an expensive form of amusement that could do no good, and of course those taking part in the performance itself were never recognized socially by respectable people.

In 1819 William Forrest died, leaving his family unprovided for and young Edwin was forced to leave school in order to contribute to the support of his mother and the younger children. He secured a position as an errand boy for a general store but his interest even at an early age was toward the stage. His juvenile impersonation of the minister of the local church was amusing to his family but when he did a female impersonation on the stage of the South Street

Theatre, his mother felt that the entire thing had gone far enough.

Little did the public think or care that a black-haired boy, the son of William Forrest, christened at St. Paul's Church one bleak November day in 1813, would become the first great American actor--the first Yankee tragedian to storm the artistic citadel of London, the most admired, the most hated, the stormiest player of his time.

LITTLE LORD EDWIN

Headstrong and self-assured, Edwin Forrest persisted in his ambition to act and at the age of fourteen he made his professional debut as Young Norval in Douglas. The applause rang in his ears and the sweet sound of a cheering crowd flattered the ego of a boy who knew that he was a great star. His fate was sealed. He would follow the profession.

"Little Lord Edwin" as he was both affectionately and sarcastically called by his associates, spent the next few years in the hard school of the frontier theatre. He joined a traveling troupe playing in Pittsburgh and the Ohio River towns, and when that failed, found off jobs to keep his body and soul on speaking terms. In 1823 Forrest was in Cincinnati, where Sol Smith, later a comedian and manager, was editing a newspaper.

While in Cincinnati, Smith's farce The Tailor in Distress was presented with Forrest as the first noted actor

to do blackface impersonation* in the records of the American stage. Smith soon recognized that the boy had the makings of a great star and was quick to take him under his wing. Through Smith, Forrest received an offer to work with the Caldwell company in New Orleans but balked at the prospect of the long trip and joined a circus in Kentucky. When the news reached his benefactor, Smith swooped down upon the young actor and rescued him from the lure of spangles and sawdust. Forrest was speedily sent on to James H. Caldwell, the theatrical czar of the South where he secured a position.

Forrest was a powerful, handsome, healthy animal, an unschooled youth not yet twenty when he reached New Orleans, a city gay and corrupt with every vice and disease imaginable -- the New Orleans of 1824 where Spaniards, Frenchmen and American tradesmen met gamblers, pirates, slaves and a half-world of glamorous quadroons. Hardy frontiersmen came with their gold only to lose it over a gambling table. Women, grown hard by experience although still young in years, sold their bodies for a golden coin regardless of race or color. Forrest was handsome, headstrong and powerfully built. His temperament was filled with passion and his dark eyes with lust. He was unquestionably talented -- and knew it. Had the young actor known the severe hand of discipline, his entire life would probably have been more fruitful and certainly more happy.

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* See Monograph on Minstrelsy, Vol. XIII, this series.

THE GLAMOROUS QUADROON

That such a social custom of old New Orleans as the Quadroon Ball was not exactly ideal training for a handsome boy of eighteen goes without saying.

Forrest had scarcely arrived in New Orleans when he became involved with a young woman of questionable reputation whose touch of dark blood only added to her glamour. After a few weeks she was discarded in favor of the leading lady of the Caldwell troupe, Jane Placide, but Forrest was to spend the remainder of his life paying for his indiscretions. From then until his death Forrest's loves were legion. With each and every one he was sincere for the moment but his impetuous nature together with his egotism prevented his being faithful to any one person for any period of time. His love could rapidly turn to hate when he had found another interest.

An actor may condemn his profession but he would give his life's blood for it if the occasion demanded. This expressed Edwin Forrest. He loved the profession with its excitement and flattering applause. After the theatre came life.

JAMES BOWIE

When choosing his friends, Forrest seemed to prefer vital men of experience rather than educated men of culture. Although he considered the theatre to be fine art at its best, very few of his intimate friends were associated with the profession. One of his warmest friends in New Orleans was James Bowie.

Col. Bowie's character may be explained in some small degree by the fact that he had adapted a peculiar form of knife with which to fight a duel. The procedure followed was that the duelists were stripped naked, bound side by side on a bench, with right arms raised, and into each right hand was put a "bowie" knife. At a given signal the duelists proceeded to cut each other into small bits.

Bowie was highly successful at this form of pastime and would indulge in a duel at the slightest offense to his honor. He presented his favorite knife to his friend Edwin Forrest but must have forgotten the customary penny to insure friendship for in a short time the pair came to blows over a woman in a gambling house.

Forrest and his friends lived with a code which exalted impulse and ignored law. Even the slightest derogatory remark was enough to cause a fight unto death. In that extraordinary mingling of fact and moralizing, in W.R. Alger's Life of Edwin Forrest the author says quaintly of Bowie:

> "In heart, when not roused by some sinister influence, he was as open as a child and as loving as a woman."

Bowie and his friends influenced Forrest to the extent that he never forgot the lessons of conceit taught him in New Orleans.

Another of the actor's intimate friends was a river captain who once in a spirit of revenge attached a cable around a bank-side house of prostitution and pulled it into

the Mississippi, drowning all of the inmates. In all probability the river captain was doing the city of New Orleans a heroic favor in the cause of sanitation under the guise of personal revenge.

These were the men who would come to the theatre when Edwin Forrest performed and applaud long and loudly as the actor's powerful voice rang through the palace of the finer art.

MY LADY'S HONOR

Jane Placide was the leading lady of the Caldwell Dramatic Company and incidently Mr. Caldwell's light of love. Unfortunately the manager was bound by the ties of holy matrimony but not by the vows which go with the ceremony. Forrest, believing that the gentleman was taking advantage of his position and unfair advantage of innocent girlhood, challenged Caldwell to a duel. Caldwell and his mistress practically laughed the boy off the boards.

Forrest rode away with a Choctaw Indian friend where the plaintive songs of an Indian maiden were soon to make him forget the incident and were to give him inspiration for a series of Indian plays. This terminated a gay life of eighteen months with experience teaching him the wrong way to live. New Orleans was now history and Forrest returned to the East.

EDMUND KEAN

Edmund Kean, who was to influence Edwin Forrest's

career as an actor more than any other person, had struggled to fame from humble origin. His private life was dissolute and unrestrained, but he was well-schooled in his profession and had a native genius for interpretation of character. Forrest, unlike the English actor,was untutored and unrestrained. His ability lay in an emotional and romantic approach which to him was completely natural. At this time all the better actors were English, schooled in courtly manners with a flow of eloquent language. Combative self-assertion characterized Forrest's temperament, and he favored parts in which the heroes led revolts of the people against tyranny.

Forrest opened in Albany in the fall of 1825 in support of the English star, Edmund Kean, at the munificent salary of $7.50 per week. Kean took a fancy to Forrest and while Forrest played Iago to his Othello, and other supporting roles, taught him both by example and friendly precept. Although Kean influenced him, Forrest had his own individual style, as was shown by his initial performance of Iago whom he presented as a gay and dashing blade. Kean received the surprise of his life when Forrest, playing Iago, let his voice slip from a high pitch on the words, "nor secure."

"Wear your eye thus, not jealous -- nor secure," ending in a whispered horror.

An hour later in the dressing room, Edmund Kean demanded:

"In the name of God, boy, where did you get that?"

"It is something of my own," said the delighted youth. Much to Forrest's love of flattery, Kean praised him to the high heavens both in the theatre and in public.

CONTRASTS

Forrest was definitely a dual personality -- egotistical, suspicious and grasping on one hand; and with a sense of humor, kindhearted; and at rare intervals, humble on the other hand. As an example of his violent characteristics, once in Albany he gambled all night, then hurled the cards into the fire, threw the money on the floor, and never gambled again.

In order to prove to his friends that he had been a member of a circus troupe, he performed in the Old North Pearl Street Amphitheatre in Albany in a pole-vaulting act which elicited shouts of laughter and applause from those present, who knew it was "Ned." His costume consisted of an enormous pair of Turkish trousers, breastplate and fly; his feet were adorned with a pair of sheepskin pumps of huge size, and the few who knew him had a jolly time at his expense. Once he made a flying leap through a barrel of red fire singeing his eyebrows and burning his face in order to amuse the audience, and for the benefit of a friend.

After supporting an actor like Kean, it was not long before Forrest felt he was capable of doing leads himself. He played Othello at the Park Theatre in New York in 1826 where his old manager could not refrain from exclaiming, "By

God, the boy has made a hit!" Critics and audience were a trifle more refined in their enthusiasm but they were unanimous in their praise of the new star.

When Forrest opened at the Bowery Theatre he met expectant, friendly crowds. The next season he was paid $200 a night which netted the twenty-one year old actor $16,000. This was the foundation for a fortune which is denied most actors, and from then on, when managers sought him for engagements, they paid him a salary befitting a star. Forrest had reached his goal in but a few short years. His triumph was to spread to two continents where he was to be a victim of his own impulsiveness. Edwin Forrest was to find that fame and fortune cannot buy happiness.

MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE

Edwin Forrest was thoroughly American. He believed in keeping America for American actors and was convinced that in America there was talent as good as, if not better than, that which England had to offer. He advanced the idea that plays should be written with an American background for American actors. He announced that he would offer a prize for the best play based on an American subject and, of course, suitable to the many talents of Edwin Forrest.

The first prize play was Metamora, a drama of Indian life by John H. Stone, produced at the Park Theatre, December 15, 1829. Another was Jack Cade which the actor

used until his belated retirement from the stage. There were nine plays in all, some good some bad, but the movement awakened an interest in the American drama by American authors and with American actors. Together with his friend James Oakes of Boston, Forrest spared neither pains nor money and is said to have given over $20,000 in prizes for plays.

"OH, TO BE IN ENGLAND"

With New York at his feet, a small fortune accumulated and his family made comfortable, Edwin Forrest retired from the stage to make a tour of Europe and attempt to gain through travel that which had been denied him in education. Before he sailed for Europe the leading citizens gave him a public banquet, presenting him with a medal as the first great American actor. After a leisurely tour of Europe, Forrest returned to Philadelphia to make hurried preparations to return to England and storm the gates of London.

Characteristic of Forrest, who never did the conventional thing, he shocked the English out of their teacups by appearing as Spartacus in The Gladiator, a play by an American author. The traditional path would have been a series of Shakespearean plays and at least the Bard would have been honored by the initial performance. Forrest opened at Drury Lane October 17, 1836 in The Gladiator. The play gave the star ample scope to display his splendid physique and for enunciating in sonorous periods lofty opinions on tyranny. London survived the shock and the majority thought, while the American was a "bit

vulgar," at least he was different. When Forrest had added Othello and Macbeth to his repertoire he was considered eligible to enter the inner sanctum of the Garrick Club sponsored by Macready who at that time befriended him.

It was during this visit to England that Forrest met Catherine Norton Sinclair, daughter of John Sinclair, a Scotch ballad singer. Edwin Forrest was a noted figure, financially independent, handsome and therefore he was a good catch for the daughter of a genteel family with moderate means. The actor knew and occasionally admitted his limitations. He was a great actor -- and dared anyone to deny it -- but he lacked education and refinement. A marriage with Miss Sinclair, together with his position and money, would assure him an excellent social standing should he care to use it. Forrest was exceedingly fond of Catherine and perhaps infatuated, but the very first principle of love is self-denial and willing sacrifice, and Forrest was so wholly engrossed in himself that it would have been impossible to love wholeheartedly.

Catherine Sinclair, on the other hand, was both infatuated and flattered by Forrest's apparent interest. She was young and impressionable as she confessed herself: "This is the handsomest man on whom my eyes have ever fallen."

After a respectable interval they were married at Saint Paul's Church in June 1837. The wedding was fashionable and showy, touched here and there by refinement and culture.

Forrest was again the star, with the Sinclairs and their friends lending the proper background. In the autumn the bride and groom sailed for America where Forrest was to resume his career and Catherine was to make a host of friends. This was the beginning of a hectic married life, with Mrs. Forrest's increasing love for her husband attempting to salve over his neglect and infidelity. After twelve years the break came in the most sensational divorce scandal New York had ever witnessed.

CHAPTER III

"When the pie was opened
The birds began to sing.
Now wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before the King?"

MACREADY

Possibly the greatest English actor of the time was Macready who had not only befriended Forrest when the American visited England, but had introduced him into the more select circles and incidently to his future wife, Catherine Sinclair. While Macready held the throne of his profession in England he was also a snob. His audiences were definitely the upper stratum who appreciated the exquisite delicacy of icy glitter and applauded with decent restraint his more brilliant performances. Forrest appealed to the masses who crowded the theatre to cheer with honest gratitude what they believed to be superb acting. In America the masses resented the Englishman and in England the friends of Macready called Forrest a horrible boor. Macready, like Forrest, was an egotist with an ungovernable temper. Once he debated with himself whether a play could succeed, as it contained two good parts in addition to his own!

In 1843 Macready made a second visit to America which was financially successful for him although not always for the theatres. During this visit he spent some time as a guest at the Forrest home in New York. By this time Forrest had won over the American people both in the theatre and by his preference for American plays. Macready found that the audience, while politely appreciative of his efforts, were less demonstrative than on his first visit and in many cases critical. He returned to England unhappy over his reception in America and annoyed to think that Forrest could completely monopolize what he considered his by divine right.

RETURN TO ENGLAND

In 1845 Forrest and his wife again visited England. They found that the theatre was in a state of transition. The Royal Patent had been withdrawn from Covent Garden and Drury Lane and the field was wide open. Many of the English actors were "at liberty," including Macready. London was prepared to resent foreign invasion to the extent of public demonstration. Forrest appeared at Covent Garden in Othello and Macbeth and was practically hissed off the stage. His humiliation was increased when the London critics, in publications controlled by Macready's friends, called his performance, a burlesque of Kean, his Lear "comic." Forrest was positive that Macready was behind all this and when Macready's friend Bulwer-Lytton refused him permission to play Richelieu

and The Lady of Lyons in London, the American actor needed no more proof as to where the guilt lay. Macready had failed in Paris but was a friend of the manager of the English company who not only refused to see Forrest but ignored him socially. When Edwin Forrest nursed an idea it grew stronger as time passed. He made a tour of the provinces with the determination that he would even the score with this Englishman if he had to remain in England the rest of his natural life.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

Forrest arranged to be in Edinburgh during the period that Macready was playing Hamlet. This was his golden opportunity and he intended to make the most of it. In order that he might be seen by those in the audience and from the stage, Forrest elected to witness the performance from a box.

> With the words, "They are coming to the play; I must be idle. Get you a place," Macready skipped across the stage, waving his handkerchief above his head.*

If there was anything that irritated Forrest it was the slightest trait of effeminacy in a man. Mustering all his force he gave vent to a hiss that resounded over the entire British Isles and on to North America. It was the opening blow dealt in one of the historic feuds of the theatre.

