: a study based on contemporary opinion

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THE ACTING OF ADA REHAN
(Ada Crehan, 1860-1916)

A Study Based on Contemporary Opinion

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

by

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A.B. University of Iowa, 1919
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INTRODUCTION

Ada Rehan is not so well known among players of the nineteenth century as the critical estimates of her acting would seem to justify. Perhaps this fact may be accounted for in several ways. In the first place, her activity as an independent "star" was very limited. She made a short tour in 1894 which lasted but about five months and merely supplemented her regular work with Daly's stock company. After Daly's death Ada Rehan played for three short seasons, first as Nell Gwyn, in "Sweet Nell of Old Drury" in 1900, and during the seasons of 1903-1904 and 1904-1905, she shared honors in casts, first with Otis Skinner and then with Charles Richman appearing in plays from her Daly repertory. Other important actresses of the century,—Mary Anderson, Ellen Terry, Adelaide Neilson,—were all widely advertised upon every performance. They did not long share honors with other members of a repertory company.

Such was not the case with Ada Rehan. The Daly Company was always praised for its ensemble acting and the manager was so much interested in the impression of the unity of the ensemble that he used in his company,
supporting actors worthy of individual praise. Ada Rehan was the "leading lady" but she was not the only favorite in the company. Mrs. G. H. Gilbert and James Lewis, Otis Skinner and Virginia Dreher, received deserved comment from the critics and plaudits from the audience. Ada Rehan's complement—first John Drew, and later George Clarke—received and shared praises with her. When audiences, critics, and press greet with special applause, the work of six players in a repertory company, it is inevitably true that the work of one player becomes less conspicuous than it would be were she playing as the "star".

Had Ada Rehan accepted the generous offers made her in the four countries in which she appeared—offers made her by Possart, Blumenthal, Sarah Bernhardt, a London syndicate, a New York rival of Daly's and deserted repertory companies,—there seems no doubt that her name would be as familiar to us as that of Mary Anderson or Ellen Terry.

Ada Rehan deserves much praise for the point of view which made her happy in the Daly repertory organization as well as for her achievements in Shakespearean interpretations, her infusion of life into old comedy, and her vivid portrayal of important
parts in contemporary drama.

Ada Rehan challenges our interest and study because she was acclaimed a great actress by the major critics of four countries. She appeared in parts that had been made famous by actresses of repute before her, parts that had become distinctly associated with their names. She revived Peg Woffington's Sylvia in Farquhar's "The Recruiting Officer." Her Lady Teazle called to the critical mind that of Dora Jordan. Her Rosalind and that of Mary Anderson were of such even merit that critics disagree as to which interpretation was superior. Her Portia, though not rated so highly, bears favorable comparison with Ellen Terry's—especially in the scene of the trial. Her Katherine is recognized as the best interpretation of that part which has been made on the modern stage.

As the title of the study suggests, the method has been an examination and evaluation of all available contemporary comment and criticism. Following the sections which deal with the character and the chronology of Ada Rehan's life, the materials have been organized and presented in such a way as to give the reader an understanding of her finest Shakespearean interpretations, Katherine, Rosalind, and Viola; her
less distinctive Shakespearean roles; her outstanding interpretations in "old comedy" and in modern comedy. Whenever possible the material has been organized in such a way as to give the reader a basis for estimating the reception accorded the interpretation by the audience, a description of Rehan's interpretation, and the American and foreign estimates of the interpretation by theatre critics, contemporary actors and directors and dramatists and other literary men.

This study was made under the supervision of Professor E. C. Mabie of the Department of Speech.
Chapter I

Character and Personality of Ada Rehan

Ada Rehan's contribution to the nineteenth century theatre did not consist in the beauty of her artistic interpretations alone, but also in the beauty of her life. She was at all times generous and good, and left a record of a life exemplary and noble. Her influence was widespread, touching the lives of hundreds of men and women in the four countries in which she appeared. Such an influence on people "may have much to do with their destiny."* Ada Rehan realized the responsibility of her position and put the best of herself into her every effort. She brought to her interpretations a well-trained mind and a forceful personality. Although her formal education had been slight, she became a student of biographical and of imaginative literature as well as of the drama. This study gave her an intellectual assurance and understanding that made her capable of original work. Add to this understanding her physical exuberance and her devotion to dramatic

* Winter: The Wallet of Time, V. 2, p. 137
art and one of the secrets of her success is probably
disclosed. She was physically strong and she possessed
a spirit naturally buoyant but quick to respond to
varying emotions. These things were true in her daily
life and these things were apparent in her art. The
importance of this combination of nobility of character
and determination of purpose with natural dramatic talent
was realized by William Winter when he said, "Let us
forerun the historian of next century, and say now what
will be said then—that the present generation has reason
to be grateful not only that it can see such a piece of
dramatic art as Miss Rehan's assumption of Viola, but
that an actress so richly endowed, so abundantly equipped,
and so keenly sensible of her intellectual responsibility
exists to labor for its welfare, its pleasure and its
peace. Few persons in our time have diffused so much
happiness or deserved so well the public affection and
respect."

This bit of contemporary opinion gives an idea of
the general feeling in regard to the character of Ada
Rehan. In personal appearance, John Drew says she was
"handsome and attractive." Winter tells us that "her
physical beauty was of the kind that appears in portraits

The New York Tribune, November 28, 1894
Drew: My Years on the Stage, p. 81
of women by Romney and by Gainsborough—ample, opulent, bewitching.* Perhaps the best conception of Rehan's appearance may be gained by quoting entire the selection by Forest Izard, "What sort of woman was Ada Rehan? Well, she was of the royal line of women, regal in her stature, opulent in bodily beauty, gracious and rich in her nature. Her face, like her careless joyousness and exuberant animal spirits, was Celtic. She was not beautiful in the conventional sense, but as with Ellen Terry, simple beauty paled beside her. Her hair was exuberant too, and brown, except where, in the middle of her career, it became streaked with gray. She had the gray-blue Irish eye. 'What a great woman she was!' wrote one of her more rhapsodic admirers. 'Tall, easy, almost majestic, except that the geniality of her manner took from majesty its aloofness and pride. When she spoke her voice came so that without forcing it seemed to pervade the room. It had something of the quality of a blackbird's note. Ada Rehan is not at all of a classic type of countenance. She is genuine Celtic. To call her pretty would be ridiculous, for prettiness is something that seems to dwindle beside her. To call her beautiful would be neither completely expressive nor apt, for her features have the

*Winter: The Wallet of Time, V. 2, p. 137
warp of too many conflicting, irrepressible emotions, and the turn of what one feels tempted to call **Irish humor.** These are high words, indeed, but they had much provocation."

Ada Rehan seems to have been Celtic in nature as well as in feature. "A careless strain of music or the lilt of an old ballad would bring tears to her eyes. She was essentially feminine,—moved by fancies and caprices, subject to doubts and fears, and impressed by the strong will that achieves practical results."

It is told of her that she was found weeping after receiving an enthusiastic appreciation from the steerage passengers on one of the foreign tours of the company. It was her pity for their condition that called forth her tears.

If she was quick to weep she was as ready to laugh. Indeed her inability to control her desire to laugh was said by John Drew to have been her one fault. He cites instances of her breaking into "incontrollable laughter" during the rehearsal of "The Foresters" and of "As You Like It."

One of the predominate traits of Ada Rehan's character was her generosity. "She never forgot a kindness. Her mind was free from envy and bitterness.

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* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, pp. 210-211
* Winter: The Wallet of Time, V. 2, p. 137
* Depew: My Memories of Eighty Years, pp. 368-369
* Drew: My Years on the Stage, pp. 36-37
She saw with pleasure the merited success of others, and she rejoiced in it."* Moreover, she could, like Viola, recognize the beauty of other women and was ungrudging in her praise of it.* This generosity was discernible in every association of the actress, Fola LaFollette, who was a member of Rehan's company, leaves this testimony, "Owing to Miss Rehan's generosity the most insignificant members of her company travelled in luxury at the ridiculously small cost of a dollar a day. I have known many stars who were superficially more social in their personal contact with certain members of their companies; but I have never known another star who was so fundamentally and genuinely solicitous of the well-being and comfort of every member of the company as to relinquish the freedom of their own special car for the confinement of a tiny stateroom."*

Not only was Ada Rehan ready to administer favors, but she was correspondingly appreciative of everything that was done for her. She realized the value of the training she had received at the hands of Augustin Daly and many times expressed her gratitude for it. In a

* Winter: The Wallet of Time, V.2, p. 137
* Winter: Vagrant Memories, pp. 242-243
letter to her manager are found these words, "I also wish to acknowledge your generous assistance for the high position I hold today in my profession."* This appreciation of Daly was further evidenced by her loyalty to him. Repeatedly she refused opportunities to appear as an independent star. Finally she did consent to a brief tour, which was merely to supplement her work at Daly's. "Again while she was abroad she had received an offer from Pessart to appear with him at his theatre in Munich, another from Blumenthal, a third from Sarah Bernhardt, and still another from a syndicate in London to manage and head a company there. In New York, one of Mr. Daly's rival managers offered her 'backing' as a 'star' to the extent of $50,000. Miss Rehan refused all these offers and remained content as leading woman of the Daly Stock Company."*

This widespread recognition of her genius did not alter the fundamental simplicity of the actress. She was always modest and reserved in regard to her success. In fact, it seems that she did not place the merit upon her performances that they were accorded by critics. She never seemed to have reached the ideal that she had

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 497
* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, pp. 224-225
conceived of the part that she was portraying. Of this lack of self-appreciation, William Winter writes, "She was intrinsically sincere, modest, and humble, neither setting a great value upon herself nor esteeming her powers and achievements to be unusual; she has been known to be in tears, at what she deemed a professional failure, while a brilliant throng of friends was waiting to congratulate her upon an unequivocal success."* Riding speaks of her being "so shy and uncommunicative, so sparing in the use of that melodious voice which thrilled us in the theatre," and declares, moreover, that "she was always unaffectedly diffident as to her abilities, even when in her ascendancy she had three countries at her feet."*

Although Ada Rehan was reserved almost to the degree of diffidence, her insight into character was remarkable. She would move among her company seemingly remote and unaware of those about her. "But for all her apparent aloofness," says Fola LaFollette, "there would come sudden amazing flashes revealing detailed knowledge of a situation or an intimate discernment of people to whom she had scarcely spoken."*

* Winter: The Wallet of Time, V. 2, p. 137
* Riding: Stories of a Famous London Drawing Room, McClure's, V. 33, p. 397
* LaFollette: Ada Rehan, Bookman, V. 43, p. 503
Among personal friends, Rehan did not show the aloofness which is said to have characterized her manner in her association with her professional company. "Buoyant glee," says Winter, who knew her well, "a dominant attribute of her acting, was equally characteristic of her conduct in private life, and no stress of care and trouble could dash her spirits or deaden her sensibility."* This playful tendency is illustrated by Chauncey Depew's picture of the actress at a Daly supper. "Of course, the attraction at these suppers was Miss Rehan, Daly's leading lady. Her personal charm, her velvet voice, and her inimitable coquetry made every guest anxious to be her escort. She would pretend to be in doubt whether to accept the attention of General Sherman or myself, but when the General began to display considerable irritation, the brow of Mars was smoothed and the warrior made happy by a gracious acceptance of his arm."*

Ada Rehan was ambitious and industrious, and she accumulated a fortune. "In 1891, when she had been in Mr. Daly's company twelve years, she was 'worth something like $300,000.' 'She owns,' says a contemporary account,

* Winter: Vagrant Memories, p. 242
* Depew: My Memories of Eighty Years, pp. 363-364
* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, p. 221
'a $30,000 house in New York, possesses mortgages on adjoining property, and holds almost enough stock in a New Jersey railroad to entitle her to the position of director. She is not extravagant in anything except her love for dogs."*

This love for pets is further expounded in Mr. Winter's picture of her domestic life, which gives a good impression of the actress herself, "Ada Rehan's domestic life was, for the most part, tranquil and happy,—diversified with study, and with the sportive company of her animal pets. Among these pets were a monkey, a bulldog, and a spaniel, called Bobe; to all she was deeply attached. I have seen her wandering with her dog, on the broad, solitary waste of the breezy beach that stretches, for many a sunlit mile, in front of her sequestered cottage on the Cumberland shore of the Irish Sea. She was never so contented, never so radiant, never so much herself, as in that beautiful retreat. The nearest house is a mile distant. Far in the East rise the peaks of Coniston and Skiddaw. More near, like an eagle on its crag, is perched the ancient castle of the lords of Muncaster. Southward lies Furness, with its venerable ruined abbey. To the

* Ibid: 228
north the land trends away, past Queen Mary Stuart's fatal haven and Wordsworth's earliest home, to the dim and cloudy copes of Scotland; while remote in the west, if the air be clear, a faint outline is visible of the romantic Isle of Man. There, encompassed by associations of natural beauty and of historic and poetic renown, and surrounded by her books, pictures, relics, music, and her pets, she was happy. There she was respected and beloved. There for many years her memory will be treasured. And not only there; for, on both sides of the ocean, she has given happiness to thousands of hearts; and in them her name will be enshrined, as long as love remembers."*

The difficulty of painting a vivid character portrait of this actress is set forth in Winter's words, "Cibber could have caught and reflected the elusive charm of Ada Rehan. No touch less adroit and felicitous than his can accomplish more than the suggestion of her peculiar allurement, her originality, and her enchanting, because sympathetic and piquant, mental and physical characteristics."*

In the following pages will be recorded Ada Rehan's professional successes. It is not to be forgotten,

* Winter: The Wallet of Time, V. 2, pp. 139-140
* Ibid: 125
however, that without her nobility of purpose, her
diligence and application, her willingness to accept
and to appreciate the guidance of others, and the very
virtue of her life, her accomplishment would probably
have been less brilliant and her influence less potent.
The impress of her own nobility of character was placed
upon her Rosalind, her Viola, her Lady Teazle, and upon
other of her significant interpretations. Her charming
personality was reflected in every part she played. Her
life was devoted to her art. Had Rehan's achievement not
shown the marks of genius which are visible in it, she
would still have been a credit to her profession.

From the time of her leaving the stage until her
death in New York, January 8, 1916, almost nothing was
written of Rehan. Upon this occasion Mr. Winter wrote
the following tribute: "The sudden though not altogether
unexpected death of Miss Ada Rehan, whose intimate
friendship I had the honor and happiness of enjoying
during many years, while not a loss to the stage, since
she had long retired from professional life and was
resolutely determined never to act again, was a signal
loss to society and a cause of abiding sorrow to a wide
circle of friends. She was a lovely woman and in the
realm of comedy a great actress, and the nobility of her character was equalled only by the goodness of her life. She parted from me in the room in which I am now writing, in which I heard her voice for the last time, and in which I wrote the Elegy that I venture to insert in this place,—not knowing whether I shall ever again have opportunity thus to commemorate, however insufficiently, one who gave so much happiness to the world, and who so entirely deserved affection and honor:

"Hand Immemor

"Ada Rehan, Died, January 8, 1916

"I think I am not all bereft

Of her, so dear,

For when she went away she left

Her laughter here.

"A spirit in this room it dwells

And Ev'ry night,

When I sit here alone, it tells

Of her delight;

"Her joy in life, that was so wild,

For, in all her days,

She never ceased to be a child

In her blithe ways;
"A child, and yet a woman too,
Could love, could weep:
Her heart was pure, her friendship true,
Her passion deep.

"Her gentle laughter, soft and low,
Is in this air:
None else can hear it, but I know
That it is here;

"And here, to make my soul rejoice,
Is one sweet word
She whispered, in the loveliest voice
I ever heard—-

"'Remember!'—Death may set me free
From all regret,
But not while life remains to me
Can I forget!"

* Winter: Shakespere on the Stage, V. 3, pp. 274-275
Chapter II

Chronology of Rehan’s Life and Work, 1860-1916

Ada Rehan, whose family name was Crehan, was born in Limerick, Ireland, April 22, 1860. The family came to America when she was five years old. They made their home in Brooklyn, N. Y. and there Ada spent her girlhood and got her schooling.

"Her early education," writes Izard, "was inconsiderable, and we are told that even during her brief career in school she cared less for her lessons than for romping with her three brothers,—a course that may not have been without its value in preparing her for her success as Katherine and Peggy Thrift."*

Her education did not influence her to the dramatic profession and none of her progenitors were of the stage. Nevertheless, the elder sisters preceded her to the stage and the force of example and domestic associations doubtless influenced her choice of vocation. As a matter of fact, her first appearance was under the management of her brother-in-law, Oliver Doud Byron. The Byrons were playing "Across the Continent" in Newark, New Jersey

* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage 212
in 1873 when the actress who played Clara, a small part, became ill; Ada was called upon in the emergency. She acquitted herself so well, that the family decided that she must go on the stage.

Miss Rehan played for a time with the Byrons. While with them she made her first New York appearance, playing a small part in "The Thoroughbred" at Wood's Museum. During this same year, 1873, she entered into her first engagement with Mrs. John Drew. Here she remained for two years, and here she met John Drew, Jr., with whom she played a long time in Daly's Company.

Drew tells of her engagement, and of the incident through which her name was changed from Crehan to Rehan. "The season after I went on the stage a new young woman was introduced to the company. She came to the theatre with her sister, whose stage name was Hattie O'Neill. Their eldest sister, Mrs. Oliver Doud Byron, had written to my mother that she wanted her sisters to play in the Arch Street Theatre. From Mrs. Byron's letter my mother got the impression that the name of the younger sister was Ada C. Rehan and, thinking that a middle initial was of no help to an actress, she had the name put in the bill as Ada Rehan, although actually the name was Ada Crehan."*

* Drew: My Years on the Stage 35-36
He also goes on to say that "Ada made a hit."

After two years of playing minor parts under Mrs. Drew's management, Miss Rehan joined the stock company at Macauley's Theatre, Louisville, Ky. where she remained one season. Then she spent two years as a member of John W. Albaugh's company in Albany, N. Y. Next, during the season of 1878-1879, Rehan played in Fanny Davenport's company. In the course of this engagement she played the part of Mary Standish in Augustin Daly's "Pique" when the author was in the audience. This was the turning-point in Ada Rehan's career for it was the starting point of her long period of work under Daly's direction.

During the six years before she joined Daly's Company, Rehan had played Ophelia to Booth's Hamlet, Lady Anne to John McCullough's Richard III, Cordelia in "King Lear", Desdemona in "Othello", Celia in "As You Like It", and Olivia in "Twelfth Night". She also appeared with Adelaide Neilson, Lawrence Barrett, John Brougham, John T. Raymond, and many other "stars". Thus she had come in touch with leading actors and fine standards of acting and had attempted roles of significant value before she had reached the age of nineteen years. It is recorded as a fact that even in these early years she put forward extra effort.
in her preparation of Shakespearean interpretations. These early contacts with Shakespearean material may account, in part at least, for the understanding of his characters that she evidenced later.

Ada Rehan first attracted the attention of Augustin Daly in December, 1877, when as a member of John W. Albaugh’s company in Albany she appeared as Bianca in Garrick’s version of "Katherine and Petruchio".

On April 11, 1879, Mr. Gardner, manager of Mrs. John Drew’s Philadelphia theatre, being employed by Daly to collect a suitable company for "L’Assommoir", wrote to him as follows: "Miss Ada Rehan who will play with Miss Davenport at the Strand next week is a tall beautiful girl and splendid actress. I would advise you to see her by all means."* As a consequence of this letter Mr. Daly saw Miss Rehan in the part of Mary Standish to Fanny Davenport’s Mabel Renfrew in Daly’s play "Pique". He engaged her for the small part of Virginia in "L’Assommoir", and later gave her the part of Clemence. The piece had a run of three weeks at the Olympic Theatre, New York in

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly-Pg. 208
May, 1879.

After this preliminary engagement under Daly, negotiations were immediately begun in regard to the season 1879-1880. On July 9, 1879, Rehan closed an arrangement with Daly on the following terms:

"I write to formally close the engagement with you for the season of '79 & '80. I accept your offer of $35 per week with the understanding that you will increase it as you promised should I be worth more to you—which I sincerely trust will be the case. What I am most anxious for is to play good business, as I am refusing a positive leading position & higher salary to accept the engagement with you. However I will leave the matter of bus. entirely in your hands feeling confident you will do what is just."* Of this agreement Joseph Francis Daly says, "With Ada Rehan the leading woman of the reorganized Daly company there began a new era in her career, in Mr. Daly's, and, it is fair to say, in American acting."

The entertainment that opened the old Broadway on the night of September 18, 1879, was a one act comedietta called "Love's Young Dream" in which Miss Rehan took the part of Nelly Beers and sang a duet

* Ibid 317-318
* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage 209
with Miss Fielding. This was followed by a three act comedy, "Newport" in which Miss Rehan seems not to have taken part. Of this first night, Joseph Francis Daly says: "The entertainment, a blending of the dramatic and lyrical, was not voted a success. What the audience carried away that first night was the memory of a host of bright young people, eager to please and full of promise."*

*Divorce*, which had been played a few years before with Fanny Davenport in the rôle of Lu Ten Eyck, was revived by Daly on October 1. This part "on second thought was given to one of the most modest members of the new company—Miss Ada Rehan—who carried it with a buoyancy that brought the revival an unexpected measure of success."* The play was repeated twenty-three times.

On the eighteenth of the same month Bronson Howard's *Wives* was presented. This was an adaptation from Molière's two plays *L'Ecole des Femmes* and *L'Ecole des Maris*. Miss Rehan played the part of Isabelle De Nesle.

On May 10, 1880, Ada Rehan and John Drew first

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* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 325
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 327
played opposite each other. The play was "The Way We Live", an adaptation from the German of L'Arronge, "Die Wohltätige Frauen." It was a satire upon society women who are charitable for worldly reasons and who neglect private duties. Mr. Drew was "Clyde Monogram, who lives the best way he can since his wife lives for everybody else." And Ada Rehan was Cherry Monogram, who lives in her carriage and makes short calls at home." The play had twenty-one performances.

