



MISS MARY ANDERSON, THE YOUNG AMERICAN TRAGEDIENNE.

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THIS gifted artiste awoke upon Tuesday morning, the 13th of November, 1877, to find herself famous. She had passed the Rubicon; had stormed the fortress of New York criticism; and, with one bound, had placed herself upon a pedestal inscribed with the golden words Name and Fame. Selecting the rôle of *Pauline* in the "Lady of Lyons," her appearance at the Fifth Avenue Theatre was hailed with those distrustful feelings which permeate audiences with reference to debutantes generally, and those in whom a good deal of gush has been expended, in particular. *Nous allons voir*, with a gentlemanly shrug, was the order of the night while the

playgoers discussed the overwhelming merits of the *Paulines* of twenty years ago, gently pooh-poohing the possibility of any treading upon their kibes. Miss Anderson's appearance smote directly in her favor. Willowy, *sovelte*, fresh, a face exquisitely rounded, a mouth chiseled upon lines that Canova would have critically examined—eyes of dark gray, approaching violet hair brown with a golden sheen, a graceful throat, and a slender form, lithe and lissome; thus she stood revealed to an assemblage now somewhat anxious as to results. Was she merely a tall, handsome girl; *ganche*, as the unskilled in these things say, or was there something more in her? Her eyes were deep, rich

appeal in its first utterance, and critics cast at one another a short, approving glance—intimating, "So far she is a success." But as the play proceeded Miss Anderson rose with its requirements, and soon the vivid flashes of genius commenced to quicken the pulses of her expectant auditory. From the first it was evident that she had flung aside the conventionalities that hedge the rôle, and had taken a deeper, a more psychological view of the ghastly woes of the tortured and hapless bride. The prescribed hysterical scorn, the laid-down and well defined despair, gave way to a vague fear, a nameless intensity of suffering—bewildering, shocking, crushing. Her *sovelte* form; her hands in strong action;

Miss Anderson's *Juliet* proved as charming as her *Pauline*. It is a delicious piece of acting from beginning to end; a fascinating conception of the hapless girl's hapless rôle. Miss Anderson's *Juliet* adds another laurel to the wreath she is so ably winning from her voice never discordant even in shriek or fervent reproach; her dazed expression; all lent a realism to the scene that fairly fettered the audience. Had in that moment her success was triumphant. All the lights and shadows, all the tenderness, all the electricity of woman's passion was revealed, and Miss Mary Anderson's *Pauline* became an accepted type. But her supreme test lay in the rendition of Shakespeare's loveliest conception of the poem of girlhood—love—and

the coy and reluctant grasp of Fame. This gifted artiste has also appeared in *Evadne*, and in the character of *Meg Merrilies*. To fancy the beautiful *Pauline*, the lovely *Juliet*, transformed into a weird, uncanny snaggle-toothed, unkempt, repulsive old hag was a lively leap for the imagination; yet in this impersonation has Miss Anderson surpassed all her former efforts. Untrammelled by stage rules, she introduces a new vitality into the part, that fascinates from its truth to nature and from the impetus of its power. Her voice always rich and tuneful, even in the bitter harshness of the hag's, a vein of tenderness underlying every utterance, appeals with a charm all its own, while her action, so independent, so original,

grace-like, infuses a fascination into the rôle which those who have not had the good fortune to witness can scarcely realize. There is a future for Miss Mary Anderson—a bright and brilliant one. She has wooed Fame through the glorious inspiration of genius, and in the excitement by-and-by she will look back from the pinnacle of her greatness, upon the memorable occasion when she passed the Rubicon of New York æstheticism.