Macready continued his performance ignoring Forrest as something that should have crawled back into the woodwork, but he replied to the injustice through the London Times in

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* "Edwin Forrest," article by Walter P. Eaton, Atlantic Monthly, August 1938.

an article headed "Professional Jealousy." Forrest replied with a letter to the London Times that had to be expurgated before the editor would print it. In the letter he dismissed the jealousy charge as too insignificant to be of importance and attempted to justify his act as legitimate criticism.

Evidently the American public considered that the act was a heroic one for the theatre and America, for when Forrest appeared in New York as Lear the following autumn, a crowded house rose and gave him nine cheers not so much for his art as for his assertion of freeborn Americanism. In order to show their appreciation of Forrest, William Cullen Bryant, Parke Godwin, Theodore Sedgwick, and Samuel Ward appointed themselves as a committee of four to honor the actor at a public banquet at which Bryant presided. This event only increased Forrest's belief that his action was justified.

DOWN WITH MACREADY

Macready returned to the United States in 1848 for the purpose of making a tour and eventually retiring to Boston or Cambridge to lend his experience and knowledge of the theatre to the poor, unfortunate Americans in the nature of a dramatic school. He found that America had already taken sides in the controversy between himself and Forrest. Some of the highbrows were for Macready but the galleries, the Bowery boys, and the rank and file saw America at its best as personified in their hero, Edwin Forrest. With the exception of Boston, the seat of "broad A" culture, Macready's tour was

filled with grief. In Philadelphia he was hissed to such an extent that he made the public statement:

> "He did toward me what I am sure no English actor would have done toward him--he openly hissed me!"*

This of course brought an angry reply in print from Forrest with another from Macready and so on for several weeks. In Macready's diary are such entries as these: "November 10, '48, Rehearsed with care, but I have brutes to deal with, not intelligences -- 'ignorance made drunk' will well describe American actors from Mr. Forrest downwards! Acted Cardinal Wolsey and Oakley with a Catherine and a Mrs. Oakley to make a dog vomit!" or again: "The Baltimore papers characterize the performances of Forrest as equal, if not superior, to mine, and speak of him as an artist and a gentleman, and I am to dwell in this country!"

The feud finally culminated in the Astor House riot of May 7, 1849, as Macready attempted to complete his tour with a performance of Macbeth while Forrest was appearing at the Broadway Theatre. With the appearance of Macready on the stage, the audience composed of Forrest's friends, hissed, booed, and with an outburst of belated Easter enthusiasm hurled eggs of long standing at the bewildered actor. As though this were not enough, several of the patrons threw their chairs upon the stage and demanded their money be

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* "Edwin Forrest," article by Walter P. Eaton, Atlantic Monthly, August 1938.

refunded. In order to save the theatre and the actors from injury the curtain was rung down and the star prepared to return to England.

Urged by the press, Macready made another attempt to play Macbeth. This time he saw to it that the theatre was filled with his friends, making it impossible for the mob to occupy seats. Unable to gain an entrance, the irate friends of Forrest broke the windows and doors forcing entrance and demanding that Macready leave the stage. The manager of the theatre called forth the police and finally the 7th Regiment was asked to remove the mob from the theatre. Amid showers of bullets and a general brawl, peace was restored at last. The result was twenty dead and thirty wounded. Although Forrest was reported to have discouraged this demonstration in his behalf, the incident left a scar on his reputation which was deepened by the divorce scandal to follow.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

After twelve years of married life, Forrest began to find the ties of home and fireside a bit irksome. Catherine, with her fine manners and culture, had surrounded herself with friends of superior attitude and refinement. In addition to her social life she had moved her family into their home and the result was a world in which Forrest felt he didn't belong. Catherine's associates refused to give him the proper consideration he felt he deserved from the public at large. She resented the coarse behavior of his friends, together with the

questionable places they frequented. The marriage was beginning to be a nuisance.

In the spring of 1849, Forrest had returned to his hotel to find his wife in what he considered too close proximity to the actor George W. Jamieson and a violent scene followed. Although his wife assured him again and again that George Jamieson meant nothing in her life, Forrest felt that such an act was infidelity. Sometime later he found a very silly letter from Jamieson among his wife's possessions which convinced Forrest that he had been right in his accusations against his wife. According to Catherine Forrest and Jamieson it was a purely platonic friendship. However, to Forrest it meant that his wife had been unfaithful. Even though he acknowledged in court that he had indulged in many affairs with women of questionable character, he still felt that his wife had been guilty of a grave injustice.

For several months the matter was kept a secret but as the tension grew, the home conditions became more unbearable. Finally Forrest removed his wife to the home of Parke and Fanny Godwin where he deposited her as he would a stray cat. Troubled by his own guilty conscience, Edwin Forrest wrought himself to the point of fancying that his wife was betraying his shame to the public and thus he brought suit for divorce on the grounds of adultery. Catherine's defense was a countersuit, on the same grounds. Her intention was merely to scare Forrest into dropping the charges and return

again to the man whom she had learned to love. Her past life and the respect of the community placed the sympathy of the public on her side. She lost in her attempt at reconciliation but she won the odds in the sensational divorce which raged for six weeks.

CATHERINE WAS A LADY

If there had been any doubt on the part of the public regarding Catherine Forrest's reputation, suspicion was removed during the trial. The legal procedure began in December 1851 with Forrest publicly accusing his wife in the coarsest of language of adultery of the lowest order. He summoned the aid of persons whose testimony was even more questionable than their character while Mrs. Forrest's witnesses were among the irreproachable citizens of the land. Forrest's language and conduct during the trial only served to alienate him from the public at large. Catherine Forrest, faced with the foulest of charges, remained a lady of superior quality and breeding.

As a result, Catherine Sinclair Forrest was granted a decree of divorce from Edwin Forrest and $3,000 per year alimony, together with court costs. Forrest fought the action of law for several years until at the end he was indebted to Catherine to the extent of $64,000 of which she had to pay $59,000 in lawyers' fees.

Unable to wreak his vengeance on the legal personages, he proceeded to thrash Nathaniel P. Willis in Central

Park, believing that Willis was a party to his domestic ills. The latter hurled him into court and Forrest was again humiliated by losing the suit.*

Determined to vindicate himself with his public, he opened in New York two weeks after the first verdict. The sensation-mad audience thronged to the theatre and cheered vociferously. Forrest, mistaking notoriety for loyalty made a speech thanking the public for their loyalty to a deeply injured man and caused a banner to be hung across the parquet which read: "This is the people's verdict."**

A CASTLE FOR SALE

Naturally the trial, with its display of soiled linen, increased Forrest's box-office appeal but the fact that the court had dared to question his motives and grant a judgment against him was to embitter the life of Edwin Forrest until his death. The freedom, which he had voluntarily chosen, left a void which he had not anticipated. Several years before, he had begun to erect a huge stone dwelling on the banks of the Hudson River near Yonkers, known as Fonthill Castle. It was to have been a magnificent stage setting for America's greatest star. He never lived in it, selling it to a Roman Catholic Sisterhood for $100,000 in 1856.

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* Forrest then sued Willis for libel and collected $500.
**William R. Alger, The Life of Edwin Forrest.

TEMPORARY SECLUSION

After selling his castle, Edwin Forrest retreated to his birthplace, Philadelphia, and bought a mansion on North Broad Street. He felt that this was a wise choice, inasmuch as the city would grow out to him and increase the value of his property. After his death, his fortune founded a home for indigent actors and actresses -- of American birth. In his new home he was able to spend most of his time in his library or on the grounds, living on the harvest of his years of labor and triumph and nursing his grievances against life and the public in general. His haughty attitude had separated him from Mrs. Forrest's friends and his own associates of the fair-weather variety found Philadelphia too far distant to waste time flattering a domineering middle-aged man.

His one friend was James Oakes who had played Pythias to his Damon. The actor from Boston had urged Forrest to retire from the stage in order that he might regain his self-confidence. Oakes was a frequent visitor to Philadelphia during the winter months and accompanied Forrest to Massachusetts during the summer. Forrest was so deeply attached to James Oakes that he refused to allow a third person to be present when they met. This was the warmest friendship of his career. But neither Oakes nor a first folio of Shakespeare could remove from his mind the feeling that he had suffered an injustice beyond human endurance: that he, Edwin

Forrest, who could do no wrong, had been the victim of inferiors of the lowest order. His career as an actor had reached its peak as far as the public and the changing theatre were concerned. He had lost his wife and friends as well as the shreds of respectability. He had no children to comfort him and he was for the most part brooding alone in a great house with bitter memories and a huge fortune.

CHAPTER IV

"Oh, would some power the giftie
gie us
To see ourselves as ithers see us."

MY PUBLIC DEMANDS

Thomas Maguire of San Francisco was the first impresario to attempt to lure Edwin Forrest from his voluntary seclusion. Maguire was a clever showman who knew that a mere invitation sent by post would either be ignored by the great Forrest or at the most, curtly refused. Maguire was fully aware that an invitation from the citizens of California signed by himself was also insufficient. The message carried to the East bore the signature of the Governor, the Lieutenant-Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, and many other important personages.

> "State Capitol, Sacramento, April 20, 1857.
> Respected Sir,--The undersigned, State officers and members of the Senate and Assembly, a small portion of your many admirers on the coast of the Pacific, avail themselves of this, the only mode under their control, of signifying to you the very high estimation as a gentleman and an actor in which you are generally and universally held by all who have a taste for the legitimate drama. Genuine taste and rigid criticism have united with the verdict of impartial history to

pronounce you the head and leader of the noble profession to which you have consecrated abilities that would in any sphere of life render you eminent. We believe that so long as Shakespeare is remembered and his words revered, your name, too, will be remembered with pride by all who glory in the triumphs of our Saxon literature.

"In conclusion, permit us to express the hope that your existing engagements will so far coincide with our wishes as to permit us at an early day to welcome you to the shores of the Pacific, assuring you of a warm and sincere reception, so far as our efforts can accomplish the same; and we feel that we but express the sentiments of every good citizen of the State."*

Although flattered with flowery language, Edwin Forrest was not ready to return to his dear public. The wounds of his personal injustice were still fresh in his memory. He felt that if he were to return to the stage it would be to admit that he had been wrong. He would deprive the public of its greatest star for a few years and when he did return they would have learned how to appreciate an artist. California was too far distant to be considered at this time. The Golden State was to serve as an outlet for his emotions when the East had cooled with the changing theatre. Thus his reply to California.

"Philadelphia, July 10, 1857.
Gentlemen:--With a grateful pleasure I acknowledge your communication of April 20, delivered to me a short time since by the hands of Mr. Maguire. Your flattering invitation, so generously bestowed and so gracefully expressed, to enter the Golden Gate and visit your beautiful land, is one of the highest compliments I have

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* Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Forrest.

> ever received. It is an honor, I venture to say, that was never before conferred on one of my profession.
>
> "It comes not from the lovers of the drama or men of letters merely, but from the Executives, the Representatives, and other high officials of a great State of the American Confederacy, and I shall ever regard it as one of the proudest compliments in all my professional career....
>
> "And now, gentlemen, although I greatly regret that it is not in my power to accept your invitation, I sincerely trust there will be a 'time for such a word' when we may yet meet together under the roof of one of those proud temples consecrated to the drama by the taste and munificence of your fellow-citizens."*

Nine years were to elapse and he was to have found his star definitely on the wane, before Edwin Forrest was to embark on the long journey to California.

THE CHANGING THEATRE

When Edwin Forrest returned to the stage in 1860 to resume his old roles in his characteristic fashion, he found that in New York, at least, the theatre had seen a decided change. The old idea of fury and rant was making a speedy exit with Forrest stubbornly refusing to conform to the new order. The result was that New York gave him the respect due their elders but his reception was on the frigid side. The younger generation had no time to waste with a senile individual who should have remained in retirement for the rest of his life.

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* Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Forrest.

On the road, the public was less critical and engagements highly profitable. The smaller cities were eager for entertainment and willing to accept Forrest on his past merits. Such was the fate of Edwin Forrest whose style and most of whose plays were now on the comic side where a few years before they had brought terror and pathos to the vast audiences before whom he played. In later years, even in the "sticks" his audiences were small as in a valiant effort he enacted his famous roles to half empty houses.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR

In 1865 the disease lurking within his massive body struck its warning blow. While playing Damon in a cold, drafty theatre in Baltimore he suffered a partial paralysis that impaired his action for the remaining years of his career. For Edwin Forrest this was the crowning blow to his pride. His excessive muscularity and agility were to him of the utmost importance. It wasn't enough that his wife and the court as well as the public should turn against him, that the young should sneer or make light of his acting; now fate had dealt a blow to his manly attributes that would impair his massive poise and his regal gait. With his indomitable ego he still refused to give up. The platforms were lowered and with the sword strapped to his right hand he would fight MacDuff or lead his gladiators in revolt.

THE WANING ACTOR

Despondent and bitter, Edwin Forrest bid goodbye to

Broadway and the key cities and took to the road playing the small towns, and villages. In a defiant gesture he accepted the call to California nine years after it had been tendered. On the West Coast he expected to find a public who would appreciate the Edwin Forrest the East had scorned. He was not conscious, however, of the rapid growth that had taken place in San Francisco, through which there had emerged a metropolis with a public as progressive as any in the East.

CHAPTER V

"And they all lived together
In a little crooked house."

PRELUDE TO "IT"

The success of Edwin Forrest's career was not alone in his ability to create the illusion of perfect acting or his technical procedure which enabled him to sway audiences, but in that undefinable something which in this enlightened age is termed "sex appeal." He was not a handsome man according to the standard measurements of classic beauty and he was wholly without humor or lightness, but he was electrifying, massive, and dominant. Fair ladies shivered not because he was King Lear or Othello, but because this man who so attracted them was Edwin Forrest, a composite picture of manhood and the illusionary Prince in the shining armor.

New York remembered, as far as New York ever remembers, that Forrest's unbridled egotism, had caused twenty citizens to be shot dead in the street. He was a magnificent animal bewildered by a spark of genius. He struck with a sledge hammer, he panted, snorted and snarled like a wild

beast -- and the public loved it because even his enemies were forced to admit that he possessed a priceless quality. Edwin Forrest was America's gift to the theatre and the prelude to "It."

> "It seems evident that Forrest's art was crude, as his training had been, and made cruder by the crudities of the audiences which cheered him most, and by the excesses of his own undisciplined character. He lacked intellect, he lacked spiritual fineness, and he confused, hopelessly for his happiness, individual freedom and egoism. Yet in his robustious style he was outlet for the robustious emotions of the unexpressive American masses of his day, and their tumultuous applause when, as Spartacus, he hurled tumultuous defiance at the Lords of Rome was rather good to think about, and not unessential to an understanding of our ancestors."*

To himself, Edwin Forrest was a king and the king could do no wrong.