The season closed on May 31, 1880, with "The Royal Middy" for the matinee, and "An Arabian Night" in the evening. In the first piece Rehan took the part of Donna Antonina. The company then divided into two parts, dramatic and musical, and departed for a tour through the principal cities. "During this season of seven months and a half, the new theatre had but one failure (the opening bill) and three unquestioned successes." In Tompkins's "History of the Boston Theatre" are found these words: "Augustin Daly's Company, with Catherine Lewis, John Drew, Ada Rehan, and other of the Daly favorites, was seen in

* Drew: My Years on the Stage 78
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 335
"Arabian Night" the week of May 24 and in "The Royal Middy" the weeks of May 31 and June 7. Although the Daly’s company afterward became a most potent attraction, it utterly failed to draw at this time.*

**Season of 1880-1881**

On August 15, 1880, the second season of Daly’s company began with the production of a melodrama, "Tiole." Ada Rehan played Isopel the Gypsy. This play "Succumbed to hot weather and that undefinable something that will so often baffle theatrical hopes."**

On November 9, 1880, Needles and Pins, the marked success of the season, was first produced. In it Miss Rehan, Mr. Drew, Mrs. Gilbert, and Mr. Lewis first drew attention as the famous Daly Quartet so renowned in later years. Of this production Mr. Drew wrote, "Needles and Pins was an adaptation of Rosen's Stark Mitteln. It had a run of a hundred nights. Miss Rehan and I played opposite each other. She was a young girl in her 'teens, and I a young lawyer captivated by her youthful charm. Mrs. Gilbert played one of those elderly spinsters trying to grow young, and James Lewis was an elderly bachelor in love with her."*** In this comedy, Rehan played the part of Selina."

* Tompkins: The History of the Boston Theatre, 1854-1901  
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 337  
* Drew: My Years on the Stage, p. 83
On January 16, 1881, Rehan appeared in the adaptation from Genee's opera, which Daly called "Zanina, or the Rover of Cambaya."

"Cindrella at School," in which Miss Rehan took the part of Psyche, was the last play of the season. It opened on March 5, 1881, and ran until April 30. In spite of the fact that it had a run of sixty-five performances, this musical play was not a decided success. From this second season of the new Daly's, writes John Drew, "Ada Rehan was an assured success."* During the course of her engagement, Miss Rehan's salary had been doubled.

Season of 1881-1882

The new season opened with another failure, "Quits" an adaptation from the German, in which Ada Rehan took the part of Thisbe. Next "Americans Abroad" by Edgar Fawcett held the stage for seventeen performances. It was followed by the third successive failure of the season, "The Youth of Lewis XIV" in which Rehan played the part of Marie de Mancini. This was produced October 22, 1881. The next play, "The Passing Regiment," given November 10, 1881, made a hit. It was a Daly version...

* Drew: My Years on the Stage, p. 84
of Moser and von Schonthan's "Krieg im Frieden." "Drew, as Lieutenant Paul Dexter, and Miss Rehan, as the Russian ingenue, Tekla Essoff, were brilliant in true comedy roles."

"'Odette,' Sardon's latest Parisian sensation, was no sooner underlined than theatrical and critical circles wondered what new actress of rare gifts was to be engaged for the exacting and sympathetic rôle of the heroine, whose tragic story was so widely discussed, when the brilliant master of stage art presented his creation to France. When this part, which demanded feeling, power, and passion—governed by reserve—was given to Miss Rehan, there was, after the first pause, a realization that Mr. Daly's judgment was not at fault. It was true that she had never before essayed so weighty a task, and that her successes had been in comedy, but already a well-known English critic, Joseph Hatton, in his "America Today," written after one of his visits to New York, had coupled her with Clara Morris and declared them to be 'two of the most remarkable actresses now on the boards,' and had added that Miss Rehan excelled in 'true natural comedy.' This play was repeated seventy-seven times.

"The Passing Regiment" was repeated a few times to

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 348
open the new season at Daly's, but it was soon followed, September 5, by the melodrama "Mankind" which failed largely because the Quartet were not in the cast. Then came Pinero's "The Squire" in which Ada Rehan, as Kate Verity, "gave as convincing a picture of the strong, self-contained, but loving and tender English woman as she had given in 'Odette' of the vivid Frenchwoman."* Mary Caroline Crawford tells us that "Clarke Davis has declared that some of the noblest acting he ever saw occurred in the two scenes of this play which Miss Rehan shared with Charles Fisher."* Kate Verity was one of Rehan's outstandingly successful rôles. The next play, "Our English Friend," drew crowds not because of its merit as a comedy, but because of the attraction of the chief members of the Daly Company. In this play, Rehan assumed the part of Barbee.

"The company had been in training long enough," writes J. F. Daly, "for Augustin to gratify his love for old comedies. Colley Cibber's 'She Would and She Would Not' was produced on January 15, 1883, with Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew. Miss Rehan's tall and slender figure and her touch of bravado were well suited to the adventurous Hypolita, disguised in cavalier's dress, in pursuit of her

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 354
* Crawford: The Romance of the American Theatre, pp. 374-75
discarded lover." This was the first time since the day of Mrs. Scott-Siddons fourteen years before, that Mr. Daly had found anyone suitable for the part of Hypolita.*

A new comedy of manners from the French of Georges Ohuet was also presented during this season. This was the adaptation of "Serges Panine" in which Miss Rehan played Jeanne de Cervay. This piece was a failure.

The big success of the season was "Seven-Twenty-Eight" with Miss Rehan in the role of Floss. "That first night, February 24, 1883, will be long remembered. As if the coming of something uncommonly good were in the air, the house was crowded, and so continued night after night until the end of the season."*

The season was followed by a summer tour through Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, Milwaukee, Omaha, Denver, and San Francisco.

Season of 1883-1884

On October 2, 1883 the new season opened at Daly's with Miss Rehan as Phronie in "Dollars and Sense," an adaptation from L'Arronge's "Die Sarglossen." At Daly's Theatre on February 16, 1884, was seen an old comedy that had not been produced for fifty years, "The Country Girl." At this time Miss Rehan first acted the role of Peggy.

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 356
* Ibid: 356-357
* Ibid: 358
Thrift, a part in which she was to become known both at home and abroad. "In the days we write of," says J. F. Daly, "there was none but Miss Rehan equal to it."*

Another of Miss Rehan's successes was first essayed during this season. This was the rôle of Tony in "Red Letter Nights"--a play adapted from Jacobson's "Ein Gemachter Mann"--which was given on March 12, 1884. The "Jenny O'Jones" scene in this production "caught the town at once"*; and since it followed so closely upon her success as Peggy Thrift it did much to establish Miss Rehan in popular favor. This play remained until the close of the season, April 27, 1884, when Daly took his company on their first European tour.

On July 5, 1884, the company, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Daly and William Winter, set sail on board the Alaska. This was the first American company to venture abroad, and crowds went down to see them off, and the event was discussed at length in the newspapers. The company opened at Toole's Theatre in the Strand, on the evening of July 19. The play selected for the opening was "Seven-Twenty-Eight"--called in England "Casting the Boomerang." Greetings had been sent to them by Mary

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 365
Anderson, Henry Irving, David Belasco, and Clara Morris; the house was filled with Americans and Britons; the applause was general; and at the close Daly was called for. Still the result remained in doubt.*

The press notices after this first performance were not enthusiastic. The English critics gained some interesting first impressions of Miss Rehan's acting. The Morning Post states, "Miss Rehan's acting is not without its own peculiar charm;" the Chronicle makes the comment, "Miss Rehan's style is entirely new to the English stage--decidedly captivating and yet curious and puzzling. She follows no conventional method of elocution, is delightfully droll and takes her audience captive from the first scene; if she is a clever sketcher of American manners, she presents an oddity in coquettes that is fresh and acceptable as a study of trans-Atlantic society";* The Times characterizes her acting as "stiff, pedantic, frequently ungraceful from over-affectation, and altogether, we should hope, a libel upon American maidenhood. It is not without its qualities, however, for a certain dry humor plays under the drawling intonation of the actress and relieves her somewhat elephantine

* Ibid: 372
* Ibid: 373
movements."* It was at this time, also that William
Archer wrote the words in the World for which he later
berated himself so soundly, "The style of Miss Ada Rehan
is too crude and bouncing to be entirely satisfactory
to an English audience. She makes Flos a painfully ill-
bred young person,—surely not a fair type of the American
girl; and her way of emphasizing her remarks by making
eyes over the footlights is certainly not good comedy."*
The writer in The Theatre was more generous when he
remarked, "Miss Ada Rohan, a great favorite in America,
has not yet been seen here in an advantageous character;
but it may be hoped that a change in the bill will soon
afford the lady a chance for distinguishing herself."*

In spite of this reception by the critics, the
piece was not a failure as is evidenced by the record of
Joseph Francis Daly. "Although the play chosen for the
debut was too novel to take with the London critics, the
charm of the players was irresistible. Crowds soon came
nightly to applaud the unconventionality of Miss Rehan,
Mr. Drew, Mrs. Gilbert, and Lewis. The receipts of the
first week were disappointing, but the second began with
a rush, and the appearance of appreciative articles, one

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* Ibid. 373-375
* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, p. 221
* The Theatre, V. 13, No. 2, August 1884, p. 108
by George Augustus Sala in The Athenaeum and others in the Court Journal, the Telegraph, and Truth annoyed the London professionals by their tone. Terriss said the success of the season was assured. Henry Labouchere was there with his wife, and said the play was not the thing,—the people would come to see the company in anything."*

The second production was "Dollars and Sense." Miss Rehan also introduced her Jenny O'Jones scene from "Red Letter Nights." The critics were no more pleased with this than with "Seven-Twenty-Eight." Nevertheless "The audiences were invariable in raptures."*

"The hit of the season was 'She Would and She Would Not.' The recalls were extraordinary, and when the play ended nobody seemed disposed to go home, but demanded the whole cast over and over again. The Press was now unanimous. All were enthusiastic, declared that the interpretation was a revelation, and regretted that there was no company in England that could play old comedy as well. It was the triumph Daly had hoped for—that his company would be applauded in the very birthplace of the old comedy. Every paper urged the return of the players for another season. The audience shouted their demands from crowded houses.

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 375
* Ibid: 376
This first London engagement lasted six weeks.

"So the first visit of an American company was a success. The public was attracted from the first, and the press yielded heartily. The impression it gave was that the visit was an event of first importance in the dramatic history of the period."*

Season of 1884-1885

The players were first welcomed home by Philadelphia where they were received with enthusiasm. "A Wooden Spoon" was presented in New York October 7, 1884, "each familiar face was hailed."* In this play, Miss Rehan carried the part of Aphra. "Wooden Spoon" was continued until November 15 when it was succeeded by "Lords and Commons," a new Pinero play that was withdrawn after ten day's trial. The next play, "Love on Cricketes," was long a favorite with Daly audiences. Upon its first production it held the stage until February 7, 1885. In this comedy, Miss Rehan played Annie Austin, the dissatisfied young wife who, under an assumed name, carries on a secret correspondence with an anonymous author who proves to be her husband.

From February 8 until February 28, "The Recruiting Officer" by Farquhar, was the play at Daly's. As Sylvia

* Ibid: 376
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 376
Miss Rehan assumed her third cavalier part. John Drew writes: "It was quite impossible to breathe life into Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*. When Daly did this in February of 1885 it had not been given in New York for forty two years." That Daly did succeed in breathing life into this old comedy, is witnessed by the line quoted from a New York daily, written after a description of Ada Rehan's assumption of the cavalier air: "The audience was in ecstacies".

March 4, 1885 saw the production of "A Night Off", an adaptation from the German von Schönhans. Miss Rehan was *Nisbe*, an ingenue. Mr. Daily writes, "The incomparable variety of Miss Rehan's ingenues no repetition of such characters could exhaust." The same writer records the unusual success of this piece, which ran until the close of the season on April 20, in these words: "If we can imagine audiences really 'convulsed with merriment', as the reporters say, and recall critics inditing their reports under the headline 'A Bonanza of laughter', we can get some idea of the impression made by the exquisite succession of uproariously funny as well as delicately witty scenes."

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*Drew: My Years on The Stage 113-114
*Crawford: The Romance of the American Theatre 61
*Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 383-384
After the New York production of "A Night Off," the company went on a summer tour embracing two weeks in Philadelphia, two in Boston, one in Brooklyn, and five in Chicago, and an engagement in San Francisco that began on July 13. The players were received with enthusiasm in all of these cities. Even the Boston audience was caused to "roll about ecstatically"* upon the presentation of "A Night Off." In San Francisco they occupied a minstrel hall, playing to jammed houses while the other theatrical managers were "feeding on air."

The Season of 1885 and 1886

The fame of Pinero's "The Magistrate" had preceded it to America, and in consequence there was a great crush to witness it when it was given at Daly's Theatre on October 7, 1885. Pinero himself superintended the production and would not allow Daly to cast Ada Rehan for the part of the boy Cis Farringdon as he had desired to do. As a result, she played Mrs. Pasket, the mother of the boy.

In the New York Tribune for Friday, January 15, 1886, are written these words, "Mr. Daly's production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," effected last night at his theatre, in the presence of a great and delighted crowd

* Ibid: 387
of spectators that filled every part of the house, has been accomplished in a spirit of entire sympathy with the purpose and tone of the comedy." Miss Rehan and Miss Dreher were both too young and too beautiful for the rôles of Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. Their acting was pleasing, however, and the revival held the stage until the thirteenth of February.

Shakespeare was followed by a brief revival of "She Would and She Would Not," accompanied by a curtain raiser called "A Wet Blanket" in which Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew appeared "in two parts that are particularly suited to their delicate and discriminating taste in the portraiture of character." This was succeeded by another short revival of "The Country Girl."

The final novelty of the season, "Nancy and Co.," was introduced on February 24, 1886 and ran until May 1. Miss Rehan took the part of Nancy and played opposite to Mr. Drew, which was, according to a contemporary, "always a happy fortune." The play was popular with both critics and public.

The second visit of Daly's Company to London came as a result of the invitation extended to them after the season of 1884. Their reception on the first night was

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* New York Tribune, Friday, January 15, 1886
* Ibid: Sunday, February 14, 1886
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 398
highly gratifying. Each member who was recognized was greeted with applause. "Then, at Miss Rehan's entrance, the house rose."* At the end of the play, the company was given five recalls. The opening bill was "A Night Off" played on May 27, 1886. The tone of the press was favorable from the first. "'Handled with exquisite delicacy of touch by the actors one and all.' *(The Times) 'They played in each other's hands with a grace and precision delightful to behold. . .' *(Morning Post) 'It was like a greeting to dear old friends and in spirit at least there was a hearty shaking of hands across the footlights with Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Gilbert, Mr. Drew and Miss Rehan, Mr. Skinner and Miss Dreher and their clever companions.' *(Era)"

When the company carried this play to Brighton for a matinee performance, William Black came with his wife to see it. "I am proud of my American readers," he wrote, "and fancied I would like to hear Americans read and see them act. One can form a very good estimate of the culture of a people by a study of the plays they adopt and the acting they enjoy; but I confess I have lost all sight of the nationality in the fine art of every member of the company. We have no one precisely like Miss Rehan nearer

* Ibid: 401
* Ibid: 400
than Paris."*

The performance of "Nancy & Co.," brought forth even more elaborate praise than the first piece. The Saturday Review said, "There is not now in London an English company as well chosen, as well trained, as brilliant in the abilities of its individual members, or as well harmonized as a whole, as the admirable company which Mr. Daly directs."** This was said at a time when there were companies in London containing such figures as Henry Irving, and Ellen Terry, Coghland and Mrs. Langtree, Wilson Barrett and Miss Eastlake, Carlotta Leclercq and Eben Plympton, Mr. and Mrs. Kendall, and Beerbohm Tree.

On this occasion Henry Irving invited Mr. Daly and Miss Rehan to sup with him and the Prince of Wales on Saturday, July 24.

"On the 19th of August, 1886, the first English speaking company in nearly three hundred years was seen on a German stage."*** On that date Augustin Daly's company opened at the Thalia Theatre, Hamburg, with "Love on Crutches." Altogether, six plays were given here, "Love on Crutches," "A Night Off," "Nancy & Co.," "A Woman's Wont," "The Country Girl," and "She Would and She Would Not."*** Although the critics allowed the players to be

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* Ibid: 406
* Ibid: 401-402
* Ibid: 406
* John Drew: My Years on the Stage, p. 127
fascinating; they were declared not true to life.* The unresponsiveness of the audience naturally dampened the ardor of the actors.

Berlin critics did not receive the opening production of the company, "A Night Off," with favor. They declared that any Berlin company could have done better, that the leads of the company would scarcely have been hired to appear in a German company, and rejoiced that the engagement was limited to seven nights.* "Of the company there were different opinions. One critic credited Miss Rehan with having 'good soubrette blood,' but said she caricatured the part of Niebe. Another observed that 'Miss Rehan, the darling of the company, was ridiculous in tasteless toilettes.' Another remarked that her action was 'charming enough, but without a trace of naturalness;' that her fainting scene (Act 2) was done 'repulsively': that no one in Germany would play a backfisch so unsympathetically. One, however, found Miss Rehan charming as an ingenue with a leaning toward the enfant terrible."*

After the second Berlin production, Gibber's "She Would and She Would Not," no more disapproval was heard. "On the third night, 'Love on Crutches' established the

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 407
* Ibid.: 409
* Ibid.: 409-410
reputation of the visitors. On the fourth night 'The Country Girl' enraptured the Berliners, and in the spirited performance of 'Nancy & Co.,' (Halbe Dichter') the German critics found courage to compare the Americans with the best actors of their own stage."* The Presse declared that "By their dramatic equipment, their smoothness in dialogue and the freshness of their humor alone, have they secured an uncontested and uncontestable success."* The National Zeitung recognized the visit as an "act of courtesy to the German public and to German authors."* It was written in the Borsten Courier that "the acquaintance of the Americans was worth while— it was captivating and won success, even with their German colleagues." In the farewell of the Lokal Anzeiger was the statement that, "Mr. Daly's actors belonged to the very first ranks of their profession."

Another distinguishing feature of this second tour was the three day engagement at the Theatre des Vaudeville in Paris. The coming of the American players had been graciously heralded in the journals for some weeks. On the opening night the company met with an enthusiastic reception in "A Woman's Won't" and "Love on Crutches." There was unwonted confusion on the first night and the

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* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, pp. 411-412
* Ibid: 412
* Ibid: 412
critics did not receive a very favorable impression of the visiting artists. One of them remarked that, "Miss Rehan, the Sarah Bernhardt of the troupe, and Mr. John Drew do not stir us in the least."** Adverse comment, however, was not general. Augustin Daly wrote to his brother, "The most unprejudiced French critics gave us praise. Almost all praised the ensemble, which, as you know, is my pride, but which nervousness, etc. nearly destroyed on the first night. Coquelin attended all the performances and was delighted, especially with Miss Rehan and Mr. Lewis."**

The audience in attendance upon the performances was an interesting one. "Care was taken to invite to the opening persons distinguished in art and literature. All who were not prevented by professional engagements or absence on their holidays were present. The English and American ambassadors had boxes for the opening, the Russian ambassador for the last night. Arsene and Henri Houssaye came to the first performance, and Coquelin, who had expected to be able to attend only the performance of *The Country Girl* was present every evening. The English and American colony were out in great force, notwithstanding the midsummer heat."** The plays presented were "A Woman's

After this engagement in Paris the company appeared in Liverpool on September 6, and in Dublin on September 13. From Ireland the company sailed for New York, landing on September 26, "in excellent spirits after the most exciting tour in their history. Since leaving home in May they had given, sixty-eight performances in London, seven each in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Dublin, five in Hamburg, six in Berlin, three in Paris, and two in Brighton."*

Season of 1886-1887

On October 6, 1886, Daly's Theatre opened with "After Business Hours" from the German of Oscar Blumenthal. On November 16, a play from the French, "Love in Harness" succeeded this first play which had held the stage through forty-nine performances.

It was on the eighteenth of January 1887, that Ada Rehan was first seen as Katherine in "The Taming of the Shrew." The reception of this piece was unusual. It had a run of one hundred thirty-seven consecutive performances—a run unprecedented by any Shakespearean comedy.*

* Ibid: 423
* Winter; Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, p. 511
The usual season was followed by the customary tour through the large American cities.

Season of 1887-1888

Pinero's "Dandy Dick" in which as Georgiana Tidman "Miss Rehan became a typical 'sporting Duchess';" opened the new season at Daly's. It was not a marked success, holding the stage through but thirty-two performances. The second play of the year, "The Railroad of Love," had a run of over a hundred nights. Miss Rehan's Valentine Osprey elicited great praise. Henry Irving and Ellen Terry witnessed the opening performance of this piece.

The third and last production of this season opened on January 31, 1888. This was Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in which Rehan appeared as Helena. This never became one of Miss Rehan's major parts. At this time the play ran until April 7, and was enthusiastically praised by the press.

On April 21, the company sailed for their third trip abroad. "The Railroad of Love" was presented at the Gaiety Theatre, May 3, 1888. In spite of the praise of critics and the delight caused by the scenes between Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew, the play was not a success. Clement Scott said of this actress as Valentine Osprey, "Acting of

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 445
this kind, so beneath the surface, so distinctly opposed to the commonplace, and so eloquent with finest touches of woman's nature, we do not believe has been seen since the death of Aimee Desclee."*  *  *  * One critic in The Theatre mixes blame with his praise, "Miss Rehan, with all her gifts has generally one, at least, unbecoming robe. It is a pity she does not do herself full justice on this point, as she has a fine figure and presence, such as would do credit to Worth's creations."