BOUQUETS AFTER DEATH

Critics and public opinion may tear an individual's reputation to shreds during his career or lifetime, but when death has claimed its victim, it is almost certain that the press will eulogize in solemn and flowery language, to undo the great injustice of a lifetime. From soiree to back-fence gossip, the life of the deceased will be defended with praise and esteem. Thus when San Francisco received the news that the great star of another era was dead, the press rose in a body to lavish tributes:

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* Atlantic Monthly, August 1938.

"The telegraph yesterday flashed the unwelcome news that the great American tragedian had been suddenly attacked by his old enemy rheumatic gout and died without making any sign. Mr. Forrest was a remarkable man, and would have won distinction in any calling, if it were to be compassed by indomitable energy, strong hopefulness, immense physique and consciousness of power. In the characters of King Lear and Richelieu, and Othello he was undoubtedly without a peer. Of late years the Roman characters seemed to be his right by his splendid physique and gallant bearing. He revelled in the performance of Damon, Spartacus, and Virginius and Coriolanus. From the fault of his surroundings, Mr. Forrest was not as genial as his admirers could wish to have recorded of him, but once his confidence was obtained nothing could shake his friendship."*

The Evening Bulletin of the same date, after referring to his San Francisco engagement, closed with these remarks:

"Since his return to the Atlantic side he has continued to play at intervals, but with abated force and indifferent success, many going to see him only once out of curiosity. He had come down to them from the time of their fathers and mothers, and was a remarkable link between the old and new schools of actors. Lately, he had been giving only occasional dramatic readings, to poor houses. As he was rich, he could have had little motive to keep before the public except that engrossing love of his profession, which makes the veteran, to use Shakespeare's expression, 'superfluous lag upon the stage.' Many thousands who belong to the generation which is now ageing and passing away, will remember him with a softened feeling, and, as they learn that he has played his last part

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* Daily Alta California, December 13, 1872.

and put on the white mask of death, will recall the crowded, sweating and shouting houses that greeted him so often and so long, and sigh for the young nights of smuggled enjoyment on painfully saved shillings which went into his pockets long ago."

EDWIN FORREST

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APPENDICES

EDWIN FORREST

CHRONOLOGY

EDWIN FORREST

1806 March 9 Birth date of Edwin Forrest, Philadelphia, Pa.

1817 Joins Thespian Club and makes appearance in female impersonation.

1819 Father dies. Edwin is compelled to leave school and help support family.

1820 Appears as young Norval in Home's tragedy, Douglas.

1820 to 1826 Takes elocution lessons, performs with traveling troupe, then with small dramatic company.

1823 Forrest gives impersonation of negro in play Tailor in Distress.

1824 In New Orleans. Plays Iago to Conway's Othello.

1825 Forrest opens in Albany playing Iago to Kean's Othello. Surprises Kean with his remarkable performance.

1826 Plays Othello at Park Theatre in New York. Makes hit.

1827 Makes acquaintance of James Oakes in Boston who becomes his devoted friend.

1827 to 1829 During next few years triumphs and wins fame and fortune.

1829 Pays off father's debts. Buys home in Philadelphia for his mother and sisters. Offers prize for the best play based on an American subject. Metamora wins prize and is produced at the Park Theatre, New York.

1834 Forrest travels in Europe and returns to Philadelphia.

1836 Appears as Spartacus in The Gladiator at Drury Lane Theatre, London. Is invited to the exclusive Garrick Club by the actor Macready. Meets Catherine Sinclair and falls in love with her.

1837 Forrest marries Catherine Sinclair in St.Paul's Church. They sail for America in autumn.

CHRONOLOGY (Cont.)

1843 Macready visits the Forrests while on his second visit to America.

1845 Mr. and Mrs. Forrest visit England. Many actors are unemployed. London resents invasion of foreign actors. Forrest ungraciously received by public, press, and friends of Macready. Bulwer-Lytton, friend of Macready, refuses him permission to play Richelieu and Lady of Lyons in London. Forrest hisses Macready at performance of Hamlet in Edinburgh. Upon Forrest's return to New York in autumn, public and prominent personages greatly honor him.

1847 Forrest's mother dies.

1848 Macready again tours America. Enmity between him and Forrest is renewed.

1849 Macready is hissed during performance by Forrest's friends, culminating in riot at the The Astor Place Opera House, New York. Forrest finds wife in rendezvous with George Jamieson, actor, and accuses her of infidelity. She claims innocence. Forrest sends her to friend's home to live. Estrangement grows.

1851 Forrest begins divorce proceedings; Catherine brings countersuit. Catherine Forrest granted divorce, court costs, and alimony. Forrest loses another suit, brought by Nathaniel P. Willis whom he had beaten in an altercation. He moves to Philadelphia from New York.

1852 Opens at the Broadway Theatre, New York, two weeks after first verdict. Acts in an engagement of 69 performances with tremendous success.

1856 Sells magnificent home he built on the Hudson to a Catholic Sisterhood for $100,000. Buys mansion in Philadelphia and redecorates and furnishes it elaborately. James Oakes, his old friend, remains loyal. Forrest's career had reached peak. He goes into retirement for a while.

1857 Receives invitation to act in San Francisco, signed by notables of the city.

1860 Forrest is induced to return to stage.

1863 Forrest's sister Henrietta dies.

CHRONOLOGY (Concluded)

1865 Forrest suffers from complication of ailments but makes comeback.

1866 Plays successful engagement in Chicago. Arrives in San Francisco with supporting actor John McCullough and agent McArdle. Is received with wide acclaim. Initial performance Richelieu. Plays for more than thirty performances. Draws 20,000 as his share of profit. The press at first enthuses then becomes critical. Forrest is displeased. He falls ill. Accompanied by Miss Lillie his adopted daughter he visits mineral springs and recuperates. Visits Yosemite. Sails for the East October 19. His physique and acting impaired Forrest's star is definitely waning.

1868 Final settlement of his divorce suit after unrelenting litigation.

1869 Forrest's sister Caroline dies.

1871 Forrest's sister Eleanor dies. Catherine Sinclair offers to return to him. He indignantly refuses the well-meant offer. Acts Richelieu and King Lear in New York with third-rate supporting company.

1872 Repeats same roles in Boston. Last words in dramatic performance "So ends it all." Gives dramatic readings as rheumatism prevents any acting. Dies alone in his Philadelphia mansion. Wills nearly his entire estate of over one million dollars to found a home for aged actors and actresses, known as Forrest Home at Holmesburg, a suburb of Philadelphia.

EDWIN FORREST

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EDWIN FORREST

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EDWIN FORREST

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES

YOUTHFUL YEARS

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1817	Rosalia (female part)		South St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
1820 Nov. 27	Norval (formal stage debut)	Douglas	Walnut St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
Dec. 29	Frederick	Lovers' Vows	" "
1821 Jan. 8	Octavian	The Mountaineers	
	Richard III (Engaged the theatre for the evening and produced the show himself)	Richard III	Prune St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
1822 Feb.	Zaphna	Mahomet	Walnut St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
Oct.	Norval (Engaged at salary of $7.50 per week)	Douglas	Pittsburgh
1823 March 6	Malfort	The Soldier's Daughter	Old Columbia St. Theatre (Cincinnati)
	Corinthian Tom	Tom and Jerry	" "
	Lubin	The Wandering Boys of Switzerland	" "
	Blaize	The Forest of Bondy, or the Dog of Montargis	" "

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1823 June 2	Norval	Douglas	Globe Theatre (Cincinnati)
" 4	Sir Edward Mortimer	The Iron Chest	" "
	Jaffier	Venice Preserved	" "
	Richard III	Richard III	" "
	Octavian	The Mountaineers	" "
	Cuffee*(Negro part) (First known Negro comedy impersonation on stage)	Tailor in Distress	" "
1824 Jan. 1	Capt. Glenroy	Town and Country	
Feb. 4	Jaffier	Venice Preserved	American Theatre (New Orleans)
1825 Jan. 3	Malfort	The Soldier's Daughter	" "
"	Adrian	Adrian and Orilla	" "
"	Joseph Surface	The School for Scandal	" "
May	King Lear (First time Forrest played this role)	King Lear	
Fall	Iago (To Edmund Kean's Othello)	Othello	(Albany)
1826 May 16	Jaffier	Venice Preserved	Old Drury Theatre (Philadelphia)

* This character also known as Ruban

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1826 May 18	Rollo	Pizarro	Old Drury Theatre (Philadelphia
" 23	Othello	Othello	" "
June 23	Othello (Hit performance one night only)	Othello (First New York appearance)	Park Theatre (New York)
Oct.15	Damon	Damon and Pythias	(Washington)
Nov.	Othello (First outstanding engagement for entire season)	Othello	Bowery Theatre

TRIUMPHANT YEARS

1827 Feb. 5	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Old Federal St. Theatre (Boston)
	(On this occasion he made the acquaintance of James Oakes who became his loyal friend for the rest of his life. Oakes went behind the scenes after the play to obtain an introduction.)		
Feb. 7	William Tell	William Tell	Old Federal St. Theatre (Boston)
Mar. 7,24	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Walnut St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
1829 Oct.17	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Park Theatre (New York) (First engagement here)
Oct.24	William Tell	William Tell	Park Theatre (New York)

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1829 Dec. 15	Metamora (1st performance	Metamora of play)	Park Theatre (New York)
1830 Dec. 8	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Chestnut St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
Dec. 10	Metamora	Metamora	" "
" 13	William Tell	William Tell	" "
" 20	Othello (Iago, Mr. Booth)	Othello	" "
1831 Oct. 24	Spartacus (1st performance)	The Gladiator	Arch St. Theatre (Philadelphia)
1833 Apr. 2	King Lear	King Lear	" "
Nov. 27	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Bowery Theatre (New York)
1834 Feb. 12	Baptista Febro	The Broker of Bogota (1st performance)	Bowery Theatre (New York)
"	Pythias	Damon and Pythias	
	Marc Anthony	Julius Caesar	
1834-1836	Two years in the old world visiting France, Germany, Russia, England, and Italy.		
1836	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia)
	Othello	Othello	" "
	Spartacus	The Gladiator	" "
	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Park Theatre (New York)
	Othello	Othello	" "
	Spartacus	The Gladiator	" "
	King Lear	King Lear	" "

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1836 Oct. 17	Spartacus	The Gladiator	Drury Lane Theatre (London)
	Macbeth	Macbeth	" "
1837 Sept. 18	Othello	Othello	Park Theatre (New York)
Oct. 4	Metamora	Metamora	" "
" 9	Virginius	Virginius	" "
" 13	Hamlet	Hamlet	" "
1838 Jan. 2	Damon	Damon and Pythias	" "
" 11	Coriolanus (First seen in New York)	Coriolanus	" "
May 14	Claude Melnotte (First time in America)	The Lady of Lyons	" "
Sept. 5	Othello	Othello	National Theatre (New York)
" 7	Macbeth	Macbeth	" "
1839 " 4	Richelieu (First time in New York)	Richelieu	Park Theatre (New York)
Dec. 9	Virginius	Virginius	Bowery Theatre (New York)
1840 Jan. 1	Metamora	Metamora	" "
1841 May 6	Othello (Jamieson as Iago)	Othello	Park Theatre (New York)
" 10	Pierre	Venice Preserved	" "
" 24	Jack Cade (First performance. Later the play was renamed Jack Cade.)	Aylmere or The Kentish Rebellion	" "

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1841 Oct. 4	Jack Cade (Aylmere was now so named)	Jack Cade	Park Theatre (New York)
1842 May 16	Othello	Othello	Chatham Theatre (New York)
" 24	Hamlet	Hamlet	" "
1843 Apr. 3	Mordaunt	The Patrician's Daughter	" "
1845 Feb.	Othello (The performance which started the feud between Macready and Forrest. The latter hissed by the audience.)	Othello	Covent Garden (London)
1846 Aug.	King Lear	King Lear	Park Theatre (New York)
1849-1852	Withdrew from stage.		
1852 Jan.	Damon	Damon and Pythias	Broadway Theatre (New York)
(69 almost successive performances at the Broadway Theatre)			
1853 Feb.21	Macbeth	Macbeth	Broadway Theatre (New York)
" 24	Othello (With one week's intermission, season closed on May 30th)	Othello	" "
1856-1860	Ill, retired to private life.		

DECLINING YEARS

1860 Sept.17	Hamlet	Hamlet	Niblo's Garden (New York)
1863 Jan. 26	Virginius	Virginius	Chestnut St. Theatre (Philadelphia)

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1865 Nov. 13	Richelieu	Richelieu	Niblo's Garden (New York)
" 16,17	King Lear	King Lear	" "
" 20,21	Othello	Othello	" "
Dec. 7	Metamora	Metamora	" "
" 8	Damon	Damon and Pythias	" "
" 22	Richelieu	Richelieu	" "

SAN FRANCISCO ENGAGEMENTS

1866 May 14,15	Richelieu	Richelieu	Maguire's Opera House
" 17,18	Virginius	Virginius	" "
" 21	King Lear	King Lear	" "
" 23	Othello	Othello	" "
" 24	Damon	Damon and Pythias	" "
" 28	Virginius	Virginius	" "
" 29	Richelieu	Richelieu	" "
" 30	Damon	Damon and Pythias	" "
" 31	King Lear	King Lear	" "
June 1	Macbeth	Macbeth	" "
" 4, 5	Baptista Febro, the broker	Broker of Bogota	" "
" 8	Othello	Othello	" "
" 11	Brutus	Brutus	" "

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Cont.)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1866 June 12	Macbeth	Macbeth	Maguire's Opera House
" 14	Richelieu	Richelieu	" "
" 15	Virginius	Virginius	" "
" 18,19	Jack Cade	Jack Cade	" "
" 20	Damon	Damon and Pythias	" "
" 21	King Lear	King Lear	" "
" 22	Othello	Othello	" "
" 25	Jack Cade	Jack Cade	" "
" 26	Virginius	Virginius	" "
" 27	Jack Cade	Jack Cade	" "
" 28	Richelieu	Richelieu	" "
" 29	Macbeth	Macbeth	" "
	RESUMPTION OF EASTERN APPEARANCES		
1867 Sept. 2	Virginius	Virginius	Broadway Theatre (New York)
" 30	Spartacus	The Gladiator	" "
1868 Oct. 12	King Lear	King Lear	Niblo's Garden (New York)
1871 Feb.	King Lear	King Lear	Lyceum Theatre (New York) (also called 14th Street Theatre)
"	Richelieu (Last engagement in New York)	Richelieu	" "

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Concluded)

Date	Role	Play	Theatre
1872	King Lear	King Lear	Globe Theatre (Boston)
	Richelieu (The last stage performance in his life)	Richelieu	" "

His last words in a stage performance "So ends it all."

1872 Gave dramatic readings: Hamlet and Othello in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Brooklyn.

Oct. 15 Gave first dramatic reading at Academy of Music (Philadelphia).

Dec. 7 Read Othello at Tremont Temple, Boston. Last words he ever said before the public:

"I kissed thee ere I killed thee; no way but this
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss."

EDWIN FORREST

MOST FAMED INTERPRETATIONS

Period of Developing Genius	Period of Glory to Close of Career
1827 - 1834	1834 - 1872
Spartacus	Richelieu
Metamora	Macbeth
Rollo	Richard III
Virginius	Hamlet
William Tell	Coriolanus
Damon	Othello
Brutus	King Lear

NOTABLE CASTS

DOUGLAS, OR THE NOBLE SHEPHERD

(Philadelphia)

Walnut Street Theatre
Monday evening November 27, 1820

Will be presented the tragedy (in 5 acts) called

Douglas; or the Noble Shepherd

Written by Mr. Home

Young Norval	By a Young Gentlemen of this city *
Lord Randolph	Mr. Wheatley
Glenalvon	Mr. W. B. Wood
Norval's servant	Mr. Martin
First Officer	Mr. Scrivener
Second Officer	Mr. Carter
Third Officer	Mr. Parker
Lady Randolph	Mrs. Williams
Anna	Mrs. Jefferson

* Edwin Forrest, then unknown, was not listed by name.

NOTABLE CASTS (Cont.)

METAMORA

(New York)

Park Theatre
December 15, 1829

As a matter of dramatic history connected with Metamora, we give the cast as originally played in New York:

Metamora	Mr. E. Forrest
Lord Fitzarnold	Mr. Richings
Sir Arthur Vaughan	Mr. Chapman
Guy of Godalmin	Mr. Woodhull
Horatio	Mr. Barry
Errington	Mr. Langton
Church	Mr. T. Placide
Wolfe	Mr. Nixem
Tramp	Mr. Povey
Holyoke	Mr. Wheatley
Kanshine	Mr. Blakeley
Child	Miss S. Parker
Oceana	Mrs. Hilson
Nahmeokee	Mrs. Sharpe

NOTABLE CASTS (Cont.)

THE BROKER OF BOGOTA

(New York)

Bowery Theatre
February 12,1834

Baptista Febro	Mr. E. Forrest
Caberero	Mr. H. Wallack
Palmera	Mr. H. Gale
Fernando	Mr. G. Jones
Ramon	Mr. Ingersoll
Francisco	Mr. Conner
Mendoza	Mr. Farren
Pablo	Mr. McClure
Juana	Mrs. McClure
Leonor	Mrs. Flynn

NOTABLE CASTS (Cont.)

THE GLADIATOR

(London)

Drury Lane Theatre
October 17, 1836

Marcus Lucinius Crassus	Mr. Warde
Lucius Gellius	Mr. F. Cooke
Batiatus Lentulus	Mr. Hooper
Jovius	Mr. Bartley
Bracchius	Mr. Mathews
Florus	Mr. Brindal
Spartacus	Mr. Edwin Forrest
Phasarius	Mr. Cooper
Aenomaiis	Mr. Baker
Crixus	Mr. Duruset
Mummius	Mr. Mears
Scropha	Mr. Honner
A Boy	Miss Marshall
Julia (her first appearance)	Mrs. Hooper
Senona (her first appearance in five years)	Miss Huddart

NOTABLE CASTS (Cont.)

RICHELIEU

(New York)

Park Theatre
September 4, 1839

Cardinal Richelieu	Mr. Forrest
Louis, the Thirteenth	Mr. Walton
Baradas	Mr. Jamieson
The Chevalier de Mauprat	Mr. Wallack Jr.
The Sieur de Beringhen	Mr. Horncastle
Gaston, Duke of Orleans	Mr. Powell
Joseph, a Capuchin	Mr. Neafie
Francois	Mrs. W. Sefton
Julie de Mortemar	Miss Monier
Marion de Lorme	Mrs. Rogers

NOTABLE CASTS (Concluded)

AYLMERE, OR THE KENTISH REBELLION*

(New York)

Park Theatre
May 24, 1841

Aylmere (Jack Cade)	Mr. Forrest
Clifford	Mr. Murdoch
Lord Say	Mr. Wheatley
Buckingham	Mr. A.Andrews
Friar Lacy	Mr. Nickenson
Wat Worthy	Mr. Chippendale
Mowbray	Mr. C. W. Clarke
Courtnay	Mr. W. A. Chapman
Jack Straw	Mr. Bellamy
Dick Pembroke	Mr. Fisher
Mariamne	Mrs. G. Jones
Widow Cade	Mrs. Wheatley
Kate	Miss McBride

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* Name later changed to Jack Cade.

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CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

CATHERINE SINCLAIR

(1818 - 1891)

PHOTO COURTESY M. H. de YOUNG MUSEUM

CATHERINE SINCLAIR

(1816 - 1891)

PHOTO COURTESY M. H. de YOUNG MUSEUM

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

1818-1891

CHAPTER I

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

CONSUELO LETTER

"And now, sweetest Consuelo, our brief dream is over; and such a dream! Have we not known real bliss? Have we not realized what poets have to set up as an ideal state, giving full license to their imagination, scarcely believing in its reality? Have we not experienced the truth that ecstasy is not fiction? I have: and, as I will not permit myself to doubt you, am certain that you have. And Oh! what an additional delight to think--no, to know, that I have made some happy hours to you! Yes, that remembrance of me may lighten the heavy time of many an hour to come. Yes, our little dream of great account is over; reality stares us in the face. Let us peruse its features. Look with me and read as I do, and you will find our dream is not all a dream. Can reality take from us, when she separates and exiles us from each other,--can she divide our souls, our spirits? Can slander's tongue or rumor's trumpet summon us to parley with ourselves, where, to doubt each other, we should hold council: No! No! a doubt of thee can no more find harbor in my brain than the opened rose shall cease to be the hum-bird's harbor; and as my heart and soul are in your possession, examine them, and you will find no text from which to discourse a doubt of me. With these considerations, dearest, our separation, though painful will not be unendurable; and if a sombre hour

should intrude itself upon you, banish it by knowing there is one who is whispering to himself, Consuelo.

"There is another potent reason why you should be happy,--that is having been the means of another's happiness; for I am happy, and with you to remember and the blissful anticipation of seeing you again, shall remain so. I wish I could tell you of my happiness. I cannot. No words have yet been invented that could convey an idea of the depth of passion, composed pride, admiration, awe, veneration and love, without being earthy, I feel for you.

"Be happy, dearest; write to me you are happy. Think of the time we shall meet again; believe me, that I shall do my utmost to be worthy of your love! and now God bless you, a thousand times, my own, my heart's altar.

"I would say more, but must stow away my shreds and tinsel patches. Ugh! how hideous they look after thinking of you."*

The foregoing letter to Mrs. Catherine Sinclair Forrest from one George Jamieson was the crowning blow to the ego of the renowned and self-assured actor, Edwin Forrest. The phrase "I shall do my utmost to be worthy of your love!" in connection with remarks regarding the happiness Mrs. Forrest and Jamieson had found together, indicated to Forrest gross infidelity. Unfortunately for him the jury failed to consider the evidence sufficient to justify Forrest's conduct in court. However, this letter was the incriminating tool in one of the most notorious divorce trials of the nineteenth century. It was a scandal full of melodrama and passion.

The letter served to confirm the suspicions of

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* Alger, W. R., The Life of Edwin Forrest, p. 486.

Forrest that his wife had been guilty of adultery; not that Forrest was faithful to Catherine, for a wife to him often proved an inconvenience. The sore point with Forrest was not the fact that his crushed heart had been torn into shreds but that he refused to admit that he, the dominant male, could be supplanted by another man in any woman's affections.

Forrest knew that his career depended on public sympathy; then, of course, there was the trifling matter of settlement or alimony. Thus by assuming a martyred and broken spirit, bitter with scorned devotion, Forrest hoped to bring a jury to his feet amid scalding and unabashed tears. Much to his amazement, Catherine proved the better actor in the stark realities of private life. The court turned a deaf ear to Forrest's pleadings and accusations. He was flayed by the judge for his use of crude language and for irascibility of temper during the trial, as well as for exposing in lengthy detail his own licentious living.

The initial seed of jealousy found fertile soil in the mind of Edwin Forrest. It seems that in the spring of 1848 while Forrest was fulfilling a professional engagement in Cincinnati, his wife was giving her attention to an entirely different phase of art. The spring is beautiful in Ohio with bright days and green bloom. It was on just such a day that Forrest, according to his biographer, W. R. Alger, entered his room at the hotel and discovered Mrs. Forrest standing between the knees of George Jamieson, an actor

supposedly of low moral character. Jamieson's hands were on her person. Forrest considered that his wife had been in too close proximity with the actor and a violent scene followed. The details of the scene are apparently of a delicate nature and our modest biographer fails to relate them. In the meantime, Jamieson had fled from the room carrying his boots in his hand. Mrs. Forrest, clever actress that she was, soothed her husband's angry suspicion and he overlooked the affair as a mere matter of indiscretion.

This was the opportunity for which Forrest had been waiting. He made sure that the incident of the hotel room was not wholly forgotten. During the months that followed he became morose and melancholy with fits of violent temper. Mrs. Forrest was his wife in name only. After their return to New York certain trifling circumstances came under Forrest's observation which made him uneasy. On opening a drawer in which his wife kept her papers, he found addressed to her the fatal letter, worn, rumpled and in Jamieson's handwriting.

Edwin Forrest read the letter with poised dignity and on its completion sank into the nearest chair, cursing the day he had met this scarlet, ungrateful woman. After a time he arose and paced majestically about the room philosophizing on the price he had paid for what he thought to be happiness. He denounced Catherine for her infidelity and as a climax fell into unrestrained weeping. His biographer Alger states with a hint of subtle amusement: "Mr. Forrest was

struck to the heart with surprise, grief and rage." The letter, prompted by wounded vanity and jealousy, gave him positive proof that his wife had been unfaithful. According to his testimony in court, hurt love gnawed at him. His attitude on the entire matter was typical of the wronged husband or suffering hero of the period in the theatre.

Naturally relations between Forrest and his wife were strained. Every deed or word became of the utmost importance and finally brought about an unfortunate incident which carried their alienation to the point of a violent rupture.

Shortly before this time Mrs. Forrest's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Sinclair, accompanied by their two daughters arrived in America and became members of the household. The Sinclairs rapidly made themselves at home in the new surroundings. Their son-in-law's residence offered to them luxury and comfort. John Sinclair was a professional man with all his notions of life derived from the stage. It was English life as exemplified both on the stage and off, but totally unsuited to that of America.

Soon the Sinclairs and Mrs. Forrest found themselves surrounded by many friends. The home became a scene of almost continuous receptions. Edwin Forrest, though a distinguished actor, was not an educated man. His manner

was blunt and crude and his friends formed an entirely different class from those cultivated by Mrs. Forrest and her parents. Forrest resented both his in-laws and their friends. This only served to make a tense situation between man and wife more strained and many quarrels ensued.

The final break came during a bitter argument regarding Mrs. Forrest's parents when Forrest made some cutting remarks concerning Mrs. Forrest's sister. Catherine had the courage to call the actor a liar. The words "It is a lie" fell into his irascible blood like drops of molten iron. He restrained his temper with great difficulty and stated: "If a man had said that to me he should die. I cannot live with a woman who has said it."* From that moment separation was inevitable and irrevocable.

Forrest accompanied his wife to the home of her friends, Parke and Fanny Godwin, and there deposited her. Parke Godwin had married the daughter of William Cullen Bryant, and both parties were important witnesses when the case was brought to trial. For nearly a year they lived apart in secrecy and during this time corresponded at intervals. On one occasion Forrest wrote an oath of innocence in the most stringent and solemn terms. The oath dealt with the importance of keeping their misunderstanding a secret. Mrs. Forrest readily signed and enclosed a letter asserting her

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* Ibid.

conviction:

> "Some day your own naturally noble and just mind will do me justice, and you will believe in the affection, which for twelve years, has never swerved from you. I cannot, nor would I, subscribe myself other than yours now and ever.
>
> Catherine N. Forrest."*

After the separation Forrest opened the doors of his home to the scrutiny of the world and appealed to the sympathy of the public to remove the skeleton which lurked in his closet. In spite of Mrs. Forrest's promise of secrecy, Forrest wrought himself to the point of fancying that she was betraying his shame to the public when it was Forrest, himself, who chose to utilize the situation and his wife's honor to bring box-office appeal. He confessed to several friends, one a newspaper man, that his marriage was over. When a listener attempted to defend Mrs. Forrest by praising her physical and spiritual beauty, Forrest replied: "She looks ugly to me; her face is black and hideous."** Yet for almost a year he had been writing his wife letters filled with tenderness and devotion. Before leaving the house Catherine had asked Forrest to give her a copy of the works of Shakespeare as a memento from him. He had granted the request, writing: "Mrs. Edwin Forrest, from Edwin Forrest."***

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* Alger, W. R. Life of Edwin Forrest.

** Barrett, Lawrence. Sketch of Edwin Forrest, p. 199, Chap. VII.

*** Ibid.

a sad contrast with the inscription formerly made in the books he had presented to her, "From your lover and husband, Edwin Forrest."

Forrest, unable to keep his part of the bargain, obtained a legal separation from his wife, allowing her $1500 per year. He still felt that as yet he had not been avenged; then too, Forrest was fond of making headlines. He wanted to be the star in his own show. Therefore, he applied for a divorce in Philadelphia -- an act that had never before entered Catherine's mind. For besides the pain of separation, misunderstanding, and distrust there was the horror of bad publicity for the man she loved until her dying day and for a profession that at its best was questionable.

A DECREE OF DIVORCE

The news that her husband had filed suit for divorce brought an end to the cherished hope of Mrs. Forrest that there would be a reconciliation. This was the final proof that after twelve years of devotion on her part, Forrest wanted to be rid of her. In a final desperate effort she wrote a letter to Forrest asking for his forgiveness and for his love. The letter in part states: "I will love you until my dying day; for what God has joined together, let no man put asunder."* The missive was completely ignored.

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* Crawford, Mary Caroline. Romance of the American Theatre.