Daly's Company essayed a Shakespearean comedy for the first time in England when they appeared in "The Taming of the Shrew," on May 29. The audience was kept in "a state of continuous merriment," the press was enthusiastic; and the play ran until July 31.

On August 3, 1888 Daly's players gave the first performance of "The Taming of the Shrew" that had ever been given in Stratford-on-Avon. From Stratford the company went to Glasgow where they gave two performances before going on their four-weeks holiday which preceded the Paris engagement.

Royalty attended these performances of the company in London, and upon one occasion Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew were invited to the box of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII.*

* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, p. 223
* Our Play Box: The Theatre, V. 20, p. 317, June 1, 1888
* Drew: My Years on the Stage, p. 145
* Drew: My Years on the Stage, p. 125
Upon the second appearance of these comedians in Paris the critics devoted themselves more to Shakespeare than to the actors. Although they did not care for "The Taming of the Shrew," thinking it coarse and full of horse play, they recognized in Miss Rehan an artist of superior qualities. "The Railroad of Love" and "Nancy & Co.," were also presented at this time. The receipts for the six days exceeded those of each of the three principal theatres of Paris.*

Season of 1888-1889

The season of 1888-1889 opened with "The Lottery of Love" from the French. During the long run of this play, Miss Rehan played the part of Josephine and, in the curtain-raiser, "The Wife of Socrates," of Xantippe.

To the part of Oriana in Farquhar's "The Inconstant," produced January 15, Miss Rehan brought "abundant life and magnetism, and confirmed the critical impression that she was always at her greatest in classical comedy."* This play had twenty-nine performances.

On February 5, "The International Match," adapted from the German, was produced with Rehan as Doris. A short revival of "The Taming of the Shrew" preceded "Samson and Delilah" which opened on March 28, 1889, and played, with

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* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 465 (Le Petit Journal) (Le Soir)
* Ibid: 466 (Figaro)
* Ibid: 468
* Ibid: 482
the exception of a few "subscription nights" inaugurated by Daly during this season, until April 27, when the usual Western tour took place.

Of this play J. F. Daly writes, "Furness came on from Philadelphia with Clarke Davis to see the play, and wrote the manager that going home on the train they talked it over and came to the conclusion as we discussed it and reviewed it and rehearsed it, that it was absolutely perfect."*

Coquelin was in America during this season and in a letter to Daly dated April 12, 1888 he wrote, "Recall me to Miss Rehan. She played to perfection her third act at the Madison Square. I'd like to play a nice scene with her. She is talented and she is charming."** These two men often conferred upon the project of the two artists appearing together, though nothing ever came of it. At one time during these negotiations, Coquelin wrote, "You can imagine what a pleasure, a fame it will be for me to play it with your artists and with the most perfect of them all."***

On August 10, Miss Rehan sailed with Mr. and Mrs. Daly on her first European trip "with nothing to do."****

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* Ibid: 483  
** Ibid: 481  
*** Ibid: 481  
**** Ibid: 481
notable performance in London and Paris was visited, and arrangements were made for an engagement at the Lyceum for the coming summer.

Season of 1889-1890

The first production of the new season, "The Golden Widow" from Sardon's "La Marquise," was a failure. On October 22 it was succeeded by "The Great Unknown" from the German of von Schonthon and Kadelburg which caught the public fancy at once. Miss Rehan appeared as Etna.

It was on December 17 that the Daly Company first appeared in "As You Like It," "a memorable production in dramatic art." As Rosalind, Miss Rehan accomplished one of the notable impersonations of her career. The play ran through sixty-two performances. Mr. Daly presented the lovers of his theatre with a private copy of his version of the play, containing photographs of the players in costume. A copy was also sent to the Memorial Theatre in Stratford.

On February 25 "A Priceless Paragon" was presented with Miss Rehan in the role of Dina. A one-act dramatic piece, a version of Coppée's "The Prayer," was played each night before the comedy. Miss Rehan as Mlle. Rose, the Priest's sister, showed "almost tragic power" in her presentment.

* New York Tribune, December 18, 1889
** Winter: The Wallet of Time, V. 2, p. 151
Sheridan's comedy "A Trip to Scarborough" was condensed into a comedietta "Miss Hoyden's Husband" and given on March 26, 1890, in conjunction with Sydney Grundy's farce, "Harounal Raschid and his Mother-in-Law."

After the close of the season the company went on a tour embracing Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, and then they sailed for their season in London.

The company appeared before a Lyceum audience on June 10, in the same play in which they had opened at Toole's six years before, "Seven-Twenty-Eight." The press notices form a striking contrast to those of the earlier production. One writer says "No comedy quite so delicate as that of Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew in this piece has been seen since the Robertsonian plays were performed under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft."** Archer of The World repenting of his former severity concerning this actress, now calls her "the swan-like" and "the divine"*and says he could have "rent his garments and strewn ashes on his head for having been blind to its beauties, which it was a sin not to see and appreciate.***

"Nancy & Co.," was produced on June 24, and was received with favor. The revival of "The Taming of the Shrew" on July176(676,439),(707,463) was called by The Times "a veritable edition de luxe."*

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 490 (Times)
** Isard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, p. 221
*** Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 491 (The World)
****Ibid: 491
The fame of Rehan's Rosalind had preceded her to and the reception given it there even exceeded that which it had inspired in America. "Irving had a box for the opening night, and after the performance he came behind the scenes and congratulated Ada Rehan upon her Rosalind."* Letters of praise came from Terry, Coquelin, Madame Felicia Mallet, and other noteworthy people. The presentation took place on July 16, 1890.

On August 6 "The Great Unknown" succeeded "As You Like It" and was played until August 16 when the season closed with "Seven-Twenty-Eight." On this last night the audience was enthusiastic and demanded the different members of the company repeatedly. Great applause greeted the announcement that the Lyceum had been secured for another visit.

On August 19 Mr. and Mrs. Daly and Miss Rehan went for a short visit to Paris. Three weeks later they sailed for home.

Season of 1890-1891

Jerome K. Jerome's "New Lamps for Old" was the first piece of the new season. It was played on October 7, and was continued for three weeks.

The second play of the year, "The Last Word" adapted from the German of Frans von Schonthon ran through a

* Drew: My Years on the Stage, pp. 137-138
hundred performances. Ada Rehan personated Baroness Vera Bowaneef.

This very successful modern comedy was followed by a revival of "The School for Scandal" with Miss Rehan as Lady Teazle, on January 20, 1891. "The old comedy caught the town and was played fifty times this season. As usual it brought out old playgoers who seldom find amusement in modern pieces, and it awakened memories of interest."*

Many and various were the comments of Rehan's Lady Teazle.

During the visit to Paris the preceding summer, Mr. Daly and Miss Rehan had seen Madame Felicia Mallet as Piemot in the pantomime, "L'Enfant Prodigue." Daly now produced it with Rehan in this role. The artistic value of the production was comprehended by only a few and in consequence it held the stage for only a week. "Such work as Miss Rehan's has never been done by any other woman on our stage in our time."*

The next Shakespearean heroine depicted by Rehan was The Princess of France in "Love's Labour's Lost" revived on Marcy 28. This play ran until April 11 when "The Railroad of Love" was given for a leave-taking.

In January of this year, Daly had Mr. Winter's book, "Ada Rehan, a Study," printed for presentation only. The

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 501
* Ibid: 502
book is dedicated to the manager. In the dedicatory poem are found these lines,

"Detraction might some trivial fault disclose
Exultant o'er a blemish in the rose;
Mine be the joy her beauties to proclaim,
And give to distant years her noble fame."*

Coquelin acknowledged the receipt of the favor in words that clearly speak that artist's admiration of the actress:

"Cher ami Daly,

"With all my heart I thank you for the handsome book I received from you yesterday evening. It is an exquisite monument built in honor of your greatest and most loved as well as most admired artist. All the different sides of Miss Rehan's talent, so supple, so deep, so distinguished, so deliciously versatile are brought out in this book in all their brightness, and it is a veritable charm to turn the leaves of that album where she is to be found in all her characters.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

"Give my respectful love to Miss Rehan, tell her of my joy at having seen her again in your beautiful book, and accept my affection and cordial devotion.

"Coquelin"*

In Miss Rehan's own answer to the tribute Mr. Daly paid her, she quoted the following lines from Herrick to express her gratitude for the efforts of her manager:

"Well may my book come forth like Publique Day
When such a light as you are leads the way.
Who are my work's creator, and alone
The Flame of it, and the Expansion.

* Winter: Vagrant Memories, pp. 268-269
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly
And look how all those heavenly lamps acquire
Light from the sun, that inexhausted Fire.
So all my mornes and evening stars from you
Have their existence—and their influence too.
Full is my book of Glories; but all these
By you become Immortal Substances."

Before going to Europe the company played in several American cities, and on June 15, appeared at South Bend, Indiana, in "The Prayer" whose author, Maurice Francis Egan, was a member of the faculty of Notre Dame University located at that place.

After leaving New York on July 1, Mr. and Mrs. Daly and Miss Rehan went for a vacation to Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Padua, Verona, and Venice.

During the week beginning August 31, 1891 the Daly Company appeared in the Vaudeville Theatre, Paris in "As You Like It," "The School for Scandal," "The Railroad of Love," "A Night Off," "Taming of the Shrew," and "The Lottery of Love." This week in Paris was gratifying. Parisians attended in great numbers. "Gil Bias observed that the players' not only delighted the Anglo-Saxon colony, but interested the entire Paris public. Their success was marked."*

On September 9 the players opened at the Lyceum Theatre, London, with "A Night Off."

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 520
The success of the season was "The Last Word."
F. F. Daly records, "'The Last Word' was an astonishing
success. The New York papers of September 20 contained
cable dispatches announcing the fact. Augustin wrote on
October 1, 'The papers you sent hardly express half the
sensation which "The Last Word" has made here and the
tumult which Miss Rehan's performance creates every night.
If I were a London manager I would (on the strength of
this success) take half a year's holiday'. In this their
latest production the Daly company attained the summit
of dramatic reputation abroad. With regard to Miss
Rehan's acting, one writer declared that 'There is no
English speaking actress who at the present moment exercises
anything like the charm that belongs to the leading lady
of Daly's Company... who has taken London by storm.'"*

On Friday, October 30, 1891, Miss Rehan laid the
cornerstone of the London Daly's which was built as a
result of the marked success of the company in that city.

During the visit, Lord Tennyson discussed with Mr.
Daly and Ada Rehan the production of "The Foresters."
"It was the poet's wish that Miss Rehan should create
the part of his woodland heroine."*

* Ibid: 526
* Ibid: 528
"Ever since M. Coquelin had seen Miss Rehan in 'The Taming of the Shrew' he had dreamed of enacting Petrucho to her Katherine." At this time he wrote Daly that he had secured American rights for the version of the play that Delair had prepared for him "in the hope of either playing it with Miss Rehan or of creating the new Petruchio alone under Mr. Daly's management if she did not fancy herself as this bonny Kate."

On the fifteenth of November the company sailed for home.

Season of 1891-1892

Early in this season Oscar Wilde sent a four-act play, "A Good Woman" to Daly asking him to read it and to let Miss Rehan see it also. "I should sooner see her play the part of Mrs. Erlynne," he wrote, "than any English-speaking actress we have, or French for that matter."*


On February 9, "Love in Tandem" was produced. It was still being favorably received when it had to be

* Ibid: 530
* Ibid: 534
abandoned for Tennyson's play. Before the production of his comedy, the poet cabled Daly, "Is the report true that Miss Rehan retires from your Company? Tennyson."* The "Foresters" was hailed by the New York Tribune as "the most important incident of the dramatic season either here or abroad."* It opened on March 17 before a "remarkably fine" audience. "At the end of Act Third, which closes the Fairy scene.....Miss Rehan, Mr. Drew, Miss Cheatham and other members of the company were called before the curtain by repeated bursts of applause."*

News of the success was cabled to Tennyson and he acknowledged it thus, "Warmest thanks to yourself and Miss Rehan and all who have taken so much trouble. Our congratulations upon the splendid success, Tennyson."* Photographs of the members of the company in costume were sent the poet. He admired "Miss Rehan in the armor and with her big shield most; and when she is pointing so boldly, bow in hand."*

The season closed with a production of "As You Like It" preceded by "A Woman's Won't."

The usual tour followed the regular season. "While on tour in Chicago, the company played for the benefit of

* New York Tribune, Sunday, March 20, 1892
* Ibid: March 18, 1892
* Ibid: 536
* Ibid: 536
the Children's Home of the Columbian Exhibition, and at
the invitation of the Board of Lady Managers gave an
open air performance of "As You Like It" in the grounds
of ex-senator Farwell, Fairlawn, Lake Forest. The scene
was a grassy lawn and a semi-circle of giant oaks on a
bluff eighty feet above the level of Lake Michigan."*
The tour closed in San Francisco, July 30, with "A Night
Off." This was John Drew's last appearance with Ada Rehan
and the Daly Company.

It was during this year that Daly received letters
from Richard Mansfield concerning his appearing in
Coquelin's version of "The Taming of the Shrew." He
wrote, "I fear there could be but one cry: What is the
matter with Shakespeare? Then too who could play 'Katherine'
after Miss Rehan? Who would? I fear this is not to be
done unless—as I have said—I did it in French." In the
same letter he said, "(I interject a little idea here—
some day, , when we want to sweep the country, let us
play 'The Merchant of Venice'—Miss Rehan as 'Portia'
and me for 'Shylock,' with an ideal Venice. Lewis as
Launcelot Gobbo, etc., etc.)"*

By way of farewell to Miss Rehan Henry James wrote
of his hopeful progress with a play containing a part for
her—Mrs. Jasper.

* Ibid: 555
* Ibid: 549
Mr. and Mrs. Daly and Miss Rehan spent a holiday abroad before beginning the successful season of 1892-1893.

Season of 1892-1893

The opening play of this season was an adaptation from the German called "Little Miss Million." "Dollars and Sense" was the second play. Miss Rehan took the part of Phronie. On November 10 she appeared as Mrs. Jessamine in "The Test Case" a farce from the German. As Julia in "The Hunchback," produced on November 29, "Miss Rehan attained a height of passionate power not reached in any of her previous efforts."* Although this play had been announced for one week only, because of popular demands it had to be kept on for four.

"As You Like It" succeeded this play; then "The Belles' Stratagem," showing Miss Rehan as Letitia Hardy, was revived on January 3. It was followed by "The School for Scandal" on January 18, and "The Foresters," with Bourchier as Robinhood, on January 24. After "The Taming of the Shrew" was given on February 7, with George Clarke appearing for the first time as Petruchio, Augustin Daly recorded, "Play seems never to have been liked so well."*

After the first performance of "Twelfth Night," February 21, Augustin Daly recorded that it "Created almost

* Ibid: 562
* Ibid: 565
a sensation in the audience."* Viola was destined to become one of Rehan's major roles. This play ran until the end of the season when the company departed from America not to return for over a year.

During this season Eleanora Duse had been a frequent visitor at Daly's. The manager wrote that "she was 'in raptures over everything, especially Miss Rehan.'"*

**Season of 1893-1894**

The season of 1893-1894 was spent at Daly's London Theatre. The opening piece was "The Taming of the Shrew" which was given before an unusual audience on June 27, 1893.* Of the production Percy Fitzgerald said, "It was wonderful! We have nothing like it."*

On July 11, Miss Rehan's Julie in "The Hunchback" pleased the London critics in spite of their strong objections to the old play itself. One of them wrote that "she charmed as a great singer charms."*

"Love in Tandem" was produced one week later. Although Arbher considered this "distinctly below the Daly average," he says of it, "Miss Rehan, however, is quite irresistible in the two later acts. Her part gives ample development to the lighter side of her talent."* This did not prove a success.

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 565
* Ibid: 563
* Ibid: 567
* Ibid: 568
* Ibid: 569
* Ibid: 195
Miss Rehan spent her summer holiday at "The Bungalow" on the Irish Sea between Seascale and Ravenglas.

In September "Dollars and Sense" was presented with Miss Rehan as Phronie. The part was considered "somewhat degrading and altogether unworthy of Miss Rehan. This was followed by "The Lost Word", "which although received with more favor, was not a success. Of it Archer records, 'The audience was not very large or very much disposed, at the outset, to enthusiasm; but Miss Rehan soon seized them and swept them away in a whirlwind of pleasure and emotion.'* He also says that "Miss Rehan's performance of the Baroness is one of the things that makes one rejoice to be alive in the nineties, and snap one's fingers at the 'palmy days'."**

"The Foresters" was revived on October 3 only to prove "a very great failure."***The new Lord Tennyson wrote of Miss Rehan that she "was excellent and looked noble," and Charles Ollier called her "superlative."

From November 13 until the first of the year "The School for Scandal" held the stage. The critics were divided concerning Rehan's Lady Teazle. The receipts for this production decreased each week.

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* Archer: *Theatrical World*, for 1893, pp. 238-239
** Ibid: 238-239
*** Daly: *Life of Augustin Daly*, p. 572
**** Ibid: 571
The turning point in this discouraging season came on January 8, 1894, when "Twelfth Night" was produced. It was declared that this revival was more brilliant than Irving's in 1884 in spite of his Malvolio and Ellen Terry's Viola.* The play ran through a hundred and eleven performances, closing on April 26. Rehan's Viola had been the subject for much critical praise during this time.

This first season in the new theatre closed with "As You Like It" on May 5. The actors had appeared in eleven pieces in eleven months, besides several charitable performances and a production at Stratford."*

Upon the return of the company to America, Mr. Daly decided to adopt a new policy. He divided his theatrical year between dramatic productions and musical comedy. His dramatic company was divided in two parts for touring purposes with Lewis and Mrs. Gilbert heading one company and Miss Rehan, as a star, the other. (During the summer season at Daly's "A Night Off" and "Seven-Twenty-Eight" were given, but Miss Rehan was not in the casts.)

Season of 1894-1895

The regular season at Daly's New York Theatre opened on November 27, 1894 with "Twelfth Night." This was Ada Rehan's first appearance in New York for eighteen months.

* Ibid: 575
* Ibid: 576
The New York Tribune was lavish in its praise of Rehan's Viola. "The actress was welcomed with unstinted enthusiasm, and from first to last her fluent, sparkling, tender impersonation held her audience as with the glamour of a fairy spell."* At the call after the fourth curtain, Mr. Daly came forward leading Miss Rehan.

A revival of "Love on Crutches" succeeded Shakespeare's play. Then came "The Taming of the Shrew" on December 27. The Tribune of the following day declared that this Shrew would "pass into theatrical history as one of the few really great and perfect dramatic creations of our time."**

"The Heart of Ruby" and "The Railroad of Love" had short runs at Daly's before the Shakespearean revival of the season. "Two Gentlemen of Verona" was produced on February 25, 1895. This play had not been seen in New York for almost fifty years. It was not as popular as Daly's other efforts with Shakespeare and it was alternated with "Nancy & Co." In "Two Gentlemen of Verona" Rehan played the part of Julia.

On March 28, "A Bundle of Lies" was given. On April 1, the one act play "The Critic" with Miss Rehan in her famous burlesque rôle of Tilburina was played with Tobin's "Honeymoon" in which she played Juliana, a part in which she was absolutely at home."**

* New York Daily Tribune, November 28, 1894
* New York Daily Tribune, December 28, 1894
* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, p. 581
The regular season closed on April 20 with "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

After playing for six weeks outside of New York, Mr. Daly took his company abroad. At the London Theatre he produced "The Railroad of Love," "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "The Honeymoon," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The last made a decided hit in London.* Although Mr. Archer did not approve of the production of "Two Gentlemen of Verona" as a whole, he allowed Miss Rehan's Julia to be charming.* This was the last appearance of the company in Daly's London Theatre.

During this visit the company were guests of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress at a luncheon at the Mansion House where a notable company was entertained.

After this season Mr. and Mrs. Daly were guests of Miss Rehan at Sandhills.

Season of 1895-1896

"The School for Scandal" opened Daly's Theatre on November 26, 1895. In two weeks it was replaced by an adaptation from the German, "The Transit of Leo," December 10.

"Twelfth Night" was revived during the rehearsals of "Hansel and Gretel" which was brought out on December 23.

* Ibid: 583
* Archer: Theatrical World for 1895, p. 239
On January 7, "The Two Escutcheons," an adaptation from Blumenthal and Kadelberg's "Zwei Wappen," was produced. It ran for three weeks.

The next play was written expressly for Miss Rehan and was dedicated by the author to her. It was Franz von Schonthan's "Countess Gucki." This play was first given on January 28, and it ran until the end of the season.

In July 1896, the company fulfilled a six weeks engagement at the Comedy Theatre, London, appearing in "Love on Crutches" and "The Countess Gucki." Archer says of this last piece, "It is simply a contrivance for bringing Miss Rehan on the stage and enabling her to exercise, in the abstract, as it were, those arts of fascination to which we are all such willing slaves."*


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* Archer: Theatrical World, for 1896, pp. 212-213
* Winter: Ada Rehan, a Study, p. 135
Miss Rehan then fulfilled a short engagement at the Comedy Theatre, London in "The Countess Gucki" and "Love on Crutches."

Season of 1896-1897

On November 23, 1896, "As You Like It" was produced to open the season at Daly's. "Miss Rehan was welcomed back by a large audience."*

On November 30, Ada Rehan appeared for the first time as Lady Gay Spanker in "London Assurance." The Tribune for the following day contains this comment, "The ample vitality and joyous spirit of that delightful actress has seldom been expended upon a more artificial part than that of Lady Gay Spanker, but her inherent charm of winning womanhood together with her superb command of her powers and of the scene, were all the more conspicuous because of the conditions under which they were exerted; and she received many tributes of earnest applause."*

"The School for Scandal" was revived on December 14. This was followed on December 23 by "Much Ado About Nothing". The Tribune for that day states that "Miss Rehan's advent as Beatrice marks a brave step in her career, and it will inspire much public interest."*

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* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 602.
Although both Terry and Madjeska had been seen in New York in the part, writers made no attempt to compare Miss Rehan's performance with that of any other artist. Although the part was successful, it never became one of the actress's major roles. This play was seen at Daly's until February 8, when it was succeeded by a revival of Pinero's "Magistrate."