Influenced by friends and to protect her reputation, Mrs. Forrest entered a countersuit in New York, charging Forrest with infidelity and extreme cruelty. The trial began in December 1851, lasted six weeks, and was reported at great length in every important newspaper in the land. Mrs. Forrest secured as her counsel Charles O'Connor, a prominent New York attorney. O'Connor saw to it that his witness was always a lady and that her witnesses were among the irreproachable citizens of the land. A reporter of the New York Herald described the appearance of the principals on the first day of the trial thus:

> "Mrs. Forrest was habited in black, wore a black silk bonnet with a white cape and a black lace veil covering her face....
>
> "Mr. Forrest wore his usual dress, namely, a black frock coat with velvet facings, collar à la Byron and a considerable display of snowy linen."*

If the trial lacked dignity it was at least sensational and while mid-Victorian New York gasped for breath in an over-crowded courtroom, Edwin Forrest proceeded to wash his wife's soiled linen with bluntness and violence. Mrs. Forrest remained calm and truly a gentlewoman, never making a direct accusation but inferring through her attorney that Forrest had been guilty of the offense he was charging to her. Her witnesses testified that Forrest had not only formed many liaisons but had been abusive in his treatment of

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* Ibid.

Catherine and had driven her from their home. It was proved beyond the least doubt that Forrest frequented establishments of questionable reputation and had on many occasions brought persons of low moral character into his home in the presence of his wife.

Forrest, on the other hand, lost many admirers and friends by his own coarseness of speech and display of bad temper. His accusations were directed against Jamieson and Mrs. Forrest. His witnesses for the most part were chosen from his acquaintances who were known to be persons of ill repute. One writer hinted that Forrest had arranged to compensate his principal witness for her testimony. During the course of the trial, Forrest assaulted Nathaniel P. Willis in Central Park on the suspicion that Willis was a party to his domestic ills. Willis brought suit for damages and was awarded one dollar by the court.*

Meanwhile Forrest rapidly lost ground and with the close of the sixth week Mrs. Forrest's lawyer had won for her the decree of divorce, together with the expenses connected with the trial, and $3,000 per year alimony. Mrs. Forrest was granted permission to marry again but Forrest was denied that privilege. This was an exceptionally important item in the so-called adoption of Miss Lillie by Forrest some years later.

As though the scandal and divorce were not enough humiliation for Catherine, Forrest, the ruthless egotist,

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* See Monograph on Edwin Forrest p. 42.

used her personal tragedy to increase his box-office appeal. Two weeks after the trial had been completed he opened in a blaze of glory and at the end of the play presented to the audience a picture of a broken, humble spirit, who was endeavoring to bear his cross as a brave man should but whose weight was killing him. He referred to his cause "not as my cause alone, but the cause of every man in the community, the cause of every human being, of every honest wife and virtuous woman, the cause of everyone who cherishes a home and the pure spirit which should abide there."* Needless to say, the theatre was filled to capacity with a scandal-mongering mob which increased Forrest's popularity,pandered to his inflated ego, and added to his fortune. During the engagement he permitted a sign to be hung across the theatre marquee with the words:

"This is the people's verdict."**

Still unable to believe that he, Edwin Forrest, could be wrong he appealed the case five times,only to be baffled and overthrown at the end. Finally in 1868, after displaying the last of the very sordid evidence and probably because he felt the public had lost interest he paid Mrs. Forrest the full award of sixty-four thousand dollars. Of this sum fifty-nine thousand dollars had been used in court expenses.

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* Ibid.
**Ibid.

THE THIRD SIDE

George Jamieson, who figured as the third side of the triangle in the Forrest divorce case, was what one could call a bon vivant, fond of good living and drinking at the expense of others and a mid-Victorian gigolo. He had been known to indulge in blackmail on a small scale and on several occasions Edwin Forrest had given or loaned Jamieson sums of money. For some reason Forrest had befriended him and had assisted his future enemy through several difficult situations.

Jamieson's interest in Catherine Sinclair was merely an adventure on the part of a man whose loves were legion. To Catherine the association was prompted by kindness, sympathy, and understanding toward an individual whose better self had never been allowed to flourish. He was amusing and entertaining to a woman who was starved for affection and a relief from the domineering ways of an exacting husband.

George Jamieson was born in New York and made his debut in a farce called The Chameleon January 23, 1837. He became a member of the National Theatre, at the corner of Church and Leonard Streets, New York. In 1861 he visited England. Returning to the United States he scored an instant hit as Pete in The Octoroon at the Winter Garden in New York. Never a great actor but a passable one, Jamieson was well known in the dramatic profession as an unreliable, careless and wasteful profligate who had no regard for moral standards of living. He had worked with the same company that

employed Edwin Forrest as the star. His charming personality soon wore through the veneer of the egotist Forrest, and he made Jamieson his confidant.

With the airing of Edwin Forrest's domestic worries Jamieson lost public favor not because of sympathy for Forrest but because of the public's deep regard for Catherine Sinclair. Jamieson declared himself innocent and unjustly misunderstood. His jovial spirit vanished as the clouds of scandal began to form about him. The years that followed were filled with melancholy and embitterment.

In October 1868 Jamieson journeyed from New York to Yonkers but was carried on to Glenwood. He had evidently decided to walk the short distance back to Yonkers rather than wait for a later train. Unmindful of the danger awaiting him he stepped onto a bridge where he was killed instantly by an express train when only a few hundred yards from safety. He was buried near Yonkers with but a few friends to mourn his passing. When Forrest received the news that Jamieson had been killed, he felt that he had been avenged in part at least. His remarks were caustic and filled with bitter hate.

THE FORKED ROAD

The path of destiny had led the famous actor and his genteel wife to a forked road; Forrest to resume his career as a star of the first magnitude, and Catherine to assemble her wrecked life and with the few remaining dollars to

attempt to find her place in the sun. After twelve years of marriage, preceded by a happy childhood and a sheltered girlhood, Catherine Sinclair was faced with the problem of earning a living -- a task made doubly difficult in an age when women in business or professions were considered a trifle below par by the elite and a general nuisance by the masculine population. In order to make herself worthy of her illustrious husband and to appreciate his genius, Catherine Sinclair had made a diligent study of the drama. Faced with the realities of life she naturally turned to the stage.

Through the efforts of one Granby Calcraft Mrs. Forrest secured George Vandenhoff, a prominent English actor, as her instructor. The actor was reluctant when asked to take this lady under his guidance. Regarding their association he states:

> "I was an utter stranger to Mrs. Forrest till I received some time in 1851, a message, through the late Granby Calcraft, requesting me to call on her with a view to advising her as to her capabilities for the stage. I did so. I gave her my candid opinion that it was late in life for her to take such a step, although she had qualities which, had they been cultivated and improved in earlier youth, might, and would, have led to her distinction. She however, represented that she would soon, in all probability, have to depend on her talents for the stage, whatever they might be, for her support; and that she wished me to give her instructions in three or four parts, to enable her to appear with some success."*

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* Vandenhoff, George. Leaves of an Actor's Note Book, Chap. I, p. 2.

At this stage of their association Vandenhoff's interest in Mrs. Sinclair was one of sympathy. He began to instruct her in several parts and it was through him that she made her theatrical debut.

Edwin Forrest, on the other hand, used the divorce and scandal to bring more silver and gold to the box office. Through the press he gave the public to understand that he was a Pagliacco in the flesh. He would don his make-up and costume to present another character to his appreciative audience but when called before the curtain he assumed the role of a heart-broken, misunderstood man who had given all for the woman who wronged him.

BACKGROUND

In the later years of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, the English theatre entered upon its third cycle. The poetic plays of the early Greeks had given way to a more staid type of entertainment. Women had been permitted to work in the theatre for several centuries. Of course, persons engaged in the theatrical profession were frowned upon by society and were never admitted to the inner circles of royal functions except as entertainers.

The theatre itself was the chosen rendezvous of gamblers, rakes, and prostitutes. It was in constant disfavor with the Church of England although highly approved of by

the English Court, especially by George III whose mistress was an actress.

In 1778 John Larpent was appointed Examiner of Plays by the Marquis of Hertford, holding the office until his death in 1824. Larpent, ever conscious of his religious principles, attempted to eventually destroy this corrupt institution. It was a definite mistake to appoint a confirmed bigot to any post dealing with the control of public amusements, and under his supervision the theatre lost most of the ground it had gained over a long period of time.

THE CHURCH vs. THE STAGE

The church, opposed to the stage as an instrument of evil, denounced the theatre, its participants and clientele from the pulpit. At Rowland Hills Chapel the congregation was congratulated from the pulpit on the destruction of Covent Garden Theatre and the annihilation of a score of firemen. This was regarded as a singular proof of the wisdom of Providence, the pulpiteer exclaiming:

> "Great news my brethren, great news, a great triumph has taken place over the devil and the stage players--a fire in one of their houses--Oh may there be one consumed every year! It is my fervent prayer."*

With the knowledge that John Larpent was supporting an actress of minor importance while caustically denouncing the profession, the public began to lose interest in the

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* Powell, Frank and Palmer, Frank. Censorship in England.

purification of their entertainment. With Larpent's death in 1824 George Colman was appointed to the office, and the theatre was again restored to its proper place. Colman and his successors banned from the theatre all mention of God, all profanity and scenes excusing open prostitution or adultery. This gained him the favor of the church while the restriction of all remarks injurious to the government won the approval of the Court. This was the theatre that John Sinclair, father of Catherine Sinclair Forrest knew.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Although never a great actor or singer, John Sinclair was modestly engaged in the theatrical business. He was born in 1790 and received the best schooling in London and on the continent. After a modest success in his own country he invaded New York where he made his debut as Orlando in The Cabinet. New York refused to be swept off its feet by this English singer and in 1834 John Sinclair returned to England.

BIRTH OF CATHERINE

While John Sinclair was not a rich man he had accumulated means to make his family comfortable. Catherine was born in 1818 near London and was christened Catherine Norton Sinclair. The home of John Sinclair was a meeting place for artists, actors, and writers. It was strictly a cultural

atmosphere imbued with Victorian principles of manners and morals. Catherine and her sisters experienced a sheltered life of comparative ease. The parents considered their responsibility at an end when suitable husbands were found for their daughters. First however, came a cultural background of music and appreciation of the fine arts, together with a moderate education. The idea that one of the daughters might follow the theatre as a profession would, of course, have been entirely out of the question. Naturally John Sinclair held a reverence for the theatre but he was of the old school who believed that a woman's place was in the home, rearing a family.

MEETING WITH FORREST

When Catherine Sinclair was a girl of eighteen, the distinguished actor Edwin Forrest visited the Sinclair fireside. The visits were repeated and the attraction was the lovely daughter of the household. Miss Sinclair was duly impressed by this polished handsome actor. Thirty years after their first meeting she remarked:

> "The first time I saw him--I recall it now clearly as though it were but yesterday--the impression he made was so instantaneous and so strong, that I remember I whispered to myself, while a thrill ran through me, 'This is the handsomest man on whom my eyes have ever fallen.'" *

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* Crawford, Mary Caroline. Romance of the American Theatre.

After a respectable interval Catherine Sinclair was married to Edwin Forrest in June 1837. The wedding was one of the social events of the season. Miss Sinclair was beautiful and Forrest was considered a splendid catch. Shortly after the ceremony the couple came to America and Forrest resumed his career in Philadelphia at the old Chestnut Street Theatre. Mrs. Forrest made a lasting impression with her beauty and refined English manners.

CHAPTER II

EDWIN FORREST

There was considerable speculation in certain circles as to what induced Edwin Forrest to come to California. It could hardly have been the hope of making more money and it is difficult to believe that the fame of the medicinal waters of California was so widely spread as to bring the actor thousands of miles in search of relief from his rheumatism. The rumor, prevalent at the time, was that Forrest, unable to prove his wife guilty of adultery in New York, where he was denied the privilege to remarry, might obtain witnesses in California who would enable him to influence the courts of California in his favor.

THE MAN

Edwin Forrest was not a man to inspire canonization although his biographers exhibit a tendency to do so. His mind was controlled during the best part of his career by animal excitement which was not curbed by intellectual prudence. He was a confirmed egotist who found a public entirely in sympathy with him until the shadow of divorce began to

gather over his pathway. He was boisterous, sensual, revengeful.

He was capable of good impulses and kind actions, but the impulses were often prompted and mandated by selfish aims. In his own estimation he was the greatest of men. The idea that any man, woman, or child would dare to criticize his private or professional life would sting him into an outburst of fury. He was entirely devoid of any sense of humor and lacked poise; conscious rectitude, patience, and submission were qualities apart from his nature. Forrest was not an educated man nor was he broad enough to ignore wounds to his vanity. He looked upon the public at large as animated scum unable to understand his genius. Fate was kind to Edwin Forrest. He possessed a splendid physical constitution, an unusual talent for the stage, and had been endowed with a magnetic personal quality.

The so-called wreck of Forrest's life was mainly the result of Forrest's own traits. As a young man he revolted against discipline. In manhood he revolted against culture, and restraints of good breeding and right social customs, the duty of consideration for other persons, the supremacy of spiritual law, and anything else that interfered with his ideas or passions. He believed himself to be a genius, but to his mind this meant that he was unlike other men and superior to them; therefore ordained and privileged to dominate everything.

He could be loving and kind at times; but he was also proud, self-assertive, and was greedy for praise and power. He loved the theatre because it was a means of personal glorification. He was capable of kind deeds toward those who spent hours praising him. If mankind had been made up of melodious sycophants Edwin Forrest would have found happiness and serenity. He was a great man and somebody thought he was not. He was the greatest actor that ever lived and some newspaper had the intestinal fortitude to deny it. He felt that men should step aside for one as magnificent as he and that women should adore him and submit to his every whim. Most of them did.

On the credit side of his life Edwin Forrest never forgot kind treatment. He remembered that it was William Jones who acted as his benefactor and manager in his early years. To William Jones he gave shelter and means of support when the former manager was in dire need. Several other acts of kindness from which he expected nothing are recorded in Forrest's favor but for the most part he was essentially selfish and grasping.

THE ACTOR

It is a pitiful situation when a waning star insists on attempting to reinstate himself in public favor with a style that has been outmoded. Time passes, leaving the young to heckle while the older folk remember that this shell of a man was once a great actor. This was the plight of

Edwin Forrest who refused either to change his method of acting or to retire when the theatre could no longer offer him security.

Physically Forrest resembled the Farnese Hercules with the addition of a black moustache and a small goatee under his lip. His voice, in both range and power, equaled his physique. He was totally without humor or lightness. He was massive, dominant, and unsatisfying unless the role gave opportunity to overwhelm the emotions. His King Lear and portions of his Othello were labeled by the critics of the day as the greatest of all time.

Forrest's tours outside of New York were profitable even when age, outmoded style, and rheumatism had impaired his ability. In 1865 he had suffered a partial paralysis of the right sciatic nerve. For a man who had taken an enormous pride in his massive muscularity and whose style had depended upon bodily agility, this was a terrible blow. Yet in 1866 he played in San Francisco for thirty-five appearances to sixty thousand people for a reward of $20,000. By this time, Forrest was living on his reputation and had found a public willing to flock to hear a celebrity regardless of the mediocrity of his work. Such was the lot of Edwin Forrest as an actor in his later years.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF EDWIN FORREST

To condemn the private life of Edwin Forrest would probably place the stamp of disapproval on most men. Yet to

entirely condone it would be to ignore the behavior which modern civilization has termed indecent. The life of John Doe is probably as colorful as that of Edwin Forrest but Edwin Forrest was a nationally known figure and therefore subjected to the scrutiny of the entire population rather than a small community.

Forrest's liaisons and indiscretions were publicly aired during the divorce trial, nor did they cease with the court verdict. During his later years he discovered Miss Lillie, many years his junior, who became his protégée. Denied the privilege of remarriage by law he adopted Miss Lillie. It was pathetic and yet amusing to see an elderly man attempt to regain lost youth by every conceivable method, including sulphur baths. The ingénue accompanied him everywhere and his fondness for her was manifested in his every act. One critic remarked that Miss Lillie lacked fire as an actress but that Forrest would supply that.* Evidently he did. After several years a younger man won from the great actor the love of his declining years. Forrest returned to the East where he died at his home in Philadelphia, December 12, 1872.

CATHERINE SINCLAIR APPROACHES THE THEATRE.

Catherine Sinclair's approach to the theatre was made through George Vandenhoff who, as has been indicated, was persuaded to coach the potential actress in several parts. The

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* Dramatic Chronicle, 1866.

partnership of Sinclair and Vandenhoff began the day that the actor heard Mrs. Sinclair read several passages of poetry. Vandenhoff advised her to study Lady Teazle in The School for Scandal as well as other roles in important plays of the period. As Mrs. Sinclair had no present means of payment Vandenhoff agreed to coach her and perform on the stage as her leading man when she was able to go into the profession for profit. In consideration of the services rendered, Mrs. Sinclair was to divide with Vandenhoff the profit of their joint performances. Regarding the matter Vandenhoff states:

> "Mrs. Forrest wished to go on the stage; she needed preparation; she could not pay for it; but it was probable that public curiosity would render her engagements highly profitable; and, in consideration of my instructions, and also my performing with her, I was to be allowed an equal share of the profits which her temporary and facetious attraction would secure." *

Mrs. Sinclair made her debut as Lady Teazle in The School for Scandal on February 2, 1852. Unfortunately Vandenhoff was confined to his hotel due to illness and was unable to appear with the actress. Vandenhoff insisted that Mrs. Sinclair appear as Lady Teazle because he felt that her appearance, style, and general capabilities would make the best impression. She adhered to Lady Teazle and found that Vandenhoff had been somewhat of a prophet, for Lady Teazle was the one outstanding performance that Mrs. Sinclair gave to the theatre. But the Vandenhoff-Sinclair combination was headed

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* Vandenhoff, George. Leaves From an Actor's Note Book.

for disaster due to a misunderstanding regarding finances.

In Leaves From an Actor's Note Book Mr. Vandenhoff relates:

> "I give the receipts of the first eight nights of our joint performances. The terms were to share, after $100; that is, to share with the manager, he first deducting for himself one hundred dollars.
>
> "The receipts of eight nights were:
> 1852, Feb. 16 to 23 inclusive Lady of Lyons)
> " " 24 Love's Sacrifice)
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | | $4,119.50 |
> | Deduct on eight nights for Manager | 800.00 |
> | | $3,319.50 |
>
> "Leaving our joint share for eight nights $1,659.75
> That is, for each 829.87½
>
> "Mrs. Sinclair was then taken ill, and did not resume her performances till the first of March.
>
> "For her third week, the receipts were $2,405.75: of which our joint share was $902.87½ that is $451.43 each.
>
> "In her fourth week, we played only four nights, one of which we gave to Mr. Brougham for his benefit, and the joint share was $637.87½ or $318.94 each; thus on the seventeen nights, our joint share was $3,200.50, or $1,600.25 each.
>
> "On the 12th of March, we were engaged to give a Reading jointly at the Tripler Hall (now the Metropolitan Theatre) at the sum of $300, which we shared equally. At this reading, I had the honor to be encored in the recitation of "Young Lochinvar."
>
> "The course I adopted was to settle in full with her on every engagement; stating the account of each night's receipts, paying her the amount, and taking her signature to the account and acknowledgment for her share of the proceeds, at the foot of such account, in my book. And I have her signature and discharge to every account of every engagement which we played together.

"To enable her to go to England, for the purpose of visiting her father, (since deceased) I advanced her besides having paid her $4,567.36 her share, in full over $2,500: which, with other sums advanced to her return left her in my debt for money lent, to the sum of over $2,800 on her going to California.

"From California she remitted me to London, in 1853, on account, a draft on Peabody for L 200 sterling, ($1,000), which leaves a balance due me, at this day, of nearly $2,000 exclusive of interest, for money lent to her.

"And this was the result of my engagement with Mrs. Sinclair; that I lost my time and my money both, instead of having "put money in my purse" as has been generally believed. My sole motive for publishing the above statement, is to show the true state of an affair which has been misrepresented. It is an additional of the proverb--'All that glitters is not gold.'"

Mrs. Sinclair's New York debut while successful was not sensational. Public interest was due to the fact that she was Mrs. Edwin Forrest rather than to her ability as an actress or a desire to witness The School for Scandal. She followed her initial selection with The Lady of Lyons, Much Ado About Nothing, Love's Sacrifice, and The Patrician's Daughter. Basking in reflected glory she was billed as Mrs. Edwin Forrest the name she had asked to drop in the sensational divorce trial. She felt that the use of her ex-husband's name for professional purposes was a small recompense for the humiliation and suffering imposed upon her by Edwin Forrest.

GEORGE VANDENHOFF

George Vandenhoff the man who was responsible for Mrs. Sinclair's modest success in the theatre was a self-centered English gentleman, the son of an eminent actor. As a

young man he possessed no particular predilections for the stage. He had been educated in law, and at a very early age secured a position with a handsome income. George Vandenhoff's ambition was to be a soldier, not for love of country but for the admiration that his splendid physique would receive when encased in a uniform. Unfortunately England remained peaceful and Vandenhoff was forced to give his talents to Madam Vestris' corps dramatique rather than to the English cavalry. The Solicitor to the Trustees of the Liverpool Docks" made his dramatic debut at Covent Garden on Monday, October 14, 1839 as Leon in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. His success in the theatre caused him to desert his briefs for the boards. In August 1842 George Vandenhoff came to New York where he made a sensational success on the New York stage. Illness prevented Vandenhoff from appearing with Mrs. Sinclair in her first production but he joined her in The Lady of Lyons. Regarding this incident Vandenhoff relates:

> "In 1852 I played at what was then called Brougham's Lyceum, now Wallack's Theatre (there is great merit in calling things by their right names!) with Mrs. C. N. Sinclair who had just resumed her paternal name in consequence of her divorce from her husband, the great American tragedian. Trial by jury is a great Alfredian institution; 'the palladium of our liberties,' and all that; but, as my Uncle Toby says, 'it is not till the great and general review of us all, corporal, day of judgement, that it will be known what verdicts will stand, and what will not!'"*

Vandenhoff was undoubtedly impressed by this charming woman who had humbly asked for his assistance, but their

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* Vandenhoff, George. Leaves from an Actor's Notebook.

relationship was a strictly business one. Catherine Sinclair wanted to be an actress for the sole purpose of making a living and Vandenhoff could provide the necessary background and instruction for a share of the profits.

In 1850 when a marriage ceremony was considered more than just a legal form, divorce was frowned upon by society as a disgrace. A divorced woman or man could never hope to regain recognition in mid-Victorian society nor could they expect the love and respect of a chosen partner. Still the public loves scandal and while they disapproved heartily of the measure taken by Forrest and his wife, they were only too anxious to see a sensational character on exhibition.

With this thought in mind, in addition to the fact that Edwin Forrest was a big name in the theatre, it is easy to understand why Catherine Sinclair enjoyed success as an actress. Her ability was far below par. She stepped into leading roles without any proper foundation or inherent talent. However, Catherine Sinclair was a clever woman who was well aware of the fact that she was not an actress. In addition to her charm and business ability she possessed intelligence enough to know that she must make hay while the sun was at its height. When the public began to lose interest she retired from the stage to become a successful theatre manager. She was contented to leave leading roles to those better fitted to play them and when she appeared at all it was in a supporting part.

A LONDON ENGAGEMENT

After their New York season Vandenhoff and Sinclair took to the road. During their engagement at the National Theatre in Boston in the spring of 1852, the theatre was destroyed by fire. The dramatic company gathered up their remaining belongings and moved to the Boston Theatre where Mrs. Sinclair completed her engagement. She persuaded George Vandenhoff to loan her a sum of money and left New York for England on June 16, 1852. Sinclair's visit to her native country was to pay her respects to her father and if possible to invade the English theatre. The latter was denied her at this time due to inability to secure an engagement because of unfavorable publicity. The English were reluctant to take Catherine to their hearts regardless of the fact that she was a native daughter. With righteous indignation she returned to New York where she began another road tour in Albany. Catherine was determined to conquer the theatre in her native land which she accomplished on her second visit to England in 1857. Her debut as Beatrice at the Haymarket Theatre was a financial success but was torn into shreds by the London critics.

SAN FRANCISCO

In the past when an actor or actress wished to gain experience either before or after a failure on Broadway the one way open was the "road." Nor was this form of show business always pursued by the novice. The waning star who refused to accept retirement gracefully, took to the road when

New York had begun to lose interest. After a short time sensation seekers grew weary of Sinclair and her love triangle and looked elsewhere for entertainment. Therefore accompanied by Vandenhoff, Mrs. Sinclair set out on a tour of the United States which was to terminate in San Francisco. The Middle West refused to be either amused or startled. Several towns denied the troupe admission on the grounds that the public was not interested in dramatic entertainment, nor would they take into their midst a notorious woman, a female who dared to violate the marriage vows. Her most enthusiastic audience was that of New Orleans where Mrs. Sinclair was lauded to the skies as a potential star. Mrs. Sinclair knew that the handwriting was on the wall, that her days as an actress were numbered. She was now searching about for another field of endeavor which would enable her to live as she felt she should. This she was to find in the promised land of gold. In St. Francis' town Catherine Sinclair was to regain her position in society as a gentlewoman, the respect of her business associates, and a fortune, for in this new country the public was too busy building a new empire and accumulating wealth to delve into the past for hidden skeletons.

Mrs. Sinclair arrived in San Francisco from the East aboard the steamer Panama on May 5, 1853. Her success in New Orleans together with her matrimonial difficulties had preceded her arrival to a city where the advent of any white woman was a novelty. When the lady was one of culture, talent,

and beauty such as Catherine Sinclair, then it was of the utmost importance.

The Golden Era of May 8, 1853 reported:

> "Mrs. Catherine Sinclair:-This lady who has for the last two years occupied so large a share of public sympathy and professional celebrity in the Atlantic States, arrived in this city on the steamer Panama. She will, we understand, make her debut at the San Francisco Theatre during the coming week, where, we doubt not, her fame and talent will attract full and brilliant audiences."

The not so clever publicity agents of the day introduced a new star with long dissertations regarding past merits rather than a few well-chosen catch lines and the ability of the actor or actress to win the critics on the initial performance. Quoting the Delta of New Orleans of April 7, 1853, The Golden Era of May 8, 1853 states:

> "Mrs. Sinclair's engagement in this city has been a brilliant one. She has made a host of admirers, who will gladly welcome her back from the journey she is about to take to California. She has had an immense and powerful opposition to contend with in the ever attractive Ravels, and the high attractions of the Opera; but, despite all this, she has successfully contended with them, and won a large share of public patronage. She was enthusiastically called out, last evening, at the conclusion of the performance, when, with infinite grace and much feeling, she thus addressed them:
>
> "'Ladies and Gentlemen:-At this late hour, I will detain you but a moment to express my heartfelt thanks for the brilliant reception you have given me. My heart is filled with gratitude, and I pray you to believe me that the recollection of your kindness will be among the happiest memories which I bear with me to the "land of promise" for which I am bound. It will cheer me on my way thither--be an incentive to exertion there--and inspire me with the hope that I may

> speedily return to meet you all again;--till when, I beg, most respectfully to bid you farewell!'"

The first dart of adverse criticism came when Mrs. Sinclair billed herself as Mrs. Edwin Forrest. The critic, undoubtedly a Forrest sympathizer, accused the actress of "stealing her husband's thunder." Regarding the matter the critic remarks:

> "Mrs. Sinclair had stolen her husband's thunder--in announcing herself on the posters in a very significant manner, whereby the words 'Mrs. Catherine N. Sinclair, late' were in very diminutive type, and 'Mrs. Edwin Forrest' boldly displayed, making it the feature." *

The critic seems to have forgotten or perhaps chose to ignore the fact that Catherine Sinclair entered the theatre because she was forced to earn her own living. He undoubtedly felt that twelve years with Edwin Forrest was glory in itself whereby Mrs. Sinclair's many admirers took it for granted that this lady had earned not only her husband's thunder but his lightning as well.

Mrs. Sinclair was fully aware of her limitations as an actress but her ability as manager of the Metropolitan Theatre in San Francisco was an important stride in the city's theatrical history. Yet the critic who had flayed her for using her husband's name, and ever anxious to vindicate his hero, again states when asked his opinion of Mrs. Sinclair:

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* Evening Post, San Francisco, Feb. 11, 1876. "Theatricals in Early Days." (The California Stage in 1849)

"Did you regard Mrs. Sinclair as a great actress?"

"I did not. The prestige of Mr. Forrest's great name was the power that upheld her and made her the cynosure of all eyes." *

The critic seems to have failed to recognize that Catherine Sinclair endeavored to bring the best entertainment available to San Francisco. To her the theatre was more than just a place to seek amusement. It was an artistic endeavor to broaden the scope of public living. Money was no object if it would buy for her public something truly worth-while.

THE SAN FRANCISCO THEATRE

Three years before Mrs. Sinclair's arrival in California a slumbering settlement had been awakened by the metallic ring that had been heard around the world. The cry of "gold in California!"

The settlement developed into a thriving city filled with vice and corruption whose buildings were hastily constructed firetraps and whose population numbered every

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* Ibid.

nationality. These were the audiences for whom the artist exhibited his talent.

Theatricals in San Francisco were with a few exceptions crude, impromptu affairs. The stars of the period were reluctant to make the long trip around the Horn to a wilderness filled with discomforts and barbarians. If they came, their reason was obviously to add to their fortunes and make a speedy return to the East or to Europe.

By 1853 the theatre had taken its place among the important enterprises of the now thriving city. The public was rapidly becoming dissatisfied with mediocre entertainment to the point that if the offering was not of a superior quality, the management would receive a critical rebuff.

During her three years in San Francisco, Catherine Sinclair was instrumental in bringing to San Francisco the best entertainment that money and influence could secure. If she was totally lacking in ability as an actress, as many of her opponents would have us believe, she was a shrewd business woman with the addition of education and culture in her favor.