"Meg Merrilies, or The Witch of Ellangowan," from Scott's "Guy Mannering", was given on March 12. "Miss Rehan played Meg, and presented vividly the contrast between the wild beauty and high courage of the young gypsy and her stern yet not repulsive old age."

This play was succeeded on March 23, by "The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret," which had not been seen in New York for twenty years and had been written for nearly two hundred years. Miss Rehan made the most of the part of Violante which was first played by Mrs. Oldfield.*

Miss Rehan was in the audience on April 6 when "The Tempest" was played for the first time. However, she shortly assumed the role of Miranda. Of this part it was said: "Simplicity, the most difficult thing in art and the loveliest, has not at any time been more completely sustained than by this artist in this most exacting trial of her resources and capacity.*

* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 607
* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 608
"Much Ado About Nothing" was revived for the last night of the season. In Mr. Daly's curtain speech he referred to the fact that Miss Rehan's health had suffered as a result of her creation of five new parts during the season.*

The English season was begun with an open air performance of "As You Like It" given at Stratford. From Stratford the company went to Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Liverpool, and Manchester. The London appearances were made at the Grand Theatre, Islington, for two weeks "to audiences that filled that vast playhouse to see 'The Taming of the Shrew', 'Twelfth Night', 'The School for Scandal' and 'The Last Word'. These occasions, the last on which the members of the Daly company were seen together in Europe, received very appreciative notices and were graphically illustrated in the picture-papers."*

On October 26, 1897, the company returned to America.

The Season of 1897 - 1898.

On November 29, 1897 "The Taming of the Shrew" opened the new season at Daly's.

"Number 9: or the Lady of Ostend" appeared on December 9. Miss Rehan's health had been impaired

* Ibid. 609
* Ibid. 614
during the rehearsals for this piece. It was followed on December 20 by a revival of "The Taming of the Shrew" which was in turn succeeded by "As You Like It". On January 11, "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was revived, George Clarke appearing for the first time as Falstaff. Miss Rehan's Mistress Ford was much improved at this time, "but it was, at best, merely a passing incident."*

On January 25, 1898, "Twelfth Night" was revived for the last time on Daly's stage. It was followed, on February 11, by the last revival of "The Country Girl". The "curtain raiser" for this last piece was "Subtleties of Jealousy" in which Rehan appeared as Nell Yerence. "The Country Girl" was played fifty-five times.

On March 16, "The School for Scandal" was put on. On April 11, "The Taming of the Shrew" was repeated, and on April 13, the Daly company appeared in "As You Like It". This was the last time they were seen in this play in New York. It closed the present season.

"On May 10, 1898, Mr. Hutchings, Mayor of Stratford, wrote that the Executive Committee of the Memorial had 'honored themselves and the institution by making Miss Rehan a Life Governor, and wished Mr. Daly to tell her that':

* Winters: Shakespeare on the Stage, v.3, 404
"We find she is now as thoroughly identified with our good old Town and all its prized associations as if she lived amongst us, as I know she does in spirit."

In October of that same year a bronze bust of Miss Rehan as Katherine was placed in the library building.

After a long tour, the dramatic company separated Mr. and Mrs. Daly and Miss Rehan sailing for a holiday in Europe.

It was during this season that Mr. Daly received a letter from Oscar Wilde regretting the fact that he was unable to write a play for the company. In the letter he said, "I am very much flattered by your kind offer and I would like extremely to write a play some day for that brilliant and fascinating genius Ada Rehan, whose own art is supreme on the English-speaking stage. It is rare to find such a personality combined with such perfection of artistic effect in method."*

While playing out of town, a version of Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac" was produced with Ada Rehan as Roxane. This was not brought to New York because of Mr. Mansfield's determination to play it there.

On November 19, 1893, the last season of the Daly Company opened with the production of "The Merchant

* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 625
of Venice." In Portia Miss Rehan created one of her great Shakespearean rôles.

On January 3, Sardou's "Madame Sans Gene" was produced. In 1894, Paul Blouet had written to Daly that "No living English-speaking actress would do the title rôle like Miss Rehan. It would be the triumph of her career."

The French comedy was replaced on January 16, however, by "The School for Scandal". January 23 saw a revival of "The Taming of the Shrew".

The success of the season was "The Great Ruby" in which Miss Rehan took the part of Miss Garnet. This was first given on February 9, and it ran until June 7. After May 13, Miss Reardo relieved Miss Rehan, the latter sailing for Europe on that date in company with Mr. and Mrs. Daly.

Mr. Daly died in Paris, June 7, 1899. An attendant nurse, Mrs. Daly, and Miss Rehan were with him when he died. His death marked the end of Miss Rehan's active career. The members of the Daly company were released by his death. The executors took the matter of continuing the organization without Mr. Daly into serious consideration. Miss Rehan and two others were prepared

* Ibid. 634
to contribute $10,000 each as a working capital, but it was decided not to accept the offers and the company was disbanded.

Mr. Daly authorized his executors to close up the business of the theatres whenever they deemed it advisable and to sell the leases and property connected with them. "The proceeds of such a sale were to be paid; ten percent to the same charities, ten percent to the testator's brother, twenty percent to Miss Rehan and the remainder (sixty per cent) to Mrs. Daly." * In case of Mrs. Daly's death, Miss Rehan was to receive one-fourth of the proceeds.

Mr. Daly further remembered Miss Rehan in his will:

"To Miss Rehan the widow was asked to present in her name and in his the Empire furniture in his private office at the theatre and any pictures there which she might select, 'to keep in remembrance of the many years in which I have benefited by her unfaltering faithfulness on every occasion'. In another clause he makes further bequest to Miss Ada Rehan, to whose unswerving devotion to the interest of my theatre I owe a great share of its honor and prosperity.' In the event of his wife and brother - who were named with Mr. Dorney

* Ibid. 646
as executors - dying before him, the friends who were appointed in that contingency to act in their place were directed to close up his business, when "in consultation with Miss Rehan it may be deemed advisable - her counsel to prevail".*

From 1900 - 1916.

In 1900 Miss Rehan impersonated Nell Gwyn in "Sweet Nell of Old Drury". In the spring she sailed to Europe to repair her health. She retired to her home on the coast of the Irish Sea.

In 1903-1904 she acted again with Otis Skinner, in plays from her repertory among which were "The Taming of the Shrew" and "The Merchant of Venice".

She played one more season, 1904-1905, with Charles Richman as her chief support. "And then, on May 2, 1905, she appeared on the stage for the last time, when she took part in the farewell to Modjeska at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Rehan herself has never had such a testimonial, though she deserved one as richly as the great Polish actress. Unostentatiously she entered her profession, so she pursued it, and so she left it, slipping out of public life so quietly that many playgoers were half consciously expecting her reappearance for years after she had quite the stage

* Ibid. 645
for good. But she can have, as long as she lives, the reward of as genuine a success as can come to any actress."*

Little is recorded of the life of Ada Rehan from the time of her retirement in 1905 until her death in 1916.

Summary for Chapter II

"The long list of parts that have been represented by Ada Rehan since 1873 indicates, as nothing else can do, the versatility of the actress and the drift, variety and scope of her study and experience."* She was successful in Modern comedy, in Shakespeare, and in Old Comedy. Of the last winter says: "No actress of our time ever exhibited a happier faculty or a more flexible method of infusing her personal vitality into the old forms."*

In my research I have found the time of performance for eighty-five roles in Miss Rehan's repertory. Some of these she repeated many times. Sixty-four of these parts were in modern comedy, eleven in Old Comedy, and ten were Shakespearean roles. In his book "Ada Rehan, A Study" Winter gives a list of one hundred sixty-five parts played by this actress between 1874 and 1898. In "The Wallet of Time" he says:

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* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, 228
* Winter: The Wallet of Time v.2 - 147
"The most completely finished and authoritative of her graver impersonations was Knowles's Julia, and her favorite woman in Shakespeare was Portia. Her best performance was that of Rosalind. Her most obviously effective and popular performance was that of Katherine. She acted more than one hundred and seventy parts, of record, and many others not recorded. Of characters in Shakespeare she impersonated Beatrice, Bianca, Celia, Cordelia, Desdemona, Helena, Julia, Katherine, Lady Anne, Miranda, Mrs. Ford, Olivia, Ophelia, Portia, Prince Edward, the Princess of France, Queen Elizabeth, Queen of France, Rosalind, Ursula and Viola." *
Chapter III

REHAN'S INTERPRETATION OF KATHERINE

Ada Rehan's most notable achievement in acting was her interpretation of Katherine in Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew." This was her most popular part and it is the role with which her name is inseparably connected. No predecessor in the role had met with success comparable to that of Rehan's. This fact alone places her among famous players of Shakespeare's women. Moreover, it was the first of her Shakespearean interpretations that challenged the attention of actors, critics, writers, and students. Rehan herself was a student of Shakespeare as is evidenced by the subtle understanding and careful thought evidenced in her interpretations.

Reception of the Part

Her first appearance as Katherine was January 18, 1887. It is recorded that her acting was so effective that even her critics were seen to applaud.* The actress received an enthusiastic greeting, and a special recall after her first scene with Petruchio. The New York Daily Tribune declares that "the success of the night

* Drew: My Years on the Stage p. 90
would have been placed beyond question by the acting of Miss Rehan alone."* This statement is emphasized by the fact that Horace Howard Furness came upon the stage after the performance to congratulate her upon her achievement. The interest in this production continued and its popularity grew with every production. Crowds—unprecedented crowds came to witness this epoch making representation.

On January 23 the Tribune printed the following interesting article:

"GREAT CROWDS AT DALY’S THEATRE

"MUCH INTEREST IN THE STRIKING PRODUCTION OF

'TAMING OF THE SHREW.'

"The lobbies and approaches of Daly’s Theatre presented a remarkable spectacle yesterday afternoon. A crowd composed in great part of ladies, but with a larger percentage than usual of men, besieged the box-office for an hour and a half. From the little window from which could be seen the weary-looking ticket-seller to the steps outside, and at times even to the curbside, a line of people extended patiently waiting their turn to face the man on the other side of the little window

* N. Y. Daily Tribune, Jan. 19, 1887
and receive admission tickets. All the reserved seats were sold before the doors opened, and before 2 o'clock the announcement was made that no more admission tickets could be sold. The consequence of this rush was probably the largest matinee audience known in the history of that theatre. And all this excitement and interest were bestowed upon a comedy of Shakespeare. It would doubtless have been profitable to one of those pessimistic philosophers who delight in dwelling upon the decadence of the stage and the absence of any taste for good dramatic work on the part of the public to watch the stream pouring past Mr. Daly's ticket taker.

"The play was followed with unintermittent attention and throughout the applause was frequent. Miss Rehan's 'Katharine' and Mr. Drew's 'Petruchio' in especial roused the audience to enthusiasm."*

This was written less than a week after the opening night, but it might have been applicable to many a performance during this unprecedented run of a Shakespearean comedy. Finally, on April 3, we find this press notice recording the constant interest in the play that had been raised largely by Miss Rehan's acting

* Ibid: Jan. 23, 1887
from broad farce to comedy:

"On Wednesday in Easter week the 'Taming of the Shrew will receive its 100th consecutive performance at Daly's Theatre. Few of Shakespeare's plays have been played in this city so long as this, while none of his comedies has run for anything this length of time. The 100th performance finds Mr. Daly's Theatre as crowded as did the first, and even Lent has caused no diminution in the business. It has been decided that 'The Taming of the Shrew' will finish this season and 'Needles and Pins' will be postponed indefinitely...

On the night of the 100th performance Mr. Daly will present to everyone in the audience a pleasant souvenir. It consists of a copy of the play especially printed and arranged from Mr. Daly's own prompt book. It will contain a view of the banquet scene and portraits of Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew in costume."

After this performance Mr. Daly gave a supper to the company and a few invited guests. "Think of a supper," exclaims John Drew, "at which General Sherman acted as toastmaster, at which Horace Porter made an unusually clever speech, Mark Twain told a story,

* Ibid: Apr. 3, 1887 (Sunday)
Bronson Howard and Wilson Barrett spoke, at which Ada Rehan made a neat and charming response when her name was called, at which the ever young Lester Wallack commended in the heartiest way the brother manager whose guest he was, at which "Willie" Winter read a poem of home manufacture."

After this "great and history-making production," Mr. Daly had J. Scott Hartley execute a bust of Miss Rehan as Katherine, he presented Eliot Gregory's portrait of her in that character to the Stratford Library, and placed the portrait by Hilary Bell in the foyer of the theatre.

Such was Ada Rehan's first reception in the character of the Shrew.

Description of Katherine as Played by Rehan

In "Shakespeare on the Stage," William Winter defines Ada Rehan's conception of the Shrew. In the first place he says:

"Daly was judicious, therefore, when he caused the play to be acted as farcical comedy, and cast Katherine to an actress as lovely in her nature as in her person, and well aware that the essence of farcical acting is

* Drew: My Years on the Stage p. 92-93
* Ibid: 89
absolute gravity, and sometimes the semblance of passionate ardor, in comically preposterous situations."

He goes on to say: "According to Miss Rehan's ideal, the shrewishness of Katherine is largely superficial. She is externally a virago, but the loveliest qualities of womanhood are latent in her. She is at war with herself; a termagant in temper; haughty; self willed; imperious; resentful of the thought of submission to love, yet, at heart, ardently desirous of it, and secretly impelled to seek for it. Her spirit is high and fiery, and while she longs for the triumph and the endearments of love, she rages against herself, contemning the weakness which permits her longing, but which really is her, as yet unrecognized, power. That ideal was implied by Miss Rehan's treatment of the character, and her art, in the implication and expression of it, was as nearly perfect as anything human fabric can be. The vitality, sympathy, and delicious bloom of her Katherine could not be too freely extolled. By precisely what means she imparted a sense of Katherine's charm it would be difficult to say. Perhaps it would be exact to suggest that her

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage V. 2-520
latent loveliness was signified not by action but by conditions,—by the personality of the actress, and by the feeling, relative to the character, with which she was wholly possessed and animated.*

In the same work this critic gives a vivid description of her costuming of Katherine: "Her appearance was magnificent. The raiment that she wore and the make-up of her face were exactly correspondent with the complex temperament of the ideal Shrew she had determined to represent. She wore ruddy golden hair, short and curly. Her first dress, dark red in color, consisted of a short skirt of velvet; an over-skirt of stiff, heavy, flowered silk, looped up at the left side, with a gold cord, so as to expose the velvet skirt; a short train; a long-bodied waist; inner sleeves, fitted close to the arms; and over-sleeves, depending from the shoulders almost to the knees, with flame colored lining. Around her neck she wore a single, close-fitting string of large, heavy, dark-ruddy beads. On her head was a small red cap, and from her ears depended massy gold ornaments. Her shoes were of satin, dark red in color, to match the dress."*

* Ibid. 520-521
* Ibid. 521
In the New York Tribune for January 19, 1887—the day after the first performance of the part—Winter commented: "Miss Rehan has had the subtle impulse to make the dress of the shrew correspond with the temperament. Her 'Katherine' is red-headed and high-colored, and like a fierce and scorching flame."*

It is Percy Fitzgerald, who considered her "almost perfect in her character," who writes of her appearance: "In the earlier scenes her full, splendid presence and costume suggested an Italian dame from one of Moroni's or Pordenone's canvases."* All agree in the striking appropriateness of her costuming of the character.

Winter describes more fully than W. Davenport Adams the entrance of this impressive Katherine, which the latter chooses to call "one of the most magnificent 'entrances' on record."* He says of it and of the early scenes of the play:

"Her first entrance on the scene, as she swept in driving Bianca along with her, affected her audience like the rush of a whirlwind. Her impetuosity was terrific, and yet she was majestic. Her every

* The Theatre N. S. V. 21-38 (1888)—Percy Fitzgerald: "The Taming of the Shrew."
* Adams: Ada Rehan: Her Life and Work--Theatre N. S. V. 26-174
movement lithe, graceful, and splendid, showed the abounding health and affluent energy of youthful womanhood. As she moved to and fro, in tempestuous rage, it became easy to appreciate the dread of her which had previously been expressed, by Grumio and Hortensio. After a moment, as Bianca ended her speech of supplication, she suddenly came to a menacing stand, towering over the frightened girl, and, in her first, deep-throated, tremulous, angry query, struck the key-note of Katherine's raging discontent:

'Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee tell whom thou lov'st best; see thou dissemble not!' "In Katherine's subsequent scene with her father she was effectively rebellious and sullen. The sound of her voice, outside, exclaiming 'Out of the house, you scraping fool!' plainly and comically signified the sorry plight of the unlucky Music-Master, and there was an expressive blending of rage and curiosity in the tone of her remonstrance, 'Sir--father--surely--' spoken outside to Baptista, and by him curtly interrupted, with 'Hence, Kate! ne'er tell me!' just before her entrance to meet Petruchio."*

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage V, 2-522
Percy Fitzgerald writes: "She was at her best in her earlier scenes, and her speechless contempt, astonishment, and rage, all mingled, at the announcement of the lover, was truly admirable. In what a capital tone of comedy was the warning to her father to be 'quiet', as she flounced off."*

This first meeting with Petruchio is vividly pictured by Winter: "In Katherine's first scene with that impudent wooer she evinced extraordinary vigor and variety of feeling and action, and, notwithstanding the intensity of her struggle with him and her fierce defiance of him, there was underlying her violence of demeanor and effervescence of wrath, a subtle denotement of resentful consciousness of being interested in and even attracted by him, and with this was mingled an agitation not unlike the tremor of fear. A gleam of gratified vanity showed itself in her face when Petruchio said:

"For by this light whereby I see thy beauty--
Thy beauty that doth make me love thee well!"

The threatening speech at the end of the act, already mentioned, was delivered with such magnificent savagery

that sometimes I used to wonder whether Petruochio, if he had heard it, would have had the hardihood to make his appearance, according to promise, 'on Sunday next.'"*

The same reference gives us a description of the scene after the wedding feast; the scene in which her suggestion of her susceptibility to taming is made:

"In the moment of the tumultuous return of the guests and bridgroom, after the marriage service, when distracted between fear and fury, she was half dragged upon the scene by Petruochio, who compelled her to dance with him. Her imperative ejaculation to Baptista, 'Father, be quiet!', instead of offending, merely amused. There was a singular blending of dread and supplication in her entreaty to Petruochio, spoken as though for his hearing only, 'Now, if you love me stay!' And there was a fiery 'now or never' spirit in the 'Nay, then, do what thou wilt, I will not hence today!' and in the mocking repetition, 'No-o-o-o-o-o!' of Petruochio's interjected query."**

The significance of Miss Rehan's interpretation of this scene is denoted by this author in another place: "But into her ideal of Katherine, Miss Rehan, by something in her voice, and by something in her manner, conveyed the suggestion of a loving and lovable woman, latent

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, 523-524
**Ibid. 524
beneath the shrew—and that was the true charm of the embodiment; for the spectator felt that this glorious creature, with all her violence of temper, could love, and that her love would far excel that of all her silken sisterhood. Even as early as the scene of the wedding-feast her voice, when saying, 'Now, if you love me, stay'—in the entreaty to Petruchio—seemed to disclose the capability of tenderness. It was only a flash, but it illuminated the heart of the character; and, taken in association with other and kindred denotements, it revealed the nature which renders Katherine's subsequent conversion or rather development the inevitable consequent of her temperament."

Miss Rehan's acting of the taming scenes elicited some interesting comments. John Drew, her first Petruchio, records the violence of her acting of these scenes, when speaking of his first impressions of Maude Adams for a leading lady: "I had been accustomed to play with Ada Rehan, who was so much bigger and stronger. Stronger she was, as was evidenced by the blow on the jaw that as Katherine she gave me in The Taming of the Shrew. In the scene, in the acting version, where

* Winter: Ada Rehan, a Study p. 54
Petruchio says: Were it the forefoot of an angry bear, I'd shake it off; but, as it's Kate's, I kiss it. Katherine gives him a sound, ringing blow. There was a time when it was not considered good art actually to hit a person on the stage instead of making as if to hit; but there was no make-believe about this stage blow. It was indeed real; in fact, it seems to me now as I look back that the blow that Katherine used to give Petruchio might have given the redoubtable Dempsey a jolt."

The Theatre for August 1, 1893, registers the effectiveness of these scenes: "While the fight continues just so long does the fun last, and not an instant longer. With the final sounding smack of the bride's hand upon Petruchio's cheek, the last real hearty cheer goes up."

A writer in the London Times declares: The Shakespearean vocabulary did not suffice her; she found a whole gamut of inarticulate cries, shrieks, grunts, and growls."

The interest in the struggle that she evidenced so plainly and the use of vocal devices are mentioned

* Drew: My Years on the Stage 169
* Theatre, N. S., V. 31-102
* Literary Digest, Vol. 52-289
by another critic. Fitzgerald says of these same scenes: "Admirable, as a refinement of acting, was the air of contending struggle that she continually suggested. You saw what a contest was raging within, which relieved itself with that most natural cry—or squeal was it?—of fury when some fresh outrage had to be submitted to."*

In speaking of her reluctant declaration that the sun is the moon, the same writer states, "When she repeats the words, 'it is the m-o-o-n!' it is with a sort of passionate vexation, which shows that they were wrung from her."*

A few critics failed to recognize Miss Rehan's final submission as natural to the character portrayed. A writer in Blackwood's for September, 1890, says: "Where Miss Rehan chiefly fails, like most actresses of the part, is in not indicating the gradations of change wrought upon Katherine by the rough taming process of her lord." Winter's first impression was that the submission seemed "a little sudden and a little insincere."* Later, however, he was of a very different

* Fitzgerald: "The Taming of the Shrew" The Theatre N.S., V. 21, -38. (July 1886)
* Blackwood's: V. 148, 424--Sept., 1890
opinion. He writes of her submission and closing scenes, "From that point onward, through the trial and tribulation of the taming episode, the actress steadily held the sympathy of every spectator, largely by virtue of the potent charm of her natural womanly feeling. This was deftly used, as involuntary, to show Katherine's gradual change from turbulence to serenity, and from shrewishness to loveliness. Throughout the closing scenes, in illustrating the ideal she had formed, Miss Rehan depicted the unfolding of a woman's nature under the stress of widely varied emotions, showing pride, scorn, sarcasm, anger, bewilderment, terrified amazement, and, at the last, sweetly feminine tenderness. Her appearance was continuously lovely. Katherine, finally, was shown as indeed changed, 'as she had never been' from what she was at the opening of the play, yet, as indicative of the uniformity of the impersonation, she was seen to be unmistakably the same woman, only now her natural self."