TURNIPS AND ORCHIDS

It is not humanly possible to please all of the people all of the time, especially when there has been unfavorable publicity. Admitting the fact that Mrs.Sinclair as an actress was barely professional, her enemies never missed an opportunity to drag out the skeleton when an opportunity presented itself. It was only by patience and long suffering

that Catherine Sinclair found her place in society. Even San Francisco and its tolerant citizens were reluctant to welcome this lady who had come to serve them.

Regarding Catherine Sinclair's first appearance on May 9, 1853 at the San Francisco Theatre, the drama critic of The Golden Era states in the May 15, 1853 issue of that periodical:

> "Mrs. Sinclair: In pronouncing upon the professional merits of this lady, who has for the past week been fulfilling a short engagement at the San Francisco Theatre, we feel that to do justice to our own convictions and those of a great majority of our play-goers, notwithstanding we may be charged with a lack of gallantry, we are compelled to differ with the recorded opinions of the daily press of this city, who have, true to their instincts, in speaking of her success and public career, called into requisition, all the sickly and fulsome phrases with which their 'Theatrical Scrapbooks' abound. To the impartial critic, and we say it with reluctance, it was palpable that as 'Margaret Elmore' her opening character, she betrayed throughout the entire performance, so great a want of necessary qualifications of an artiste, that had it not been for other causes of which it would be improper here to speak, her reception would have been far from flattering. The character Margaret Elmore in the hands of one equal to the portrayal of the passions of woman's nature, is at once pleasing and impressive, but when attempted by inexperienced mediocrity, loses its force and becomes painful and irksome to the auditor. In saying that Mrs. Sinclair, with but few exceptions, failed in the leading points of the character, we believe it to be the honest verdict of the unprejudiced. In the characters of Pauline and Mrs. Haller, we saw much to admire, but none of those distinguishing traits of a great actress. Mrs. Sinclair, though rather too far advanced in years to expect much, may, by dint of perseverance, attain a high rank in the profession. We are aware that comparisons are odious, and would say nothing to wound the feelings or

> injure the prospects of Mrs. Sinclair, who is eminently deserving of public favor, but we must be allowed the privilege of saying that there are in California at this time, at least three artists who are gifted with a higher order of histrionic talents."

In June 1853 Mrs. Sinclair and company made a trip into the interior where she was received with enthusiastic applause at every performance. She opened a new theatre in Marysville to a packed house on Monday June 13, 1853. After a few weeks she returned to San Francisco where she resumed her work at the American Theatre. Evidently the critic of The Golden Era, July 24, 1853, repented a little for he remarks:

> "Mrs. Sinclair has been performing to brilliant audiences at the American during the past week. She has improved materially since her first engagement in this city, and although her acting is by no means faultless, it must be acknowledged that as a tragedienne, Mrs. Sinclair has no rival in California."

On the other side of the fence was the San Francisco Herald which had an entirely different story to relate regarding Mrs. Sinclair and her ability. In the July 17, 1853 issue it stated:

> "Mrs. Catherine Norton Sinclair commences an engagement tomorrow night at the American. She is a lady of high attainments, an actress of decided ability in her line of characters, an authoress of considerable celebrity and withal, we believe, a much abused woman. We bespeak for her, therefore, a full house. She has resorted to the stage to support herself, and so sure are we that the California public will encourage artistic talent so deserving, combined with personal charms so attractive. She is entitled to a hearty reception, and sustained by so excellent a company as that at the American, her favorite characters will be brought out with great effect. She appears on Monday night as Beatrice

in Shakespeare's comedy Much Ado About Nothing."

As a grand finale to her week's engagement at the American Mrs. Sinclair presented the role of Queen Katherine in Henry VIII. Her performance was undoubtedly a brilliant one for quoting again from the San Francisco Herald, July 24, 1853:

> "In the character of Queen Katherine, she acquitted herself in a manner scarcely to have been expected from one whose dramatic experience has been so brief. In the lofty deportment of the Queen, in the spotless purity of the wife and in her deep seated, yet proud anguish after the divorce, we feel that she is what the poet designed Katherine to have been. That her personations are without fault cannot be contended. but they are the faults of a novice. In every moment and action she displays an accurate conception of her character, and if there is a failing, it is confined to want of experience in the execution. Perhaps no actress has ever occupied the stage for so short a time, who has been subjected to so severe an ordeal of criticism as Mrs. Sinclair. From the very moment of her appearance in this new sphere, the pen of the critic has been sharpened and we do not go too far in saying that she has sustained her part in a manner alike creditable to herself and gratifying to her friends. That she possessed dramatic talent of a high order, that cannot be questioned; nothing out of time and experience is needed to develop her natural talent and place her in the upper galaxy. The admirable taste uniformly displayed in the arrangement of her toilet so often commented upon, and combined with her graceful commanding figure, contributed greatly to her success in the character of Katherine; indeed in the trial scene, when indignantly retiring from that scene of mockery, she looks every inch a Queen."

This should have silenced those who would discredit Catherine Sinclair in her fight for recognition but unfortunately her life was to be a long, hard battle during the

entire run of her public life.

Catherine Sinclair had made a host of friends during her short sojourn in San Francisco. In spite of her critics she was rapidly gaining ground both socially and professionally. In August 1853 she was tendered a complimentary benefit by the gentlemen composing the First California Battalion. The event was significant because it was the first of its nature to be given to an artist in California. The San Francisco Herald of August 10, 1853 gives the letters:

> "Dear Madame: The gentlemen composing the 'First California Battalion,' impressed with a high appreciation of your professional talents, and being desirous of offering you some testimonial of their sincere regard in return for the many hours of enjoyment you have offered them by your skillful delineations of character in the highest range of the Drama, beg leave to tender you a complimentary benefit at the American Theatre, and request that you will name the earliest evening for the same, which will be convenient and agreeable to yourself.
>
> "With the warmest assurances of our sincere personal regard and esteem, we have the honor to remain, Very respectfully your most ob't. serv'ts. Capt. Fred A. Woodworth, Capt. F. R. Schoeffer, Capt. Olonzo Coy, Capt. J.R. West, Capt. W. R. Gorham.
>
> "California Committee on behalf of First Battalion. San Francisco, August 4, 1853."

To which Mrs. Sinclair replied:

> "San Francisco, August 6, 1853.
>
> Gentlemen: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your very flattering letter of August 4, couched in such gratifying terms, and tendering me so high a compliment, that I find it impossible adequately to express my thanks; and while I accept with gratitude, your proffered kindness, I feel that if there be anything

> tolerable in my efforts, I owe it to the indulgence of the public, who have encouraged and cheered my endeavors and have pardoned, in the novice, the faults which, I trust the more experienced actress may omit.
>
> "With your permission, I will name Wednesday the 17th instant, for the proposed benefit, and have the honor to remain, Yours with the highest respect and esteem, Catherine Norton Sinclair."

Another proof of Catherine Sinclair's increasing popularity and the direct approval of the public is recorded in The Golden Era of September 25, 1853. It would seem that some of the members of the staff of that newspaper were neighbors of the actress:

> "Serenade--On Tuesday evening last we were brought to the door of our sanctum by the discourses of a fine band of music under our windows, which, we began to flatter ourselves were intended for our own individual ears, until after putting ourselves in readiness to say 'something nice' in the way of thanks, we heard one of their number say 'Three cheers for Catherine N. Sinclair' which order was heartily responded to. Of course, we were a little the less gratified than as though the honor was meant for us to find that it was intended for our fair neighbor."

Thus Catherine N. Sinclair weathered another storm of her life in her struggle for a career as an actress. In December she was given a benefit at the San Francisco Theatre and with the coming of the holidays opened at the new Metropolitan Theatre as actress-manager.

MRS. SINCLAIR AS THEATRE MANAGER

At last she had reached the height of her career. She had found her niche in her chosen profession. As manager

of the new Metropolitan she brought to San Francisco entertainment entirely new to the San Francisco theatre. Prominent stars visited the Golden West under the management of Catherine Sinclair. Producers called her extravagant and were constantly foretelling her downfall. Ernest Harold, a pioneer actor and an ardent admirer of Edwin Forrest, attributes the disastrous termination of her engagement to spending:

> "The salaries she paid at the Metropolitan were unprecedented. She appeared from time to time in prominent characters but never achieved distinction in any one. She was a lady of profuse liberality, generous impulses, brilliant accomplishments and a supremely finished education. To Mrs.Sinclair's prodigality in the lavish expenditure of money in the production of plays and operas, and engaging the very best artists at enormous expense, employing permanently a dramatic corps, opera company and ballet troupe, did I attribute the disastrous termination of her engagement." *

However, it is imprudent to say that Mrs. Sinclair's management was in any measure a failure. The new Metropolitan Theatre was built for her. This was the initial proof that Catherine Sinclair had won the faith of San Francisco. It must be remembered that in the fifties San Francisco was just recovering from the shock of the gold rush. Events moved on in rapid transition as a peaceful village became a great metropolis. Business houses were hastily established only to change hands within a week's time. Yet, Catherine Sinclair entered a virgin field, forming an institution that remained

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* Ibid. (p. 110)

intact for over two years under her guidance.

The new Metropolitan opened its doors December 24, 1853 presenting The School for Scandal with Mrs. Sinclair as Lady Teazle and the distinguished actor James E. Murdoch as her leading man. The cast numbered Mrs. Judah, Matilda Heron, and Edwin Booth, all stars in their own right. With the close of the performance Mrs. Sinclair and the cast, together with Mr. Bochsa, conductor of the orchestra, received the ovations of the delighted audience. Those who had come to admire the new theatre were gratified, those who had come to see the play were impressed, and those who had come to scoff saw theatrical history in the making.

The Golden Era, January 1, 1854, at last convinced that Mrs. Sinclair was an exceptional woman, relates:

> "At the Metropolitan, we have Murdoch--glorious Murdoch; and Mrs. Sinclair--talented and generous --who stand forth as the standard-bearers...."

During February, Mrs. Sinclair tendered a benefit for her new find, Miss Matilda Heron. The Golden Era of February 19, 1854 reported:

> "Metropolitan--The present has been a brilliant week at this establishment, where Miss Heron has been performing a pleasing round of characters. The stock company at this house is the best we have ever seen collected in the country, while Mrs. Sinclair has shown much tact and talent as manageress."

Sincere appreciation of San Francisco audiences increased Catherine Sinclair's popularity by leaps and bounds. The tragedy of her life while not entirely forgotten had been

dismissed by the multitude as an unfortunate mistake. With Murdoch she appeared in Marysville and Sacramento where she was heralded as a great actress, a charming woman, and a splendid manager. Sinclair was deeply grateful to San Francisco for her brief moment of happiness. She felt that she must in some way repay the public who had assisted her to her present position. San Francisco must have entertainment on a more lavish scale. Money was no object. The result was a series of operas to be produced in 1854 and 1855. The Golden Era of May 14, 1854 reported:

> "Mrs. Sinclair, who never was so popular as at this moment, is about to produce a series of operas, on the grandest scale. This lady is entitled to the thanks of the San Franciscans for her very liberal manner in catering to their amusement. Indeed, for the very short time she has been in public life, everybody is surprised at the tact and talent she has shown as manageress--not only exhibiting genius in this capacity but rendering herself universally admired and esteemed on and off the stage."

Her complimentary benefit given on June 7, 1854 was a pleasant contrast to her first reception in San Francisco. The theatre was taxed to its capacity with additional chairs placed in the aisles. This was the largest audience the state of California had yet witnessed under one roof. The bill was the Hunchback, never a favorite play in San Francisco and during the evening Mrs. Margaret Sinclair Voorhies made her debut as a vocalist. However the play and the debut were secondary to the importance of the tribute paid to the lady manager. The Golden Era, June 18, 1854:

"We have said purposely, 'the ever memorable night of the 7th of June 1854,' for that night will never be forgotten in the annals of the Metropolitan Theatre. It was the benefit night of a lady, who, since her arrival among us, some months ago, has won the respect and regard of all who know how to appreciate her many good qualities---we allude to Mrs. Catherine N. Sinclair, whose most assiduous and liberal management, for the last six months, well deserved the compliment paid to her on that night, by the best portion of our population, who for some days previous, were anxious to procure seats for that occasion, knowing that many could not obtain them!

"A more cheerful, discerning and contented audience we have seldom seen within the walls of any theatre. We need not say that our fair ladies, always distinguished for their good taste, formed the best portion of those occupying the Dress Circle...the receipts exceeding by $500, all former occasions; (gross receipts on the night of 7th of June $3,120.00).

"During this beautiful performance, Mrs. Sinclair was most enthusiastically greeted, and after the dropping of the curtain, being called for by the audience, was led to the front by Mr. Murdoch, and after receiving a shower of bouquets, addressed the public in the following eloquent though unstudied language:

"'Allow me ladies and gentlemen, most gratefully to acknowledge the deep sense of obligation I feel to you for this, and many other evidences of kindness and sympathy which you have ever shown me; not only when I have appeared before you professionally, but throughout my brief managerial career. Your kind and generous aid has enabled me successfully to contend against the difficulties consequent upon commencing so arduous an undertaking; and has emboldened me to continue in my present position during another season. And although I regret the departure of some of California's greatest favorites, yet I am happy to say that others, who are no less deservedly appreciated, will remain; and I have made arrangements with several artists of the highest reputation, who will appear during the summer and autumn.

"'Permit me to commend to your generous suffrages one who will now make her first appearance before you. Allow me once more to offer you my most heartfelt thanks, and the assurance of continued efforts on my part to deserve your approbation.'"

For a moment there was deep silence and then as Mrs. Sinclair retired, prolonged applause rang in her ears. That part of the speech which alluded to her being encouraged in the continuance of her managerial duties at least another season, seemed to have given everyone satisfaction.

In commending her sister Mrs. Margaret Voorhies to the kind suffrage of the public, her appeal was not in vain for Mrs. Voorhies was received with the most flattering encouragement.

OVERTURE TO CHAOS

The Golden Era, October 22, 1854 reported:

"At the Metropolitan, last week, we were favored with a taste of opera. This is a dish of which the public was never weary, and the Metropolitan is famous for the creditable manner in which such productions are put upon the stage."

While her venture into opera in English proved her crowning success as actress-manager, it was the beginning of the end for Catherine Sinclair in San Francisco. During the panic of 1855 Sinclair surrendered the Metropolitan management to Joseph Trench. With the first taste of opera she was confident that her many friends would support opera on a colossal basis. Financial unrest was at fault, not the manager or her flawless productions.

The two important issues during Catherine Sinclair's venture into opera were the debut of Carlotta Patti, sister of Adelina Patti, with the Barili-Thorne Italian Opera Company, and a spicy row between the Company and the actress-manager of the Metropolitan.