In another place this critic writes, "As soon as her heart was touched she saw her faults with contrition and humility, and her rude will was tamed. In Miss Rehan's acting the gradations of Katherine's submission began with mingled feelings of perplexity, physical weariness,

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, pp. 524-525
wonder, and fear, in the presence of Petruchio's mad antics, and thereafter her mood became one of demure almost humorous docility, which was immensely diverting; and at the last she spoke Katherine's beautiful climax speech, on woman's duties in the state of marriage, with a simple tenderness, a bewitching grace, a sweet gravity, and a melody of correct yet seemingly artless elocution, beyond all praise."

A writer in the _Pall Mall Gazette_, London, bears witness with Winter on this point, "The gradations by which the metamorphosis is effected are so gradual that we fail to notice them at all; and when at the end we see the tame but still spirited woman the loving and submissive wife, there is nothing shocking or strange in the recollection of what a demon she was at the commencement of the play."*

One writer in _The Theatre_ says, "Her superb tigress fury of the opening is not more perfect than her lovable gentleness at the close;"* but Percy Fitzgerald declares in an earlier issue of the same magazine that "In the latter scenes we should have liked more fire, a fiercer outburst now and then."*

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* Winter: Ada Rehan, a Study, p. 54
* Ibid: 178
* Plays of the Month, _Theatre, N.S._, u31, 102, Augl, 1893
* Fitzgerald: "The Taming of the Shrew," _The Theatre, N.S._ V. 21, 39. (July 1893)
In the last Act Miss Rehan did not follow the prescription of the text in regard to her costume for she wore "not a 'cap,' but a handsome wreath of dark green leaves, though Petruchio always spoke the lines,

'Katherine, that cap of yours becomes you not; Off with that bauble, throw it under foot!"

At another point in the play a similar discrepancy occurred. It was at the scene after the supposed fall with her horse when Miss Rehan's undisturbed appearance was "a blemish on almost perfect stage management."

Frank A. Marshall writes of this in the following words, "Grumio (Mr. Lewis) arrives at Petruchio's country house, as in the original, and narrates with admirable spirit the misadventures which have occurred to his mistress on her journey; how she and her horse fell in a miry place, how she was 'bemoiled,' how she waded through the dirt, etc." After listening to this the audience is considerably staggered by the entry of Katherine in spotless dress, the same as she wore at her wedding, without a single trace of mud upon it! Now I cannot believe that Miss Rehan is so little of an artist as to be unwilling to appear in what might be an unbecoming toilet, when the text of her author imperatively demands it."

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, 525
* Marshall: The Theatre, N.S., V. 21, 14-July 1888
From these contemporary descriptions of the part, we find that Ada Rehan presented a woman, consistent and natural, who was a virago in external appearance only. In reality she was a lovable and loving woman who needed but the master hand to bring out her more favorable qualities. Her most striking scenes were probably her furious entrance and her docile speech of submission at the close.

Some Critical Estimates of Rehan's Katherine

The New York Daily Tribune (Winter), ranks the Katherine of Rehan among the great creations. "The figure stands out with royal prominence, and it will pass into theatrical history as one of the few really great and perfect dramatic creations of our time. It is all that Shakespeare seems to have had in his mind, as an ideal, and it is more than he has actually conveyed in his text. The fact that stage annals contain no record of any success in that character comparable with the success that has been gained in it by Miss Rehan is significant, on this point, and is decisive."

William Winter says that this part placed Rehan as a great actress. "It was her impersonation of Katherine, in 'The Taming of the Shrew,' that decisively established

* New York Daily Tribune, December 28, 1894
her rank as a great actress of comedy. She subsequently surpassed that embodiment in the more complex, more poetic, more intellectual, and more difficult character of Rosalind, in "As You Like It;" but her expression of Katherine was resplendent and readily appreciable, and, because of its force, vehemence, glitter, and dazzling beauty, that performance would generally be deemed her best. She has no rival in it, and probably she never had an equal. The image of her Katherine will live in memory, and in stage-history as that of an imperial blonde, tall, lithe, supple, with queenly demeanor, flashing eyes, a proud scornful countenance, spontaneous posture of command, an impetuosity that seemed invincible, and a voice that now could cut like a knife, with its accents of sarcasm, and now could ring out like a clarion, in rage and defiance."

The beauty of the interpretation is described by Winter, "In the acting of Ada Rehan there were many charming qualities; obvious purpose clearly seen and steadily pursued; complete identification with assumed character; unerring responsive intelligence, which answers every look and word of others, ample breadth and fine denotement of gesture; prescient purpose; exact performance; invariable authority; that art which conceals

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, 53
art, producing an effect of perfect spontaneity; melodious, flexible elocution, which flows from deep feeling; and the refined physical luxuriance which at once pleased the imagination and satisfied the eye; but the most delightful of all its qualities was its healthful vitality,—an impartment of freshness and purity, as of roses in their morning bloom. No taint infected it; no element of morbidity underlaid it; no hint of coarseness ever defaced it; and the observer was conscious of a large, fine, breezy, vigorous nature, a lovely temperament, diffusive of happiness and stimulative of noble thoughts and genial feelings.*

Finally, William Winter declares that the actress has succeeded in identifying herself with the part. "Ada Rehan has acted Katharine in "The Taming of the Shrew", with such fire and brilliancy, such indomitable power and such enchanting grace of womanhood, that the part is exclusively her own—so that in theatrical history her name will be as closely identified with Katharine as that of Adelaide Neilson is with Juliet, or that of Ellen Terry with Beatrice. Prior to her time, "The Taming of the Shrew," when played at all, was played as a noisy farce, for the sake of Petruchio. Miss Rehan restored it to the stage as a comedy."*

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, 525-526
* Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V. 3, 317
Joseph Francis Daly felt the beauty and the power of the picture and also its value. "The Katherine of Miss Rehan was one of the most individual and striking figures of the time. A survey of the known impersonations of the role shows it to have been without a prototype. In stage legend it remains unexcelled for loftiness as well as power. Her raving became that of a goddess, or one of those unconquerable women whom the Vikings worshipped and dreaded."*

Forrest Izard it is who places Rehan without question beside the great dramatic artists because she gave to the world a "supreme embodiment." "In proportion was her radiance, when once she was placed in the map of 'stars,' for Rehan will be at least a tradition to be placed with those of Woffington and Terry, when her lesser sisters are long since quite forgotten. She was the supreme embodiment for all time, one feels certain, of Katherine, Shakespeare's Shrew. That part she was born to play."*

George Odell credits Rehan with the success of the play in England and feels the greatness of the artist, "The tasteful production of Daly was an immediate success, thanks largely to the glorious Katharine of Ada Rehan.

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 428-429
* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, 203
Her performance was at once hailed as among the very few greatest Shakespearean representations, not only of that age but of all time. Such it remains in theatrical history.*

Otis Skinner in the Boston Transcript tells of the individual and independent merit of this Katherine and also suggests the lasting fascination exerted by it, "The quality that made her preeminent as the shrew was that her Kate never, even its most tempestuous moments, lost its underlying sense of humor. This gained its fullest value in the episodes of violence and extravagance in Petruchio's cottage, and I rarely lost the opportunity, when off stage, of slipping into the wings and watching her scene with Grumio. She seemed to be saying, 'It is the funniest thing in the world that I, the haughty Katharina, should be brought to this pass.' Her Kate may have been equalled in the power and force of the stormier scenes, but I doubt if any other actress of her day, or before it, ever approached her humor in the part. She had a way quite her own of taking the audience into her confidence, and were they ever so apathetic, they inevitably fell delighted captives to her art. Her art was her own, springing from a sense of character and

* Odell: Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving, 383
expression never borrowed from another's work. And no one ever brought more devotion or greater labor to the work of perfecting her art than did Ada Rehan."

Henry Irving, who according to Ellen Terry, was slow to praise other actors, considered Ada Rehan a great artist and commended her highly. John Drew writes, "When we did "The Taming of the Shrew" in London, no one seemed more enthusiastic about the Katherine of Ada Rehan and my Petruchio than Henry Irving. He gave a most delightful supper for us at the Beefsteak Club."**

Drew also records words spoken to him by Robert Browning, "I have seen Mr. Drew and Miss Rehan act in "The Taming of the Shrew," and I am pleased to tell Mr. Drew how much I enjoyed the play and how pleased I was with such talent and success."***

The power of the actress is designated by the critic, W. Davenport Adams, in his article published in "The Theatre" "From the moment in which this Katherine came storming in upon the scene, making one of the most magnificent entrances on record, to that other moment in which she spoke the beautiful lecture to Bianca--beautiful, that is, in the way in which it was enunciated--she held our hearts and judgments in her hands."****

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* Literary Digest, 52:289
** Drew: My Years on the Stage, 145
*** Ibid: 138
**** Adams: Ada Rehan: Her Life and Work, Theatre, N.S. V. 26, p. 174
All writers do not favor this presentment. Walter Pritchard Eaton says Ada Rehan was "never Shakespeare's Shrew, but a very wonderful person, none the less."*—a statement which he nowhere defends.

Percy Fitzgerald writes, "Ada Rehan was admirable, but still hardly coarse enough."** On the other hand, J. Ranken Towse criticizes her for being too coarse; "As Katharine, Ada Rehan won a personal triumph, and the part remained long in her repertory. For myself, I must confess that I could never fully agree with the panegyrics bestowed upon her performance here, and afterward in England. Undoubtedly it was a good one—in some respects even more brilliant, but I fancy that the personal fascination of the actress—which in her prime, was very great—had much to do with the wide critical acceptance of it. Her shrew was a superb figure, but to my mind she vulgarized the character somewhat unnecessarily."

It is true enough that, in the text, Katharine's unmanageable temper is described in words that would warrant almost any degree of coarseness and violence, but some allowance must be made for the bluntness and vigor of Elizabethan speech, and it should not be forgotten that Katharine was the daughter of a merchant prince,

* Eaton: Leaves from a Critic's Scrapbook, p. 223
* Fitzgerald: Shakespearean Representation, p. 85
moved in 'upper circles,' so to speak, and, presumably had the training of a gentlewoman, in a period precise in its code of manners. On the whole, it is reasonable to suppose that she had her normal moments and that it was only in her tantrums that she became positively outrageous. The play itself, although it contains some notable blank verse, is not of very much consequence, but it would lose nothing in humor and gain in plausibility and interest with a higher conception of Katharine than that of a half-crazy virago. She ought to suggest some of the graces of her station, carry with her a certain personal distinction, and exhibit passion in varying degrees. Miss Rehan started her performance at the highest pitch of quivering indignation at her command, and hereby secured a most picturesque and effective entrance. She maintained herself at this level, or near it, with amazing energy, but the effort left her without any reserve force for climaxes. Consequently her performance was lacking in light and shade and grew weaker instead of stronger toward the end. But it marked an upward step in her career.*

Some Foreign Comments on Rehan's Katherine

Miss Rehan acted Katharine far and wide. The following comments from foreign periodicals evidence her success

* Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre, 347-348-349
in that character on the stages of England, France, and Germany. Her first London appearance in the part was made May 29, 1888. It was continued until July 31, 1888.

In the *Theatre* for July 1888, F. A. Marshall writes, "No doubt much of the success of this production is owing to the excellent acting of Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew in the two principal characters." Miss Rehan's acting has been described by some critics as 'a revelation,' and it may be doubted whether the part has ever been played with so much artistic effect."

*Blackwood's* for September 1890, contains this paragraph, "The play would therefore probably have found little favour in London but for the Katherine of Miss Ada Rehan. With a fine figure, set off by admirable costumes, she puts an amount of fire and force into her performance, which is especially welcome at a time when these qualities are rare upon our English stage."

Mr. Archer suggests a criticism of the part in a rather hesitating way in "The Theatrical World for 1893," "Miss Rehan's Katherine is as vivid and daring and irresistible as ever. It struck me that at one or two points she slightly overdid the deliberation of her contemptuous iambics, but it may have been a mere fancy on my part."

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* The Theatre, N.S., V. 21:11, July 1888
** Ibid: 16
*** Blackwood's, V. 148:424, September 1890
**** Archer: The Theatrical World for 1893, 185-186 (June 27-July 10)
The following is an extract from *The Pall Mall Gazette*, London, praising the art and the power of the actress. "There are certain theatrical performances, like certain faces, which once seen are never forgotten, and such a one is Miss Rehan's rendering of the part of Katherine in 'The Taming of the Shrew'. As we journeyed to Islington we tried unsuccessfully, and perhaps somewhat ungallantly, to recall how many years had elapsed since first we saw the great American actress in the character of Shakespeare's most turbulent heroine. Once the curtain rose, our difficulty was solved. It must have been yesterday, or last week, or last month at the furthest, for there, in her pristine passion, vigor, and grace, moved the figure exactly as we first remembered it. To some people the impersonation of Baptista's willful daughter appears the easiest in the whole gallery of female portraits that our great poet collected. Only be virulent and violent enough at the first and sufficiently meek and mild thereafter and the thing is done; but more acute observers will see that this is not so; that shrew is not necessarily a scold or a termagant, but a woman with a naturally willful and headstrong disposition which, unrestrained by any controlling influence, leads its possessor into excesses bringing disquiet and unrest to all around. Shakespeare eloquently shows that a woman
may be a shrew and yet be a loving and lovable creature, waiting only for a still stronger nature than her own to which to yield and give obedience. With what art Miss Rehan presents all this, it seems almost superfluous, in these days, to describe it.* . . . Miss Rehan indulges in no undue violence of voice or gesture to produce her effects. For her the heroine's passion is only the more dangerous because she never quite allows it to explode itself. It is always simmering and smoldering—never quite ablaze."

In record of Miss Rehan's English reception of Katherine and of her artistic revelation of the character The London Graphic said, "The house literally rose at Miss Ada Rehan when she 'took the stage,' as the old phrase has it, in a characteristically tempestuous fashion, which none who saw will soon forget. It would be difficult to overpraise the excellence of Miss Rehan's presentation of the proud, capricious Katharine—at once a human tigress and a gentle woman, whose refinement was evident even in the most furious outbursts of her outrageous temper, and the subtlety and variety which her soft, rich voice succeeded in imparting to her impassioned Her distinct enunciation and perfect delivery of the lines, too, suggested a reflection how rarely these

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, pp. 176-177
qualities are encountered on our stage."

In the London Daily Telegraph are these words, witnessing the vitality and reality of Rehan's Shrew.

"If ever there was presented an embodiment of nervous force, nervous exhilaration, nervous tension, nervous abandonment, and nervous depression, it is contained in the Katherine of Ada Rehan. She does not act only with her voice, or her hands, or her face, but with her whole nature. We seem to see everything that is passing through the woman's mind, her keen struggle for supremacy, her lovely abandonment to the inevitable, her womanly expression of love and tenderness. Other Katherines that we have seen seem to think it necessary to forget their breeding in the emphasis of their rage. Not so Miss Rehan. There is dignity in her furious passion, there is infinite grace in her humiliation. Her scream of baffled rage is terrible; her cry for pardon is piteous. Miss Rehan's Katherine is no mere actress; she is a veritable woman. She does not frighten us; she arouses our pity. It may be cruel and insolent to tame a high-spirited woman so; it may be considered degrading to see her bow her knees to her lord and master. In these days of lady senior wranglers and senior classics the picture of Katherine

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, p. 178
will appear more horrible than before. But, granted
the scheme of Shakespeare, it could not be transmuted with
more force or consummate art.*

Outside of London Miss Rehan received equal praise. The critic of the Birmingham Daily Gazette wrote of her,
"Many don the mantle of Shakespeare, but to few is it
given to wear it with dignity. It dwarfs imposters to
their natural proportions. It shows forth presumption
in all its contemptible littleness. The man or woman
who can wear it with grace must have something of the
deathless fire of genius. Such a woman is Ada Rehan,
an actress whose strong personality, passionate sympathy,
and fire of soul declare her one of the long line of those
who have worthily interpreted the ideals of the master
poet of English speech. There are characteristics in
Miss Rehan's acting the thinking observer to this con-
clusion.”*

Another provincial commentator writes in the Edinburgh
Scotsman, "For the first time Miss Ada Rehan, an actress
whose praises have been sung on two continents, visits
Edinburgh and submits along with Mr. Augustin Daly's
company, an entertainment which disarms criticism on
account of its excellence and variety. Since 1890 she

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study p. 180
has been in London as a bright particular 'star' in the theatrical heavens, and now she has gone out to conquer the provinces, which, judging by her last night's performance, are likely to be in accord with the two great cities on different sides of the Atlantic in which her reputation has chiefly been made. Miss Rehan has all the qualities necessary for a theatrical 'star'--an artistic temperament, a stately presence, a beautiful voice, and a training which has put face, gesture, and voice thoroughly under command. Of the role of Katharine she has unquestionably a thorough grip. Her mood was as tempestuous as the winds which proverbially usher in the month of March. She blustered and stormed for a while until the tempest was gradually quelled, as if by a magician's wand, and died away in soft, spring-like whispers. This marvelous transition in the character of the Shrew Miss Rehan depicted with many charming touches of art; and it would be difficult to say in which aspect of the part the audience most enjoyed her acting. She was equally good in both. The audience was exceedingly enthusiastic."

Upon the death of Ada Rehan, the Literary Digest quoted The London Times as making this comment on her

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, p. 179
Katherine, "You thought Shakespeare foresaw her when he wrote that part. She made Katherine a magnificent animal, her rage devastating like some great convulsion of nature. The Shakespearian vocabulary did not suffice here; she found a whole gamut of inarticulate cries, shrieks, grunts, and growls. Looking at her, you seemed to snatch the fearful joy of dancing on the edge of a volcano. Yet the whole thing was harmonious and superbly beautiful, Shakespearian through and through, absolutely right. For once a dramatic character had met with the very person born to interpret and illuminate it. Such a piece of good fortune is not likely to happen again." *

The French critics did not care for the play, "The Taming of the Shrew", but, although they "were shocked when Katherine boxed Petruchio's ears", "they recognized Miss Rehan's success in the part. A writer in Le Petit Journal is said to have "recognized in Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew artists of ability";* one in Le Soir is quoted as saying Miss Rehan was "a comedienne of race, very beautiful, very distinguished, rendering the part of Katherine like a great artist, acclaimed by the whole house, French as well as American... . . . . It was a

* Literary Digest Vol. 52 - 289
* Drew: My Years on the Stage - 144
* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly - 465
great success and she deserved it." *

A writer in Figaro, after naming a long list of actresses who had attempted to play Katherine, says of Ada Rehan: "Let us stop here, at this one. Even from our point of view the superior qualities of Miss Ada Rehan can be recognized. Her stature and singular beauty present the image of a Scandinavian divinity of the Valhalla. Nothing can be more singular than the panther-like cries that provoke the first attack of Petruchio, and the noble and penetrating diction of Katherine's final submission." *

Le Siecle states: "The success of the evening was won by Miss Ada Rehan. She seems to combine the charm of Mlle. Rechamberg with the piquancy of Mlle. Rejane." *

In "Paris" it was written, "Miss Rehan assers herself by voice, look, and gesture; even those who do not understand what she says feel that she is a personage. She does not charm, but commands, she forces herself upon the attention and the mind." *

Winter records the effect of the French production in these words: "The brilliant representation of 'The Taming of the Shrew' that was given in Paris, in the summer of 1888, at the Gaiety Theatre, by Augustine Daly's

* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 466
* Ibid. 466
* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study 193
* Ibid. 193
company of comedians, headed by Miss Rehan, aroused extraordinary public interest, and it was attended by at least one important consequence. The eminent French comedians Constant Coquelin (1841-1909), having seen Daly's production, became desirous of acting Petruchio, and under his auspices, with himself in that character, an adapted French version of Shakespeare's play presently made its appearance on the Paris Stage. That version made by Paul Delair, is entitled "La Megere Apprivoisee". On January 24, 1892, Coquelin appeared in that play, at Abbey's Theatre (now, 1914, the Knickerbocker), New York, acting Petruchio, in association with that accomplished actress Jane Hading, as Katherine. . . . Jane Hading gave a weak imitation of Miss Rehan, devoid of charm, and - which was singular, considering how clever she had elsewhere shown herself to be, - devoid of art." *

From the German press, Mr. Winter brings these two comments. The first is from The Berlin Chorivari. "We have already remarked upon the brilliant ensemble of the Daly Company. It has among its members, also, artists who, in their individual acting, are of the first rank. Miss Rehan. . . . showed herself to be an artist, who throws her whole soul into the performance, and

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, v. 2-528-529
she has won our German hearts by her naturalness, her sincerity, and her wonderful versatility." * The second is from *The Berlin Boersen Zeitung*: "The sample of original American comic acting was received enthusiastically by the audience. Among the participants Miss Ada Rehan, whose versatility is astonishing, distinguished herself by an uncommonly original and delightful performance." *

* Ibid. 193*
Conclusion

Ada Rehan approached the interpretation of Katherine after years of careful study of the women of Shakespeare. She brought to it a clear understanding and the result was a flaming, vibrant Shrew that seemed to be the true embodiment of Shakespeare's ideal. She lifted the part from the turbulent farce to comedy and made a living reality out of a character that had formerly been but a foil to bring out the qualities of Petruchio. When Rehan first played the part in America it was repeated over a hundred times to audiences that grew in size and enthusiasm. Her reception was equally enthusiastic in England where the play held the stage for two months. It was also presented during short engagements in France and Germany. In these countries Miss Rehan was recognized as an artist in spite of the strangeness of the language and of the dislike that was avowed for the play. This appreciation lasted throughout the many years that Ada Rehan acted the part of Katherine.

The mass of the opinion in regard to Rehan's Katherine in "The Taming of the Shrew" indicates the value placed upon it by the four countries in which it was presented. In America the interpretation was recognized by many critics as outstanding. William Winter says that
she had no rival in the part and that she probably never had an equal. According to Joseph Francis Daly, the interpretation was unexcelled for loftiness and power. Forrest Izard recognizes in it a tradition to be placed by the side of the work of Woffington and Terry. Otis Skinner called this acting preeminent and never tired of watching Katherine's scenes when he, the Petruchio, was off stage. Favourable English comment is more profuse than that of America, according to my findings. Percy Fitzgerald characterizes the presentation as almost perfect. W. Davenport Adams calls Rehan's entrance one of the most magnificent on record. George Odell considers her characterization one of the great Shakespearean achievements. Not only of her day but of all time. Frank A. Marshall doubts whether the part was ever played with such artistic effect, and William Archer calls it irresistible although he suggests that it was a bit deliberate at points. Irving among actors, and Browning among literary men she recognized and appreciated the success of the interpretation. Anonymous critics in The London Times, The London Graphic, The London Daily Telegraph, The Pall Mall Gazette, The Edinburgh Scotsman, The Birmingham Daily Gazette, and The Theatre have left tributes, to the actress that bear witness to her widespread recognition in England. In France Coquelin expressed the
desire to play Petruchio to Rohan's Katherine, and he did have an adaptation of the play produced in which he appeared as Petruchio and Jane Hading as Katherine, giving an imitation of Rohan's ideal of the part. Favorable critics writing for Le Soir, Le Petit Journal, Figaro, Le Siècle, and Paris characterize this actress variously, as comedienne of race, an artist of ability, and of superior qualities, the success of the evening, and a personage. Finally, we find the German critics declaring her to be natural, sincere, original and delightful. These impressions are quoted from The Berlin Charivari and The Berlin Boersen Zeitung. America, England, France, and Germany testify to the rank of Ada Rohan's Katherine.

The adverse comment on this interpretation consists in Walter Prichard Eaton's undefended and unexplained statement that Rohan's Shrew, although very wonderful, was never Shakespeare's Shrew. Towse's objection to the coarseness of the picture which he puts forth in spite of his declaration that Shakespeare's text would allow almost any degree of coarseness and that Rohan's interpretation was undoubtedly good and in some respects brilliant, and an anonymous article in Blackwood's that, while praising the characterization for fire and force, criticizes it as lacking in subtlety. Thus, we
find the blame so mixed with praise that it is scarce deserving of the name. Every critic recognized the interpretation as worthy of favorable consideration, and actors and literary men agreed in their judgment.

Before the time of Rehan, the part of Katherine had been attempted by Sarah Siddons who was a misfit in the role. O'Neill met with like failure and Kitty Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, while giving vivacity to the part, did not meet with preeminent success as Katherine. During her time, no one rivalled Rehan in the character. Since that day the part has been commendably interpreted by Margaret Anglin and Julia Marlowe, although neither has eclipsed that of Ada Rehan. Rehan made Katherine her own from her magnificent entrance to her equally fine submission at the end. This fact alone would give Rehan a place among actresses of Shakespearean comedy who are remembered had she never made her later successes as Rosalind and Viola.
Rehan’s Interpretation of Rosalind

Rehan’s second Shakespearean representation was her Rosalind. Her conception of the part was not that of many Shakespearean students who had decided that this Rosalind was an elusive creature of fanciful nature not resembling that of reality. Ada Rehan saw in her a joyful and loving woman—a woman who could frolic through Arden with piquancy and animation, giving them an appeal and a fascination not usually imparted to them, and yet who was composed of flesh and blood and who could love with all the fervency of which youth is capable. She was woman from first to last in the character. She made the most of the first act by establishing her ideal of womanhood, and she carried this ideal through the merry woodland scenes to the time of the revelation of her identity. Her denotement of this ideal was subtle and exact and it established a precedent that has been followed by actresses since her time.

In England, as well as in America, critics, actors, and Shakespearean students agreed that Miss Rehan’s conception of this much discussed heroine of Shakespeare was well founded and nobly presented. It was generally conceded that with
her creation of Katherine, her treatment of Rosalind placed her beyond doubt beside this poet's great interpreters.

Winter tells us of the value of this conception: "Her impersonation of Rosalind in As You Like It—a striking contrast to Katherine—interpreted that character as essentially and deliciously human, and separated it, at once and finally, so far as the present generation is concerned, from all the old scholastic theories of a vague and cloudy abstraction."

Miss Behan deserves consideration with two other outstanding players of Rosalind in the nineteenth century—Adelaide Neilson and Mary Anderson.

Reception in the Part

Miss Behan first appeared in the character of Rosalind on December 17, 1899. "Miss Behan's whole performance was a triumph," wrote the New York Times. Critics had looked forward to this performance with interest. It came just two years after the astonishing success of "The Taming of the Shrew." Although the two plays are widely different, Miss Behan had shown her capabilities in the interpretation of boy parts in old comedy, and this was the second Shakespearean revival of note. Critics were not disappointed in

*Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V.3-317-318
*New York Daily Tribune, Sunday, Dec.22, 1899(Cuoted)*
the success of the production. The play ran through sixty-two consecutive performances. A privately printed book of Daly's version of the play was distributed among patrons of the theatre, and this book enlarged and embellished with photographs of the players in costume was sent to the Memorial Theatre in Stratford.

**Description of Ada Rehan as Rosalind**

In "Shadows of the Stage," William Winter describes Ada Rehan's conception as in agreement with that of Shakespeare. He says, "Shakespeare did not laugh in his portrait of that delightful and enchanting woman. She was, in his imagination, intended to be spiritually pure, intellectually brilliant, physically handsome, lithe, ardent, and tender, the incarnation of glowing health, bewitching sensibility, passionate temperament, and captivating personal charm. Her distinctive superficial attribute is piquant sprightliness, but beneath that she has a deep heart, and the freedom of her conduct and exuberance of her wit flow out of her absolute sincerity and innocence. She has not the half-mournful sweetness of Viola, nor the self-centered, stately composure of Portia, nor the tragic intensity of Imogene; she is just the type of a healthful, happy, sparkling woman, predominant by rich, pure, and charming personality, loving dearly, and wishful to be loved, and ultimately exultant in the ecstatic consciousness that her
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natural wish has accomplished its aim.

Thar© are persons

who appear tc resent that they possess bodies, and. there
are many who seem ashamed of their emotions.
Rosalind,

Not so with

£>he is exultant in her physical life, her heart
0

is full of tenderness, and what her heart feels her tongue
must speak:.
That way the character was apprehended by Ada Reha®,
and that way-acting it for the first time in her life—
she embodied it, charming every observer by the ooplous
and prodigal exuberance of her sweetness and her brilliancy,
and winning the honor that is due to a royal achievement in
dramatic art,”*
I found no description of the eostume worn by Miss
Rehan in the first act of the play.

Of her appears®®# in

the "forest scenos” , Cecil Howard says: *Mias Rehan looked
admirable in hor drab-coloured male attire, with ruby-col­
oured cloak and brown hose."*
The New York Tally Tribune says of the playing of the
early scenes on the night of the first production; "Through­
out the first aot, which passes at court, Miss Rehan makes
Rosalind interesting by simple loveliness and by a bearing
that is invested more v/ith the superiority of genius or of
original character than with the distinction of royal man­
ner*

Yet this is not omitted.

Here her personal fitness

^Winter; Shadows of the Stage V.2-160-161
•Howard, The Theatre n.2. V.26-Aug.l,lQ90


for the part is instantly proved, in nobility of stature and
presence, opulence of essentially feminine charms, and in
sympathetic voice and limpid melody of speech. The act is
not used merely as a preparation for getting into male at-
tire. There is ample revelation in it of the sweetness of
Rosalind's nature, and Miss Rehan gave a touching expression
of the bewildered tremor naturally incident to the first love
of a girl's heart. This was in the scene of the wrestling."*

W. Davenport Adams comments on the first act in this
fashion: "Miss Rehan played the first act in a somewhat sub-
dued tone, save when she stood up to her tyrannical uncle."*

The writer in The London Daily Telegraph gives Miss Re-
han much credit for her work in Act I, "The early scenes of
"As You Like It" are considered by the amateur quite unnecess-
ary and immaterial. Ada Rehan does not think so. Here she
has to show her womanly nature, her pride and her independence.
Directly she opens her mouth we know her heart overflows with
tenderness. If it were not so, how could she love and adore
the gentle Celia. But she has pride also, a pride that cannot
be crushed by any love or sentiment. Then, best of all, Rosalind
shows this to perfection after her scene with the Duke, when,
the sentence having been pronounced, she proposes the girlish
escapade, not so much as a revenge, but as a relief for her
baffled and crushed pride. Her denunciation of the Duke is
superb in its majesty and force—no stage ranting, but the over-

*New York Daily Tribune, Dec. 18, 1889 (Writer)
*W. D. Adams, Ada Rehan: Her Life and Works-Theatre N.S. V.26-175
flow, the natural overflow of a proud woman's heart. But
the reaction to a burst of humor and fantastic deviltry is
equally admirable. Rosalind wants a relief to her pent-up
pride and vexation, and she finds it in the mad cap journey
with Celia and Touchstone. The woman, remember, is all
nerves. She has seen the only man she can love, she has
been insulted by one who should have protected her, and she
rushes into the comedy of the situation like the wildest and
most impetuous woman in the world. Nothing finer has been
seen in the way of brilliant contrast than Rosalind's proud,
fiery, and impetuous outburst when the duke insults her, find-
ing its relief not in tears exactly, but in the comforting
love of her kinswoman. This superb effort was crowned with
overwhelming applause. But the audience little knew, though
the Shakespearean students did, that this was the keynote, as
it was, of Ada Rehan's Rosalind. She is a woman in the first
act, and she never ceases to be a woman in every scene in the
play. She may masquerade, she may gasconade, she may chaff,
she may be the spirit of humor and comedy, but, concealed by
the doublet and hose, and illustrated by the aggressive spear,
there is still the woman Rosalind ever with us, never for one
second losing her womanly charm."

*Winter, Ada Rehan, a study 181-182
In the denunciation of the Duke, Gowse feels that Miss Rehan has been surpassed.

"Her retort upon the tyrant Duke had spirit and dignity, but in this passage she was far excelled by Mary Anderson, who had the gift of majestic utterance."*

Gleeful animal spirits marked Miss Rehan's assumption of the forest scenes. William Winter writes of these scenes:

(1) "When she dashed through the trees of Arden, snatching the verses of Orlando from their boughs, and cast herself at the foot of a great elm, to read those fond messages that Rosalind's heart instantly and instinctively ascribes to their right source, her gray eyes were brilliant with tender joy; her cheeks were flushed; her whole person, in its graceful abandonment of posture, seemed to express an ecstasy of happy vitality and of victorious delight; her hands that held the written scrolls trembled with eager, tumultuous, grateful joy; the voice with which she read her lover's words made soft cadences of them and seemed to caress every syllable; and as the last rhyme,

'Let no face be kept in mind, But the fair of Rosalind,' fell from her lips like drops of liquid silver, the exquisite music of her speech seemed to die away in one soft sigh of pleasure. While, however, she thus denoted the passionate heart of Rosalind and her ample bliss of sensation and exul-

*Gowse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 351
tant yet tender pride of conquest, she never once relaxed
the tension of her glee."**

(2) "Later, when Rosalind emerges in her state of
liberty and not of banishment in the forest of Arden, Miss
Behan's gleeful animal spirits soon began to irradiate the
performance and from that time onward the inspiriting glow
of happy-hearted raillery never flagged. The relief that
Rosalind experiences as soon as she knows that she is be­
loved by the man of her choice liberates her into a gentle
frenzy of pleasure, and this condition is expressed in
Shakespeare by incessant frolic."**

(3) "She did not try to be anything more than
woman. She did not grope after abstract meanings. She
dashed merrily into the woodland frolic; and the image of
sprightly womanhood that the embodied was sweetly reckless;
because absolutely innocent as well as ardently impetuous.
The performance was marked by incessant movement and yet it
did not become monotonous or insincere; because it was con­
tinually fraught with suggestiveness of the bounteous nature
beneath it."**

Adams writes of her spirit in these scenes: "But
no sooner did her Rosalind set foot in Arden, than she gave
way to the ebullience of her feelings, her joy in existence and
her passion for Orlando."***

*Winter: The Wallet of Time, V.2,155
**N.Y. Daily Tribune, Dec. 18, 1889
***Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage V.2,271
****Adams: Ada Behan, The Theatre N.Y. V.26,175
The fact that this actress did not attempt to really disguise the fact that she was a woman, is illustrated by her meeting with Orlando. According to Winter, "The spectator of her modest perplexity on the score of doublet and hose felt that his spirit was brought into contact with a nature radically good,—a nature of which noble sincerity was a cardinal virtue and to which meanness was impossible. Furthermore, that delicacy was found to be perfectly compatible with brilliant and incessant sprightliness."

Towse tells us that "Her first meeting with Orlando was marked by coquetry rather than timidity, but was very pretty, natural, and feminine." He also says of her subsequent scenes with her lover: "Her doublet and hose became her excellently, and she played the scenes with Orlando with a pretty affectation of boyish swagger mingled with maidenly consciousness. The humor of it all was scarcely in the poetic or Shakespearean vein, but her acting was unaffected, lifelike, and sympathetic. It was a performance of great but not superlative merit."

"Those courtship passages in the forest," says William Winter, "wherein the boy plays the woman, drag wearily when Rosalind is not the actual woman of Shakespeare's dream. In Miss Behan's portrayal they ran with the sparkle of a

*Winter: Shadows of the Stage V.2,162
**Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 351
***Ibid 351-352
brook in spring-time. Her spirit brims over with affluence equally of feeling and of frolic. Rosalind is not one of the cold, experimental women who stop short with wishing, not to love, but to experiment by making men love them; she is herself a lover, and she crowning ecstasy of her life arrives in the golden hour when at length she is sure of Orlando's fidelity. Few emotions that women feel are of a more sacred character that the one that must be experienced and conveyed by the representatives of Shakespeare's favorite heroine. Miss Rehan rose naturally to the height of the character and sustained herself easily in that poise."

The same critic writes: "Throughout Rosalind's scenes with Orlando the variety of her limpid elocution, combined with incessant animation of capricious demeanour sustained the impersonation in a clear light of sparkling piquancy."

Sir Theodore Martin considered that her buoyancy detracted from her princely rank. "She would I think modify many of the details of her performance in the forest scenes if she kept steadily in mind that it is Rosalind the Princess as well as Rosalind the loving woman who, under the Page's disguise, is doing her best to rivet the affections of Orlando."

Adams gives the following criticism of the fainting

*Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V.2-169
**Ibid: 164
***Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, V.2-294
scene. "Toward the close came the fainting scene, on which Miss Rehan lays more stress than do most Rosalinds; but, taken as a whole, her assumption is mainly and broadly comic-lacking a little both in tenderness and in refinement; lacking, in fact, in the qualities of ladyhood which some of us find quite as charming in Rosalind as her vivacity and sparkle."*

Winter does not agree with Adams in saying that this Rosalind lacked in refinement. In fact he takes the opposite stand when he says, "The three dramatic conditions of Rosalind—the woman, the woman playing the boy, and the boy playing the woman—could not be more perfectly discriminated than they were by her, and throughout them all the soft refinement of personality was never for an instant frayed or warped by even the least tone of that involuntary coarseness which, under such conditions, excitement is sure to develop in a vulgar nature."**

Finally, Winter says of her spirited playing, "In Rosalind's rebuke of Phoebe, whose subsequent speech to Silvius is such an ample and delicious description of her person, the jocular humor and bubbling glee of the actress reached their height, and when she spoke the Epilogue, which she did with zest and finish that gave point and glitter to that inadequate tag, she finally vindicated her rank among the great comedians of the nineteenth century."***

*Adams: Ada Rehan—The Theatre, N.S.—V.26—175
**Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V.2—161
***Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage V.2—274
Some Critical Estimates of Rehan's Rosalind

The New York Daily Tribune critic (Winter) felt the first night of "As You Like It" that Rehan's Rosalind was noteworthy. He says: "Miss Rehan's long and thorough training in all sorts of parts yield a golden fruition in such trials as certainly this must have been. The result is not in doubt. The success is emphatic. Miss Rehan was applauded many times and with a warmth unusual even with her most cordial admirers; and when she spoke the epilogue last night—which she did with a gest and finish that gave point and glitter even to some of the worst drivel in Shakespeare—she had vindicated her rank beyond all question among the great comedians of the century!"

William Winter considers Rehan's Rosalind the best of the age—even outclassing Miss Anderson's. In several places he declares her greatness in the character:

(1) "It was acutely remarked by Boaden, when commenting on the Rosalind of Mrs. Siddons, 'that she closed her brilliant raillery upon others with a smothered sigh for her own condition.' That aspect of the part had been perceived by Miss Anderson. She displayed spontaneous enjoyment of exuberant physical vitality, as little subdued by stress of restrained emotion. Her performances of Rosalind

* N. Y. Daily Tribune Dec. 16, 1889
has only once, within my observation, been excelled. Ada
Rehan's surpassed it in spontaneity, and through the Forest
Scenes, in exuberance of joy and in cumulative vigor of ex-
ecution; indeed, Miss Rehan's Rosalind was, as Mrs. Clive
said of Mrs. Siddons, 'all Nature and daylight,'— the best
that has been seen within the last sixty years."

(2) "Art can accomplish much, but it cannot supply
the inherent captivation that constitutes the puissance of
Rosalind. Miss Rehan possesses that quality, and the method
of her art was the fluent method of natural grace."

(3) "Miss Rehan, in this performance showed herself
to be one of the most proficient artists that have appeared
in our time—producing in art the perfect effect of nature.
No performer within contemporary knowledge has acted a poetic
part with more flexibility, or spoken blank verse with more
fluency of natural utterance, or delivered prose speeches with
a nicer perception of the melody inherent in our language."

(4) "She was the best Rosalind ever seen in our time,
or, as far as extensive reading on the subject enables one to
judge, ever since "As You Like It" was written, and I confidently
believe that, within her special field of archness, raillery,
sentiment, coquetry, and noble, womanlike feeling,—she has seldom
been equalled and never excelled."

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*Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V.2-302
**Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V2-168
***Winter: Vagrant Memories 241-242
****Winter: Shakespeare of the Stage V.2-274
Joseph Francis Daly records the spirit of the presentation in these words: "Miss Rehan's Rosalind was a presentation of boundless, resistless, exuberant youth."*

J. J. Hayes, instructor of elocution at Harvard considered the part the greatest in Rehan's repertory. He wrote Mr. Daly: "To my mind Miss Rehan has had nothing that can compare with her Rosalind. It was a performance to be remembered."**

George Odell classes Rehan with the English Terry after her presentation of Rosalind. He writes: "Here on July 15, 1890, the delightful Rosalind of Ada Rehan first captivated susceptible London, and in this part she was placed ungrudgingly by critics and public on the highest pedestal. This was her crowning achievement in the British capital. From this time on Ada Rehan and Ellen Terry stood side by side as the great representatives for that generation at Shakespearean heroines; this position they still occupy without dispute in the history of the theatre."***

Henry Irving, one of the great actors of Shakespeare, saw "As You Like It" in England. In a letter to Augustin Daly, he wrote: "A delightful performance, and Miss Rehan beyond praise. She kept the entire play together in a splendid way."****

*Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 486
**Ibid: 487
***Odell: Shakespeare from Bitterton to Irving, V.2, 386
****Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 493
John Drew tells us that "Irving had a box for the opening night, and after the performance he came behind the scenes and congratulated Ada Rehan upon her Rosalind." This recognition by an actor like Irving speaks strongly for the actress's true conception of the character. He was ever enthusiastic over Rehan's ability. In conversation with William Winter Henry Irving said of Ada Rehan: "She is a great actress; one of the dignities of the Stage, and with whom it is an honor to appear."**

Ellen Terry wrote to Miss Rehan after Rosalind appeared in England:

My dear Ada Rehan,

I suppose you'll be flying off directly you have finished at the Lyceum, and if so I shan't see you and I haven't seen your Rosalind!—only one act of it at least, which was lovely enough, all except a 'red feather' which I want you to wear as the only possible improvement which I might suggest!!

... "Goodbye, my dear—you should be delighted with your great success, our B.P. (British Public, please)—just love you—and so the ought to, as they say in the Dials.

"Yrs. affect'ly,

Ellen Terry"**

*Drew: My Years on the Stage 137-138
**Winter: Vagrant Memories 330
**Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 493
Constant Coquelin, the great French comedian recognized Miss Rehan as an actress of genius. In a letter to Mr. Daly Coquelin said: "I am ravished with your success and that of Miss Rehan."* He saw the English production.

Mrs. Marie Bancroft of the English stage, wrote to the actress after this same performance, "Your Rosalind is one of the most perfect representations I have ever witnessed--full of thought and genius--a truly beautiful performance."**

Madam Felicia Mallet wrote the producer after this much praised performance (No II) In this letter to Mr. Daly Madame Mallet wrote: "Thanks to your amiability, I passed, yesterday, an exquisite evening. I beg you to make my perfect admiration known to Miss Ada Rehan."***

Joseph F. Daly tells us that, "Joseph Knight addressed her as 'divine artist' and Mrs. Mary Ann Keely as 'bewitching Rosalind'.