The history of the famous Patti family has been recorded often and has no particular bearing on the life of Catherine Sinclair. It is enough to say that Carlotta Patti was an artist of exceptional merit surpassing that of the noted Madame Barili-Thorne and according to many even that of her renowned sister Adelina Patti. Significant is the fact that it was in San Francisco at the Metropolitan that Carlotta Patti made her debut in the profession. Due to a physical disability Carlotta Patti was unable to work in opera but she did appear in concert and as a pianist.

The disagreement between the Italian Opera Company and Mrs. Sinclair had its beginning when Mrs. Sinclair failed to send a proper carriage which was to bear Madame Barili-Thorne to the theatre in pomp and circumstance. The company severed connections when Mrs. Sinclair was unable to pay top salaries, due to financial reverses. To the statement on the part of the company that they refused to sing any longer on nothing Mrs. Sinclair replied:

> "Editor of the Herald: I beg to enclose to you the returns of the treasurer of the Metropolitan Theatre of the receipts, expenses and losses attending the production of the Italian operas, and as briefly as possible, with your permission, answer the card of Madame Thorne.

"With regard to the profits made during Mr. and Mrs. Williams' engagement preceding the appearance of the Italian opera troupe, and that all the money then made was subsequently lost by the treasurer I must add $330 for costumes furnished by me for Madame Thorne's use, some of which she still retains; likewise the nightly expense of a carriage to convey her to and from the theatre.

"No mention had been made of the serious losses accruing to the management from the subsequent postponements occasioned by Madame Thorne's illness, likewise Mr. Lanzoni's indisposition, on account of which Don Giovanni was put off after being announced. Since the date to which the treasurer's account is made up Don Giovanni was given twice, and for each representation Madame Thorne was paid $100. On the occasion of Mr. Lanzoni's benefit the charge of $700, as per agreement, was not made for rent alone (the rent of the theatre being $100 per night), but for all the expenses of theatre, including the orchestra, etc. Up to this time Madame Thorne was paid in full, but I have never denied that some small arrears of salary are due to the other artists. The opera was repeated to a receipt of $150. I have never requested the artists to sing gratuitously, nor for my profit, and it was very evident that they were afraid to run any such risk when they declined trusting to a subscription, however complete its moral success.

"I agreed to pay the artists a certain sum for the representation of the Lombardi on Tuesday, under the impression that great efforts would be used to secure a large house. At the rise of the curtain the receipts of the house amounted to $600, the disastrous commercial news received but a few hours before preventing the attendance of many persons. (This has reference to the great panic).

"Under the circumstances I requested the treasurer to send all the receipts to the artists, nothing being reserved for the theatre. Of this sum Madame Thorne received $300, the rest was divided among the artists and the chorus, and I only learned the next day that no portion was appropriated to Mr. Planel. I think those engaged with me during more than eighteen months will uphold me in the assurance that I have never 'duped' or 'injured' anyone. I have endeavored to the utmost of my ability to fulfill all my

promises to the public; if on two occasions I have been prevented from doing so it was because I could no longer derive from other sources the means of paying an Italian opera troupe more money than they drew to the treasury.

"In justice to the gentlemen composing the orchestra and chorus I should say that Mr. Loder (conductor) informed me they were ready to volunteer their services provided the artists would do likewise. In justice to Madame Bishop and Herr Mengis, I have forborne to make any mention of my agreement with them, although they were for a time connected with the Italian Opera but I would take occasion to say that at all times when called upon they have gratuitously sung for the benefit of all artists, native and foreign; that Madame Bishop never disappointed the public, and that she furnished all her own costumes, and did not require a carriage to take her from the International Hotel to the theatre.

"Praying you will pardon the inevitable length of this statement, I remain, Most respectfully yours, Catherine N. Sinclair."*

The Italian Opera company was not to be outdone. They replied to Mrs. Sinclair's statement in caustic terms denying that they had received their just dues. They stated in no uncertain terms that most of the expenses were borne by the company and not by Catherine Sinclair and that the company had paid for Madame Thorne's costumes. An issue was made over the fact that Madame Thorne had been insulted as an artist and that the carriage was part of the agreement. With that the company left San Francisco and the reign of opera and Mrs. Sinclair was nearing an end.

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* Published in The San Francisco Herald, May 8, 1855.

PANORAMA OF 1854-55

Looking back over the brief two years that Catherine Sinclair remained in San Francisco it is evident that her success should have been prolonged. She came under a cloud of tragedy and gossip, was flayed unmercifully by the critics as an actress but little by little conquered her opponents. Inch by inch she advanced to her place in the sun. A genteel and cultured woman, patience and perseverance reaped its reward. Two brief years of success and comparative happiness were her reward for a decade of trials and tribulations.

Her departure for Australia April 26, 1856 was a loss to the city she called home. The theatre had reaped a rich harvest from the efforts of Catherine Sinclair. Stars such as the Booths, Caroline Chapman, Mrs. Judah, the Hamiltons and Laura Keene came to San Francisco under the management of this gracious lady. Her productions were lavish not for the purpose of coining money or for personal glory but because she felt that San Francisco deserved the best.

AN AMUSING INCIDENT

About once in every decade there is a flare for child performers. A talented child will be lauded to the skies for a brief period and as long as the novelty lasts. To this idea Mrs. Sinclair reluctantly acceded to public demand. She sponsored the Bateman sisters, who gave imitations, dances and a playlet called Mother's Trust written by Mrs. Bateman.

The children drew tolerant comments from the press until they staged Hamlet against the better judgement of Mrs. Sinclair. A critic panned the performance in such terms as to draw down the wrath of Papa Bateman. The outraged father armed himself with a pistol and awaited his victim in the Plaza where fortunately his aim was poor. However, the Batemans never attempted the "Bard" a second time.

CONVINCING THE ENGLISH

When Catherine Sinclair departed from San Francisco for Australia she resolved first, to establish herself as an actress in her native country and secondly, to convince the English that she was innocent of the charges attributed to her by Edwin Forrest.

The self-sufficient English refused to be impressed by Sinclair as an actress or particularly interested in her past or present private life. To them she was a novice attempting to interpret the works of their sacred "Bard" and doing an extraordinarily poor job of it, by Jove!

She made her debut as Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing which as far as the public was concerned expressed its sentiments of Catherine Sinclair as a Shakespearean actress.

> "Haymarket.--It frequently happens, in our stage experience, that a debutante, who makes but a moderate success in a Shakespearean character, will achieve a decided one in a part by some other author. There is a poetic sinew in the meanest creation of Shakespeare's mind which tests at once the calibre of a performer's capacity.

Mrs. Sinclair, whose Beatrice was but a faint, rendering of our great poet's meaning, has in Lady Teazle since shown that Sheridan's heroine was fairly within the compass of her powers. There is, indeed, a wide distance between the poetic drama of the age of Elizabeth, and the modern comedy of wit and domestic scandal. Mrs. Sinclair brings out into strong relief the rustic points of Lady Teazle's character, and thus suggests an adequate excuse for the faults into which she is seduced. There is,in this respect, a strong similarity between the conception of Knowles' Julia and Sheridan's Lady Teazle, only the aberrations of the former are displayed and corrected before marriage, those of the latter after.

"The former,however,soars a much higher flight, owing to the author's sympathies with the Elizabethan writers, and his poetic predilections. The moral forces are brought into distinct play and manifestation,and we hear the heart throbs, with a certain grandeur in them,as they beat in the bosom of an intellectual and too impulsive girl, on the verge of womanhood. All this, however, was caviare to the elegant author of The School for Scandal, required a robustness of mind and a depth of sentiment not to be expected either in the man or his work; and would, in fact, have been out of place in such a comedy. Mrs. Sinclair's Julia,we opine would prove very unsatisfactory, though her Helen might please. The former would demand an insight into motives and feelings which are purposely ignored in such a part as Lady Teazle. Under the circumstances, there is reason to believe that Mrs.Sinclair in prose domestic comedy will find a field in which her talents may not be unfavorably exhibited. She continues to be well received by the audience."*

With two strikes against her she returned to the United States and played in various cities with indifferent success. As an actress she had failed, her marriage to the

* The Atheneum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts. London, England, 1857. p. 1214

man she adored was a magnificent failure but as manager of the Metropolitan Theatre in San Francisco she had scored a tremendous hit. Her final appearance on any stage was on December 18, 1859 when she played in New York for charity.

THE MASTER'S DIRTY LINEN

Edwin Forrest spent many years attempting to prove that Catherine Sinclair had been guilty of adultery and that he should be granted the permission to remarry. When the case reached the final court, judgement was rendered against Forrest, and $1,000 was added to the amount of alimony. Edwin Forrest yielded to the inevitable, and paid the alimony regularly till his death, December 12, 1872.

The course which Edwin Forrest pursued,in a portion of his married life, is said to have been one of licentiousness and cruelty. The course that he followed in the matter of his domestic infelicity was,to an astonishing degree,ignoble, ruthless,and wicked. It is not an exaggeration to say that it alienated from him at once and forever, the sympathy of the better class of people. He was neither reticent nor decent. The idea of privately bearing his private burdens seems never to have occurred to him. He brought against his wife the vilest charges in the foulest of words. She obtained a divorce from her husband, forfeiting none of her honor and legal rights; and,surviving many wrongs and much suffering, she lived to cast the flower of pity and pardon on his grave.

SECLUSION

In 1860 Catherine Sinclair retired to her home in a busy section of New York. She seldom appeared in public and wished her identity to be undiscovered by her neighbors. When Edwin Forrest died she made claim to her dower right in his estate, and, in 1874, this was granted to her by the executors. She died in New York City June 16, 1891, practically unknown. Always in her memory was the tragedy that had torn her from the arms of the man she loved but which in forty years the world had forgotten.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to believe that such a woman as Catherine Sinclair, refined and with a delicacy of mind, could be guilty of the low amours of which Forrest accused her. It is far more logical to say that Forrest had virtually made a mountain out of a molehill; that his ego had been deflated because of petty jealousy and gossip, and that his accusation against his wife was merely a camouflage for his own infidelty. The public was asked to believe that Edwin Forrest was honest in his convictions and that Catherine had sinned against her marriage vows and thus destroyed the ideal to which Forrest would ask that his marriage be accepted. The public did not believe.

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

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A P P E N D I C E S

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

CHRONOLOGY

1818 Born in England, near London, daughter of John Sinclair, singer and actor.

1836 Meets Edwin Forrest and they fall in love.

1837 Marries Edwin Forrest in St. Paul's Church. They sail for America in autumn. Widely feted in the States. She is popular and basks in husband's glory.

1845 Visits England with husband and they move in exclusive social circles. Feud between Forrest and Macready, noted English actor, spoils visit.

1847 Happily married until now but differences arise. Forrest becomes unduly jealous and suspicious of his wife.

1848 Forrest finds Catherine in intimate rendezvous with actor George Jamieson.

1849 Forrest discovers love letter from Jamieson to Catherine and is convinced of his wife's infidelity. Sends her to friends' house to live. Estrangement grows.

1851 Forrest brings suit for divorce. Catherine brings countersuit and wins. Forrest appeals case. Forrest adopts Miss Lillie, his protegée. Catherine consults Vandenhoff regarding dramatic instruction and he agrees to tutor her.

1852 Makes debut on stage in The School for Scandal at Wallack's Theatre, New York, as Lady Teazle, on February 2. Makes visit to England returning shortly to the United States. Road tour with George Vandenhoff. Enthusiastic audiences in New Orleans. Tour terminates in San Francisco.

1853 Arrives in San Francisco on steamer Panama. On May 9 makes first appearance in San Francisco Hall. Later takes theatrical trip to interior of State. Opens theatre in Marysville. Returns to San Francisco. Tendered complimentary benefit in August by First California Battalion in San Francisco. On December 24 opens Metropolitan Theatre as actress-manager.

CHRONOLOGY (Concluded)

1854 Engages prominent stars and gives lavish performances at Metropolitan Theatre, an important stride in theatrical history of San Francisco. Production of opera in English proves crowning success as actress-manager.

1855 Trouble develops with Barili-Thorne Opera troupe. Catherine plans opera on colossal basis, but financial panic of 1855 necessitates surrender of Metropolitan management to Joseph Trench.

1856 Sails for Australia April 26.

1857 Appears in London at the Haymarket Theatre as Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing, but soon returns to the United States.

1859 Final appearance on stage, December 18, in New York benefit for charity.

1860 Retires to her home in busy section of New York. Seldom appears in public.

1868 Forrest, after bitter and unrelenting fight, abandons suit against Catherine and pays full award. Most of this is already consumed by litigation.

1871 The last member of Forrest's family having died, Catherine offers to return to him. He indignantly spurns the offer.

1872 Forrest dies, December 12. Catherine makes claim to dower-right in his estate.

1874 Dower claims granted. Catherine lives comfortably in security until her death.

1891 Catherine Sinclair dies, June 16. Her grave is in the Silver Mount Cemetery, Staten Island, New York.

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

ACTRESSES MENTIONED IN MONOGRAPH

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

ACTORS AND PRODUCERS MENTIONED IN MONOGRAPH

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

OTHER PERSONALITIES MENTIONED IN MONOGRAPH

CATHERINE NORTON SINCLAIR

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES

DATE	ROLE	PLAY	THEATRE	CITY
1852 Feb. 2	Lady Teazle	The School for Scandal	Wallack's	New York
"		Lady of Lyons		"
" 24		Love's Sacrifice		"
		Much Ado About Nothing		"
		The Patrician's Daughter		"
	Dramatic Readings	Road tour with George Vandenhoff	National	Boston
	Dramatic Readings	Road tour with George Vandenhoff	Boston	Boston
	Dramatic Readings	Road tour with George Vandenhoff		Albany
1853	Dramatic Readings	Road tour of United States with George Vandenhoff		
May	Pauline		San Francisco	San Francisco
"	Mrs. Haller			"
"	Margaret Elmore			"
June		Road tour into interior of California with Murdoch		Sacramento

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES (Concluded)

DATE	ROLE	PLAY	THEATRE	CITY
1853 June 13		Opened new theatre (with Murdoch)		Marysville
July	Beatrice	Much Ado About Nothing	American	San Francisco
"	Queen Katherine	Henry VIII	"	"
Aug.	Benefit	by First California Battalion	"	"
Dec. 24	Lady Teazle	The School for Scandal	Metropolitan	"
1854 June 7		The Hunchback	Metropolitan	"
1856 Apr. 26		Left San Francisco		Australia
1857	Beatrice	Much Ado About Nothing	Haymarket	London
	Lady Teazle	The School for Scandal	Haymarket	London
1859 Dec. 18		Last stage appearance, for charity		New York

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Lawrence Estavan, Supervisor.

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