John Rankin Towse criticizes the actress's portrayal, but still realizes her power and the bewitching charm of her interpretation. He says: "Ada Rehan made a hit as Rosalind, a part which for long was one of the most popular in her repertory. The more subtle romantic elements of the character—the poetic essence, the delicate sentiment, the graces of inherent nobility—she did not much concern herself about, and

*Ibid: 493
**Ibid: 493
***Ibid: 492
her delivery of the text was marred by the elocutionary faults which she never overcame, but she presented a bewitching picture of health and youth animated by high and frolicsome spirit, just a little dashed at times by the tender anxieties of love."*

Some Foreign Comments on Rehan’s Rosalind

Miss Rehan gave her first London performance of Rosalind on July 16, 1890. It was repeated until August 8, 1890.

The Theatre for August 1, 1890, contains this comment by Cecil Howard, recording her reception in England and the general excellence of the portrayal: "Miss Rehan simply took the house by storm. There was a royal dignity in the opening scenes, to be followed by a poetic, scholarly, and most womanly assumption of the forest scenes. It was, perhaps, exuberant in the flow of animal spirits, but then the exuberance was so graceful, so eminently feminine, that if Miss Rehan was not always the Rosalind we had pictured to ourselves that Shakespeare drew, we forgave the actress’s novel conception of the character in our delight at the confidence and boldness with which it was carried out.... Her Rosalind will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it, and they will always remember with pleasure the exquisite delivery of Shakespeare’s lines."*

*Towe: Sixty Years of the Theatre.
*Cecil Howard, The Theatre, N. S. V. 25 Aug. 1, 1890
In agreement with Winter's assertion that this Rosalind was not surpassed in her day, The London Times records: "It is a merry, arch, playful Rosalind she shows us, unmarked by the smallest dash of the prose of everyday life. Rosalind's laugh is as pretty as the sound of a silver bell; her bounty to the world is as boundless as her love for Orlando. No suggestion of cynicism or strong-mindedness mars her gentle pleasantries.

Without any other claim to public regard, and it has many, Mr. Daly's production of 'As You Like It' would still be memorable for Miss Rehan's delightful embodiment of Rosalind, the best of the century."

The London Globe agrees in the charm of the embodiment, without making any comparisons. He writes of this Rosalind: "How girlish were many of the movements, the light runs across the stage into the arms of her cousin, the recoil from the advances of Orlando, the tremulous and caressing ardor that showed how deeply the arrow of Cupid had entered! How musical was the voice in its every utterance, how graphic were the gestures!... The conquest achieved by Miss Rehan over the audience was complete, and the enthusiasm was untiring and unbounded."

The Truth, London, was more emphatic than the critics quoted above in the placing of this achievement. He declares

*Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study 180-181
*Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study 183-184
that: A Rosalind more ideal, more versatile, more womanly, ... or more humorous than Miss Rehan has, I venture to say, never trod the English stage since the age of the giants."*
The London Saturday Review places this Rosalind by the side of that of Adelaide Neilson, feeling that ability, understanding, and charm were evidence throughout the play. He says: "The present generation and the growing generation have seen more than one Rosalind in London, and of them all, only one—and she, alas! has been taken from us—that could be named in the same breath with Miss Rehan. The first requisite for, perhaps, the most charming part in Shakespeare's comedies is that most undefinable thing, charm. This Miss Rehan has proved herself to possess, over and over again, in parts of lighter calibre, and, with a very distinct touch of genius in the part of Katherine in "The Tamind of the Shrew", a part capable in the hands of a very capable actress, of being played well and yet wanting charm. Those of us who hoped most from Miss Rehan's Rosalind may have been surprised at the extent to which their utmost hope has been realized. Dignity; girlhood growing into womanhood; the inception and completion of a love perfect in innocence; resentment of injustice; playfulness and tenderness, in the boy's disguise; a shy boldness beforehand with Orlando;

*Ibid:184
after the wrestling scene a complete but difficult courage, failing only in the scene of 'counterfeiting', and then still attempted; return to the absolute womanliness which has never been lost—all these things make up the sum of Rosalind, a character as trying as it is entrancing. All these things Miss Rehan understands and expresses.

Mr. Daly's presentment of the play is almost a revelation.*

This assumption put the old play over the footlights in a manner almost unprecedented in recent productions of Shakespearean comedy according to the writer in the London Daily Telegraph, who writes: "Our purpose now is to state how the artist plays upon her audience with her rare art of comedy. She is not slow or lethargic, as most English players are. She has magnetic influence; she travels over the footlights; she has the audience, or such parts of it as possess intelligence and intellect, in the palm of her hand. And what is the result? This exquisite old comedy goes with the spirit denied, alas! to Shakespeare, but reserved for Modern musical farce."*

Land and Water, London feels that Miss Rehan's powers are far reaching. He is captivated by the rapidity and spirit of the general conception and by the womanliness of this unusual Rosalind. Of it he writes at length: "Miss

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*Ibid 181
*Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study 183
Ada Behan steps from triumph to triumph; she has established it as an axiom of the stage that she can do nothing in which she is not delicious."

"Her Katherine was magnificent! Her Rosalind was an ideal realization of the ideal woman of the most exquisite love comedy that was ever written. Ada Rehan's acting, Shakespearean though it may be, in every well pronounced and musical syllable, was but a procession of old, dearly-treasured memories, whether she was coy or bold, petulant or entreating, caressing, indifferent, tender, timid, or lost in dreamy reverie of sweet love musings. Nimble of wit, fleet of foot, rapid in gesture, as the deer of the forest themselves, fluttting perpetually round the flower of love like a humming-bird moth, yet only tasting it with delicate fore-feeler, and darting back as rapidly when approached, her beautiful voice, like a splendid searchlight, wandered through the musical cadences of the lovely lines, making each well-known concert stand out in charming relief, and ever and anon lighting on some hitherto unsuspected beauty and revealing it for the first time in all its delicacy. In short, this most comely creature, graceful as the dryads, playful as squirrels, with the audible woman's heart throbbing in every gesture, accent, and look, seemed the very spirit of woman now incarnate and visible before us; the exhaustive embodiment of all that is wayward, loving, adorable, and delightful."

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study 184
This same quality of womanliness is praised by the critic whose comment appears in The Sketch, London: "The depth, the sincerity and the warmth of her Rosalind pervade the air. She has a true appreciation of the love which fills Rosalind's heart and soul and makes life joyous for her, and with an extremely delicate touch, with sprightly grace and admirable art, Miss Rehan conveys to her audience, alluringly convincingly, this side of Rosalind's character. Her Rosalind is radiant in its expression of happiness. It is beautiful in its brilliancy. But it is infinitely tender. Miss Rehan's Rosalind is an example of acting in its highest form. Well thought and balanced, perfect in its light and shade, its dominant feature is its womanliness, its truth to nature."

The Birmingham Daily Gazette credits this actress as being the perfect Rosalind because of this same quality that the critics just quoted praised: "It asks the pen of an enthusiast to bring before the mind's eye the gracious being whom Miss Ada Rehan revealed to us in the guise of Rosalind. It was an education in the virtues of womanhood to see her. And yet with what simplicity, with what unapparent art, she portrayed this exquisite character—perhaps the most fascinating of all Shakespeare's heroines. It is Dante, is

*Ibid 185
it not, who speaks of the transfiguring effect of love on woman? Miss Rehan's performance was a sort of natural commentary, nay an exemplification, a proof of this idea. Yet there was no excess of sentiment, no nursing of a passion to the point of morbidness. A more sunshiny love was never seen. And merry withal, with the joy of a heart that loves and knows itself loved in return. Deep also, with the intensity of entire self-surrender. It was a lesson in the language of the emotions to watch the play of thought on Miss Rehan's expressive features. Delight sparkled in her eyes as she listened to the protestations of the rapt Orlando. There was roguishness, too, and coyness, and all her movements were eloquent of a love almost painful in its sweetness. Here, we felt—and the whole house felt—was the ideal Rosalind.”

The St. James Gazette, London, does not attempt to compare Miss Rehan with other players. He declares:

“Miss Ada Rehan is an actress who can only be compared with herself. So strongly imbued with her personality is each character she sustains that, in order to arrive at a just estimate of any, one is constrained to consider it by the light of her other assumptions.”

*Ibid 185-186
*Ibid 183
The Nottingham Guardian contains this eulogistic com­ment on Rehan’s Rosalind: "The acme of perfection in re­gard to Shakespearean acting is reached by Miss Ada Rehan, in her impersonation of Rosalind. No other actress is there at the present time who is able to invest the masquerading heroine with such truly remarkable charm. Not even the most hardened of playgoers could resist the fascination of this Rosalind, as full of winsome wiles and pretty blandishments, she lures Orlando to woo her under the shadow of the forest trees. And when Rosalind, her all-attempted manly swagger deserting her, listens with gathering alarm to the story of her lover’s encounter with the lioness, Miss Rehan played magnificently. It is a creation which remains in the memory, a pleasurable recollection, long after the tableau curtains have hidden from view for the last time the dainty figure, clad in russet-brown doublet and hose, whose words and actions have enthralled the attention during three hours—a time which has seemed all too brief."

An anonymous writer in Blackwood’s for September 20, 1890, heartily disapproves of the Daly company in general and of Miss Rehan’s Rosalind in particular. He "ventures to think" that she should "restudy the character by the light of the text," and tirades at great length against her "mel­odramatic" performance that brings Rosalind to the level of

*Ibid 186
a "not over-modest coquette". Nevertheless, this writer, who does not sign his paper, is forced to say: "With scarcely an exception the critics of the journals pronounced it to be 'indeed perfection.' One luminous authority told us nothing so truly Shakespearean had been seen on the stage for a hundred years."* He also remarks: "Miss Rehan's rendering of this character has been received with such general applause, that other actresses who essay its impersonation will be prone to accept her reading and imitate her effects, exaggerating them as imitators generally do."*

Joseph Francis Daily writes a reply to this article in his "Life of Augustin Daly". His retort reads: "The writer in Blackwoods had not perhaps sufficiently pondered the role of that high-born lady who wanders in the woods in boy's dress, greets her lover 'like a saucy lackey,' 'plays the knave with him,' offers to 'wash his liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart,' and finally, to his 'and wilt thou have me?' replies, 'Ay, and twenty such!'

"The fact is that the writer was simply recalling the conventional Rosalinds of the early Victorian era, and could not accept a different interpretation of the part. From his mental condition the other critics had emerged. The Daily Chronicle, for instance, said: 'Miss Rehan's Rosalind

*Anon: Blackwood's V.148, Sept. 20, 1890-430
has an ease and spontaneity so engaging in its influence as for the moment to create some doubts as to whether Miss Rehan is not right, and theatrical precedent, together with ideas matured in study, altogether wrong."

*Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 496*
Conclusion

From critical descriptions of this picture of Rosalind, we find that Rehan's character was essentially a woman throughout the entire play. She demonstrated this fact in Act I where she also showed that she realized her princely rank. Not forgetful of her station according to most critics, but abandoning herself to the frolic impulse of her escapade she put unusual life, joy, humor and recklessness into her forest scenes. She gloriéd in her love victory over Orlando and her scenes with him evidenced womanly fervor. She joined with zest in the Touchstone--Audrey, Syrphus-Phoebe episodes bringing out all of the comedy of these parts and keeping the audience continuously in a state of delight. Her ardor was not diminished in the final scenes where Orlando learns that she is the subject of his amours. This spirit so characteristic of the actress, and this intelligent conception of the true significance of the part made her presentation one worthy to be followed by others ambitions Rosalinds, from her first entrance in Act I to her triumphant reading of the Epilogue at the close. Here, again, we find critics almost unanimous in their praise of this interpretation as was the case in the instance of Katherine. The first production held the American Stage through sixty-two performances. The fame of the interpretation preceded Rehan to England and her reception there was triumphant. William Winter declares
that the personation vindicated Behan's rank among the
great comedians of her century and he also calls it the
best Rosalind of the age if not the best since "As You
Like It" was written. Joseph Francis Daly characterizes
it as resistless. In England the praises were many.
Cecil Howard calls the assumption poetic, scholarly, and
womanly. W. Davenport Adams declares that although the
conception was new it was one that would never be for­
gotten. George Odell says it resulted in her being placed
ungrudgingly with Ellen Terry as the great interpreter of
Shakespearean women of the age. Actors and Actresses were
warm in their praises of the part. Henry Irving says the
interpretation was beyond praise and calls Rehan one of the
dignities of the stage. Ellen Terry gave the actress a
red feather for her cap as the only possible improvement
of the forest scenes. Marie Bancroft said the represent­
ation was one of the most perfect she had ever seen.
Madame Felicia Mallet expressed perfect admiration of
Rehan in the part. Coquelin declared himself to be ravish­
ed with her success. The list of anonymous congratulation
comments on the interpretation is extensive. The New York
Times declares it a triumph. The London Times calls this
Rosalind the best of the century. The Truth says it is
the best since the age of the "giants." The Saturday
Review says the only Rosalind worthy of a place by Behan's was that of Adelaide Neilson. Sand and Water speaks of it as an ideal realization of the heroine. The Sketch calls it an example of acting in its highest form. The London Daily Telegraph remarks that it is received with the zest usually accorded a musical farce. The Birmingham Rosalind, though played by Ada Rehan in England and America only, received recognition from players of France as well as from players and critics, of the countries in which it was given.

Rosalind has been successfully portrayed by a number of actresses. Among the interpretations of the eighteenth century Reg Woffington's, with a possible exception of Dora Jordan's, is usually considered the best. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Helena Faucit gave the outstanding personation. Later Adelaide Neilson portrayed a brilliant Rosalind. Still later Mary Anderson, was the conspicuous actress in the rôle. It is with women such as these that Rehan is compared when she is called the best Rosalind since the play was written, and when critics place her interpretation almost unanimously on an equality with the best portrayals of the part. Gazette calls this the ideal Rosalind. And, finally, The Nottingham Guardian calls Rehan's interpretation of Rosalind the acme of perfection in Shakespearean acting and declares it to have had no rival in the age.
The adverse comment is slight and is mixed with praise. Sir Theodore Martin feels that the frolic spirit of the forest scene detracted from the conception of a woman of princely rank. W. Davenport Adams objects to the breath of the comedy. J. Rankin Towse admits that the conception was bewitching, and feminine, but he thinks it has been surpassed by Mary Anderson's interpretation, especially in the retort to the Duke in the first act. The most harsh criticism is found in Blackwood's Magazine. The anonymous writer admits that most critics have called this personation the best Rosalind in a hundred years, but he dares to attack it as melodramatic and out of keeping with the Shakespearean ideal.
Chapter V

ADA REHAN AS VIOLA

After Miss Rehan's marked success in the parts of Rosalind and Katherine it is not surprising to learn that she gave with the possible exception of Adelaid Neilson's, as good a representation of Viola in "Twelfth Night" as had appeared since the days of Ellen Tree. As was the case with her Rosalind, Viola was made a picture appealing through its womanliness, charming through its buoyancy. She showed plainly her love for Orlando and her sisterly regard for Olivia's unfortunate attachment. This understanding of a woman's true reaction to such a circumstance was one of the touches that marked Miss Rehan's conception as intelligent and clearly defined.

Critics had anxiously awaited this personation, and they accorded it a place among the outstanding interpretations of Shakespeare. Both England and America agreed in its brilliancy. A few critics placed it upon a plane with her earlier achievements in Rosalind and Katherine, but for the most part it was not considered quite so great. Nevertheless, it rounded out her acting in Shakespearean comedy, showing her power in three of Shakespeare's greatest heroines, who were also three distinct and individual characters. The success of the actress in the three roles
is expressed in this paragraph by William Winter, "Ada Rehan's impersonation of Katherine and Rosalind have shown women, not marionettes. Her Rosalind was not a theory but a lover. The creature of a poet's happiest amatory fancy became a living enchantment in her assumption of that character, and it captivated every heart, and when she added Viola to the long chronicle of her achievements, she suffused an image of romantic grace with woman-like tenderness and soft poetic charm, and made that exquisite ideal an actual human creature, of such beauty as cannot be forgotten."*

**Reception in the Part**

The New York Daily Tribune for Wednesday, November 28, 1894, gives the following discussion of Miss Rehan's reception in the part of Viola. "In genuine reputation there is the element of permanence. High repute does not depend upon capricious opinion, but upon desert. A great actor is a decisive force, not only in his personal experience, but in that of his time, and the presence of such an actor satisfies contemplation with the sense of noble achievement, which neither can be shaken nor denied. It was, accordingly, with a deep sense of repose and comfort that a numerous audience, of the most intellectual

* Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V. 3, p. 36
and refined character, welcomed Miss Rehan, last night, in Daly's Theatre and looked again upon her beautiful performance of 'Viola' in Shakespeare's comedy of 'Twelfth Night.' The character typifies adorable womanhood, made sublime by self-abnegation, and—considering both its essence and the conditions under which it is manifested,—it is one that can be impersonated only by a woman who, proficient in art, superadds spiritual charm and physical enchantment. Miss Rehan was successful in Viola, from the first, because she glided naturally into those conditions, and because she was content to be, and did not strive to do. She has played the part many times within the last twenty months, and her execution of it has matured in freedom, flexibility, precision, and dispatch; but her presentment of it remains unchanged. The spirit of her ideal still combines passion, romance, melancholy, wistful patience, and delicious sweetness, while the outward garment is joyous buoyance and humorous glee.

"The actress was welcomed with unstinted enthusiasm, and from first to last her fluent, sparkling, tender impersonation held her audience as with the glamour of a fairy spell.

"All the players were frequently called back upon the scene, and after the fourth curtain there was a most
enthusiastic call for Mr. Daly, who came forward, leading Miss Rehan, but who resisted all demands for a speech. 'Twelfth Night' will be repeated many times."*

Description of Ada Rehan as Viola

Miss Rehan's conception of the character of Viola was based upon that of a great actress with whom she appeared in the early days of her stage career. "Long before she joined Daly's company, she had played in 'Twelfth Night', with Adelaide Neilson, and had become acquainted with the method of that actress in the treatment of Viola, and in assuming this character she, wisely and rightly, followed, to some extent, that excellent model which she admired and could not forget. The spirit of her personation was the same,—combining deep tenderness of feeling with glittering gayety of demeanor,—but the form of it was more massive and the execution more bold. Her Viola was less a dreamer and more an executant. Her repulse of Malvolio, 'No, good swabber, I am to hull here a little longer,' struck a defiant note and exhibited an airy truculence."**

In the New York Daily Tribune for February 22, 1893, Winter stated Miss Rehan's ideal of Viola as follows, "Viola is a woman of deep sensibility, and that way Miss

* New York Daily Tribune, November 28, 1894 (Winter)
* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, p. 73
Behan comprehended and reproduced her,—the gauze of kindly vivacity with which, otherwise, her bright and gentle figure is artfully swathed. That was the pervading beauty of the impersonation.

"In that embodiment, more than in any assumption of character previously presented by her, she relied upon a soft and gentle poetry of condition, discarding strong emphasis, whether of colour, demeanor, or speech."*

William Winter describes fully the three dresses worn by Miss Rehan's Viola in "Twelfth Night." "In the opening scene of Daly's version, the sea-coast of Illyria, Ada Rehan's Viola wore a loose, flowing white robe, trimmed with gold fringe, not a well-chosen garment, because it augmented the size of a person who, though large, was one of the most beautifully formed and proportioned women ever seen on the stage. In Viola's first scene with Orsino, and until the end of the Second Act, she wore a costume of delicate purple color, silk tights and shoes. Her doublet, heavily embroidered with gold, was open at the throat, where it was edged with white. Her garb was completed by a silk sash, fringed with gold, and a small, plumed cap. In the Third and Fourth acts she wore a

* New York Tribune, Wednesday, February 22, 1893
costume similar in detail and general design, but of a
delicate light-green color, and this she augmented with
a short armhole cloak, made of light brown, ribbed velvet.
Her dresses all were Italian."

George Odell writes of these same costumes, "Miss
Rehan's page dress of heavy crimson damask velvet seemed
to me to smother the pensive, poetic, humorous Viola; her
later green dress—to match Sebastian's—was rich with the
same oppressive heaviness." *

This heaviness was confined to the dressing of the
part only, for we are told that Miss Rehan's vivacious
spirit was shown in the frolic scenes of the play in a
very effective fashion. We read, "Those frolic scenes in
which Viola participates are consonant with Miss Rehan's
propensity for mirth and with her faculty for comic action.
She rejoiced in them, and she made the listener rejoice in
them. But the underlying cause of her brilliant success
in them was the profound sincerity of her feeling,—over
which her glee was seen to play, as moonlight plays upon
the rippling surface of the ocean depth." **

The scenes with the Duke Orsino, as given by Ada Rehan
are quite fully described. Winter wrote in the Tribune.

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, p. 75
* Odell: Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving
* New York Daily Tribune, February 22, 1893 (Winter)
"She wore the boy dress with all her usual grace. No woman plays the boy better. Few actresses have played it so well. The local public has seen other impersonations of Miss Behan, more complex, more elaborate, more powerful; no other impersonation so alluring, so essentially poetic, so significant of artistic growth, and of the rich resources of spiritual nature. Her by-play alone, in the scene wherein Viola attends Orsino while he is listening to Feste's song, was a sufficient evidence of the true inspiration of genius.*

This scene he fully describes in "Shakespeare on the Stage." While listening to the song 'O Mistress Mine' (which in Daly's stage version of the comedy was sung for Orsino, instead of 'Come Away, Death') she sat at the foot of the couch on which the lovelorn Duke was reclining, and at 'Journeys end in lovers meeting' she slowly turned her head toward that entranced sentimentalist, and bent her gaze upon him, with an expression of fond longing, supremely indicative of perfect love. This was a beautiful use of art.**

Of this same scene the writer in the Pall Mall Gazette, London, records, "It may be easy to make the masquerading girl's passion for the moody Duke seem unreal, or even unpleasant, a midsummer's madness, or an unbridled appetite.

** Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2, pp. 74-75
Miss Rehan made it seem at once natural and noble, tender and exalted, human and yet fanciful, earnest and yet always womanly. The scene in which she sits by the Duke's side and watches his face while he listens to the love song is one of the most perfect pieces of acting it has ever been our good fortune to witness. Her Viola stood almost motionless, with folded arms, but in the least turn of the head, in the slightest shade of shifting emotions on the expressive face, every feeling that stirred the girl's heart, every passionate thought that vexed her mind was revealed."

Of a conversation with the Duke, the critic of The Birmingham Daily Gazette says, "Anything more lyrically beautiful, more delicately suggestive of the longing of a fine nature enamored, than her speaking of the lines:

'She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek,"
could not be imagined. Nor is Miss Rehan's impersonation of Viola simply an interpretation of the surface meaning of Shakespeare's lines. She reads deeper, and gives us fine shades of sensibility that lie between the periods. Viola's love for Orsino--half-suppressed but unsuppressable --insinuated itself in byplay of such rare delicacy that it

* Winter: Ada Rehan, a Study, p. 187
seemed the language of natural passion rather than the effect of art; an impulse rather than a simulation.**

William Winter writes of her talk to the Duke, "In this Viola's replies to Orsino's questions about Cesario's love ('of your complexion; 'about your years, my lord') there was a delicious blending of roguishness and wistfulness.***

Of similar scenes between Orsino and Cesario the same critic gives this description, "A little of the temperament of Rosalind was infused into that of Viola. When she said, 'I am all the daughters of my father's house' her manner and the despairing sadness of her tone almost revealed her sex to the Duke. and, as Orsino turned toward her with a look of mingled surprise and inquiry, she, rapidly, confusedly, and also comically—added, 'a-a-and all the brothers, too'—thus obtaining a laugh instead of a tear. Those touches, slight but significant, indicated that the actress had formed an independent ideal of the part, and intended her personation to be in no wise deficient of the glitter of comedy." ***

"No less admirable were the scenes of playful mockery with Olivia," says the Pall Mall Gazette. The writer in the London Daily Chronicle records of these scenes, "Miss

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* Winter: Ada Rehan, a Study, pp. 191-192
** Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2., p. 74
*** Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 2. pp. 73-74
**** Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, p. 189
Rehan is to be applauded for upholding the poetry and wealth of imagination contained in *Twelfth Night* instead of dragging the story down to common place realism. She is neither amused nor surprised at Olivia's declaration of affection—her sympathy is kindly for one who is in somewhat similar straits to herself, and therefore in her rejection of the Countess there is nothing that is contemptuous, or wantonly cruel. As much a slave to the god of love as is the highborn lady to whom she has been sent, Viola regards her with pity and sisterly regard. This view of the character—the correct one—Miss Rehan brings out with grace, ease and consummate tact.**

Winter says of these scenes which he admires for the same reason, "The supreme beauty of the performance was its manifestation of the magnanimity which makes the character so noble as well as so lovely—Viola's generous, gentle, sympathetic consideration for Olivia, the woman beloved by the man to whom she is herself devoted. In Ada Rehan's denotement of that feature there was a felicity all her own."**

One more scene—the duel episode—is especially mentioned by the critics. Towse regrets that "in accordance with silly tradition she made it roaring farce;" but the *Pall Mall*
Gazette, London, contains this comment upon it: "The charming cowardice of Viola was represented without exaggeration. The first command of her powers which was characteristic of the whole performance was not for a moment last, in a situation where the temptation to overplay might well seem inviting."*

Some Critical Comments on Ada Behan's Viola

William Winter sees in this third Shakespearean representation proof of Miss Behan's artistic ability:

(1) "Her witchery in Viola did not consist in her action,—although that was appropriate, dignified, symmetrical, expressive, and winning,—but in her assumption and preservation of a sweet, resigned patience; not despairing, not lachrymose,—a gentle, wistful aspect and state of romantic melancholy, veiled but not concealed beneath an outward guise of buoyant, careless joy. The fine instinct with which she thus sieged and revealed the soul of Viola, together with the wildwood freedom and limpid fluency of her action and the air at once of sensuous allurement and spiritual loveliness with which she invested her ideal, again manifested, a poetic actress of the first order."*

The same writer sees in this embodiment revelations of powers not shown in Rosalind:

*Winter: Ada Behan, A Study 167
*Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V.3-46
"As Viola in *Twelfth Night*—a character as essentially delicate and elusive as Rosalind is strong and brilliant,—she revealed yet another side of her nature, wearing with spontaneous grace the gentle spell of wistful melancholy, ingenuous glee, and soft allurement."

The general effect of the embodiment impressed Winter as natural and spontaneous. He praises the simplicity of the portrayal:

"Miss Rohan in her embodiment of Viola, obeyed the fine artistic impulse to make no effort. Her performance was as natural and as sweet as the opening of the rose. She allowed the pensive tenderness and the sweet gravity which are in her nature to drift into her portraiture of the character and to express themselves honestly and simply. Her elocution was at its best,—conceding premeditation, and flowing, as the brook flows, with continuous music and spontaneous, accidental variety."

William Archer does not agree in this ascribed perfection of elocution, although he praises the personation highly. He feels it to be a bit retarded, and makes some picayunish criticisms as to the actress's syllabic perfection, but on the whole he praises the performance. He says: Lastly of Miss Rohan's Viola. It is a beautiful, a fascinating, a truly poetic creation—on the whole more pleasing, to my

*Ibid 318
*Ibid 45-46
own personal taste, than her Rosalind. Its one prevailing defect in slowness. Strange that one should have to say this of a performance of Miss Rehan's, but it gives all of Viola except her sparkle, her vivacity. A large exception, you may say; but until you have seen Miss Rehan you don't know what liberal compensation she presents in the shape of tenderness, delicacy, and quiet, subdued humour. At the same time, there is every reason why she should try to bring her achievement up to the point of perfection by hastening the movement of several passages. She has adopted a curious sort of psalmody in her treatment of verse. She exaggerates her pauses, and lengthens out her vowel sounds, caressingly, beautifully, but, as I cannot but think, immoderately. I first noticed this tendency to what I then called grandiloquence in her performance of Maid Marian in The Foresters. It is an error on the right side, and gives a peculiar, dreamy, languorous charm to many passages of her Viola; but an error it certainly is when carried to excess. Now and then, too, she misses what I may call syllabic perfection in the wording of her lines, baffling the ear, for example, by saying, 'I'm the man.' Her worst slip of this nature occurs in the very first lines of her part. Can anything be more beautiful than the echoing cadence of--

'And what should I do in Illyria?
   My brother, he is in Elysium.'
which Miss Rehan ruins by omitting the 'he'? But, after all possible deductions, this Viola remains a creation of indescribable beauty and charm—a thing to be seen, and never to be forgotten."*

Towse, again, is not enthusiastic about Miss Rehan's acting. He speaks unfavorably of her elocution and of her gracefulness—things for which she had been praised by many critics. "Many eloquent encomiums he writes were lavished upon the production of 'Twelfth Night' which Mr. Daly produced in 1893, and especially upon the Viola of Ada Rehan, I wish I could agree with them. The character of Viola, charged with the most delicate and fanciful sentiment, was outside the range of Ada Rehan, except in those phases of it denoted in the comic vein. Her delivery of verse, whether blank or rhymed, was always curiously monotonous and inexpressive. She was fairly successful in the soliloquy after her first interview with Olivia, and the duel scene—of which, in accordance with silly tradition, she made roaring farce—but in the sentimental and poetic interludes her droning sing-song robbed the lines of nearly all their poetic essence. She was lacking, moreover, in that refined and measured grace of gesture and action essential to illusion in any attempt to embody a conception so ethereal and free from earthly grossness."*

*Archer: Theatrical World for 1894 30-31
*Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre, 356-357
George Odell felt that the London success of "Twelfth Night" was largely due to the acting of the play: He says, "Ada Behan's Viola and James Lewis's Sir Tobey availed, more than all mechanical adjuncts, to set the piece forward on its long London career."*

Some Foreign Comments on Behan's Viola

"Twelfth Night" was first presented in London on January 8, 1894. It ran through one hundred and eleven performances and was the subject of much critical praise.

The St. James Gazette, London records the beauty and the subtly on the representation in highly complimentary terms: "Exquisitely tender, graceful and beautiful, she flits through the play like a bird across the summer sky. In every glance, in every movement, her love for the Duke finds an outlet. With what exquisite expression were the lines "She never told her love," etc., spoken by Miss Behan it is perhaps unnecessary to say, or with what perfect pathos the entire scene was played. Beautiful also was the action when, on receiving from the duke the chain intended for the countess, Viola raised it to her lips and reverently kissed it... But the real basis of Miss Behan's performance is tender and subdued womanliness. The whole picture is wonderfully vivid, and by its rare beauty appeals directly to the feelings of the audience."*

*Odell: Shakespeare from Bitterton to Irving, V.2.442
*Winter: Ada Behan, A Study 190-191
This weariness did not lower the conception of the character to prosy commonplace, for The London Daily Chronicle praises the loftiness of the ideal followed by Miss Réhan. "Miss Réhan is to be applauded for upholding the poetry and wealth of imagination contained in "Twelfth Night" instead of dragging the story down to commonplace realism."

The London Times gives this characterization the highest praise and feels the great power of the actress capable of such an embodiment. It contains this tribute: "The performance of "Twelfth Night," by Miss Ada Réhan and the other members of Mr. Daly's company enables Miss Réhan to return to the highest plane of her art, where she remains unrivalled. To her Katherine and her Rosalind, her Viola forms a charming companion picture—an ideal of womanly self-sacrifice and grace. Of the three Shakespearean impersonations which Miss Réhan has given us, it may be questioned, indeed, whether her Viola is not destined to leave the most pleasurable associations in the memory. A haunting picture is that which she presents of the love-lorn maid who "never told her love," and it is all the more enchanting from the tender and winning accents with which the actress is able to express the poetry of the conception. Important as it may be, in all the parts she voiced'or with such actresses as

*Ibid 190*
Madame Sarah Bernhardt and Miss Ada Rehan are gifted is never heard to greater advantage than in such chaste, sublimated, and sweetly feminine creations as Viola. Miss Rehan's voice counts for much in the effect produced by this performances; but no less touching is the purity and delicacy of her untold love which is less a passion than a poem. This performance confirms the impression that Miss Rehan's true line is Shakespearean comedy. There, at present, she stands alone.*

The London Telegraph also names Rehan's Viola with her Katherine and her Rosalind as representations which contributed to wide appreciation of Shakespeare. Of them we read: "Miss Rehan has given us three great and essentially womanly Shakespearean performances since she has been one of us—her Katherine, her Rosalind, her Viola! Who shall attempt to say which is the best? For ourselves, charmed as we have been, we refuse to be the arbiter. The last given is the best remembered, and Miss Rehan's Viola will be a memory that time will with great difficulty efface. These fine old plays fade and fade away from the stage. They depart and are seen no more. They are derided by such as have not the taste to appreciate them, or the grace to give them reverence, but they will live on and on, while poetry has a hearing on the English stage, and while managers so devoted to poetic art are found as Mr.

*Ibid 188-189
Augustin Daly, with Miss Ada Rehan at his right hand."

The London Saturday Review feels the romance and the beauty of the conception and the genius of the actress who portrayed it. "Romance is indeed the essence of Miss Rehan's reading of Viola. And it would be difficult to better the fine touches which Miss Rehan gives to the double intention—on the one hand devotion to Orsino, on the other a finely repressed jealousy of Olivia. It is not more in Miss Rehan's face than in her voice that she spectator reads the conflicting emotions which lead at last to so fair an end. The 'voice of gold' has somewhat to say to this. But the voice of gold, without inspiring genius, could not be supreme. And Miss Rehan has that voice and that genius."*

The Pall Mall Gazette, London calls this third Shakespearean success the greatest achieved by the actress. The critic defends his contention thus: "For in Viola, even more than in Rosalind, the desired success is difficult to seize. It is therefore, perhaps, Miss Rehan's greatest triumph. Her Viola stands by the side of her finest creations—beside her Katherine, her Rosalind; she has enriched our memory with one more ideal picture of a heroine of Shakespeare's comedy. Miss Rehan's Viola must certainly be declared equal to the finest work she has done; it is possible that it may be found better

*Ibid 189-190
*Ibid 189
than anything she has yet done. The simplicity, the passion, the melancholy, the humor all the varying qualities that are united to make Viola one of the most enchanting women that a great poet ever called to life, had their proportioned part in Miss Rehan's performance."*

The Theatre, on the other hand, does not agree that this embodiment should be called as great as that of Rosalind. He suggests, too, some faults in the reading of the lines, but still insists on the beauty of the portrayal:
"The one word for Miss Rehan's Viola is bewitching. Analyze her acting, and there would be much to take exception to. Her habit of playing so the house is destructive of illusion in fairy plays like this. Her tendency to recite speeches, in preference to speaking them, her undue deliberation and apparent resolve to get more emotional value out of a line, would have to be urged against her reading of Viola. But who cares to analyze so delightful a creation? One's instinct is to enjoy it and be glad, and it is good to indulge that instinct and enjoy its overmastering charm to the full. Her Viola is not her Rosalind, but it is very gentle, winning, and supremely lovable; and whether she be living on her effeminate beloved's smile, or suffering the extremes of comic terror, pitted against Sir Andrew.

*Ibid. 187
at all times she provides a delightful fare-ground—and moreover a poetical—in the exquisite pictures which Mr. Daly in "Twelfth Night" has happily discovered an excuse to compose.*

The Birmingham Daily Gazette declares this Viola was the outgrowth of thought and understanding, and amply fulfilled the earlier promise of the actress: "The hopes awakened by Miss Rohan's Rosalind were more than borne out by her Viola. It is she Viola formulated by the rummation and thought of generations, with the addition of something that is of the very essence and fibre of Miss Rehan's nature. The love-lorn ambassadors of love, the romantic youth feeding her flame with fond imagination, the timorous woman terrified at the sight of a sword: all these Miss Rehan was and more.... Nor is Miss Rehan's impersonation of the meaning of Shakespeare's lines. She reads deeper, and gives us fine shades of sensibility that lie between the periods."*

Conclusion

The appearance of Ada Rehan as Viola was anticipated with interest. When she did play the part her originality and intelligence were again marked and her reception was accordingly enthusiastic. Both in America and in England the part was repeated many times and always to appreciative audiences. In England it had over a hundred consecutive performances.

*Theatre N.S. 32-153 (March 1, 1894)
*Ibid 191-192
The descriptive passages about Rehan's Viola show that it resembled her Rosalind in womanliness. Her love for the sentimental Duke was so thinly veiled that at times her sex was almost revealed to him. Through subtle facial play and significant gestures she made apparent the adoration in which she held Orsino. She was truly woman in her sympathy for Olivia's plight, regarding it as serious and in no wise the subject for jest or slight. She brought out all of the humor of the part, not making of Viola a melancholy sentimentalist. Her duel with Sir Andrew showed feminine cowardice augmented in humorous effect by the picture of the timorous knight.

Miss Rehan made Viola a conception true and palpable. In doing this she avoided the temptation that is present here as in the case of Rosalind, to make the conception merely a picture of an ethereal abstraction.

The critical estimates of Rehan's Viola leads to the conclusion that although it was an outstanding interpretation, it was not so great as her Katherine or her Viola. William Winter says in this part she showed herself to be a poetic actress of the first order. George Odell feels that this interpretation was in a large part responsible for the London success of "Twelfth Night." William Archer declares it to be a picture of indescribable beauty and charm.
that will not be forgotten. *The Pall Mall Gazette* considers this part to be equal if not superior to Rehan's other great Shakespearean triumphs, and says that one scene with the Duke is one of the most perfect pieces of acting ever witnessed by that critic. *The London Saturday Review* writes that the actress had a voice of gold and inspiring genius. *The London Daily Chronicle* rejoices because the actress upheld the poetry and the beauty of the part. According to *The London Times* this interpretation returned Rehan to the highest plane of her art where she remained unrivalled as an interpreter of the women of Shakespeare's comedies. *The London Daily Telegraph* refused to state which of the three outstanding Shakespearean interpretations it considered to be the best. *The Birmingham Gazette* critic recognized the intelligence and depth of thought in the portrayal. *The Theatre* was captivated by the actress in the part, but found that the acting would not bear the closest critical scrutiny. J. Rankin Touse considers the part of Viola to have been outside the range of Rehan's powers and therefore not conducive to high praise.

The greatest impersonation of Viola between the time of Dorn Jordan and Adelaide Neilson was that of Ellen Tree. Later Rehan's interpretation was based, in part, upon that of Adelaide Neilson with whom she had appeared in the early days. She made a great success of the part but she did not
surpass Neilson. Since Rehan's time Julia Marlowe has played the role with success. No one of these actresses seems to have been preeminently superior to the others in the part.

In presenting Viola in "Twelfth Night," Ada Rehan showed for the third time that she was capable of originality of conception, distinctness of ideal, and firmness of execution. This interpretation gave another unquestioned proof of the calibre of Ada Rehan's genius.
Chapter VI
REHAN'S INTERPRETATIONS OF OTHER
SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS

From her first appearance upon the stage, Ada Rehan approached the heroines of Shakespeare with interest and hard study. She had played well several of these characters before her engagement with Augustin Daly, having appeared as Ophelia to Booth's Hamlet, Lady Anne to McCullough's Richard III, Olivia with Neilson's Viola, Desdemona, Cordelia, and Celia. Her final repertory contained sixteen of the women of Shakespeare. Three of the most famous she made outstanding, and all of them she played with understanding, depending on her own research for her conception of the part and displaying an unusual amount of original genius in the result. It is this phase of Miss Rehan's achievement that Forrest Izard writes this paragraph in "Heroines of the Modern Stage."

"Her Rosalind, by all accounts, was probably the best, possibly excepting Adelaide Neilson's, that the American stage has seen; her Viola manifested a portly actress of the first order. Add to those her Beatrice, her Mrs. Ford, her Helena, her Portia, not to speak of the half dozen heroines of Shakespeare she played before she joined Daly's company, and you have a well
rounded accomplishment as a Shakespearean actress, which, if she had done nothing else, would have won her fame."*

Ada Rehan as Portia

Ada Rehan first appeared as Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" on November 19, 1898. The part was continued until January 3, 1899. She never played this part abroad. In the role she challenges comparison with Modjeska and Terry. Her conception of this character is given in "Shakespeare on the Stage".*

"Portia is unselfish. She thinks of others and cares for them. It was one of the felicities of Ada Rehan's impersonation that it showed a solid sense of duty to be the basis of Portia's nature, and indicated her capability of being sufficient to herself, and should adversity of fortune require the sacrifice, of living without love. The sacrifice, happily, is not required. Portia loves and she is beloved, and thus she was shown in this portrayal,—not less the inspiration of love than the ecstatic personification of it."*  

* Izard; Heroines of the Modern Stage, 219  
* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 1, 216
Winter briefly describes the dress of the part, saying: "Ada Rehan's appearance, in Portia's early scenes, was exceptionally beautiful. She wore pearl gray raiment, exceedingly becoming to her tall, lovely figure, and her hair was golden red. Later the dark robe of the Doctor of Laws was worn with perfect grace."

Norman Hapgood gives a vivid impression of the humor in Portia's entrance, in his "The Stage in America," "Miss Rehan's entrance was saved for the second act. The curtain rose... Miss Rehan did the humor part of it at least fully enough. Those who think of Portia as dignified and serene, half melancholy with all her intellectual humor, quiet, poised, affectionate, needed to take a new view of her, but Miss Rehan brought out the fun with all her unction. Nerissa was driven to the wall, and it was not a conversation between the two so much as an exhibition of the abilities of the star."

The same writer says of the casket scenes, "The third act gave the first two casket scenes, well set, judiciously staged, and well acted by Miss Rehan, though without the touch of seriousness that the danger might suggest."

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V, 1, 216
** Hapgood: The Stage in America, 158-159, (1899-1900)
*** Ibid: 159
William winter seems to have felt that Miss Rehan gave a deeper, more dignified picture than Hapgood did: "Her Portia could be coldly dignified, but also she could be meek and gentle; she could be radiantly merry, and she could be fervently passionate. There was, in her temperament, a constitutional winning sweetness that not her most sparkling raillery could wholly conceal, and in the archness of her innocent mischief,—as when she said, in the first colloquy with Nerissa, I know it is a sin to be a mocker,—an exquisite charm. During the Casket Scenes she expressed a tremulous solicitude, peculiarly animative of sympathy, and her simulation of delight, combined with feminine delicacy and a maidenly restraint of ardor, in Portia's self-surrender to the fortunate Bassanio, was supremely artistic. The reply to Nerissa's reminiscent remark about the Venetian scholar and soldier who came in company with the Marquis of Montferrat, 'Yes, yes, it was Bassanio,' being spoken with eager joy, which instantly became reserve, tinged with a delicate self-consciousness, when she added, 'As I think—so was he called,' and turned to sweet gravity as she concluded, 'I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.'*

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 1, 214-215
The interpretation of the trial scene showed originality of conception; a characteristic that her major Shakespearean representation had revealed. "Her demeanor in the Trial Scene, when Portia meets Shylock was completely surcharged with goodness. She met him on the ground of their common humanity, not believing possible such wickedness of purpose, such diabolical cruelty, as had been imputed him. The reminder, 'Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee', was spoken very gently, confidentially, in a way to appease the hardest of angry men. When the test failed her indignation made her implacable, and from that point to the end she was the rigorous administrator of the exact law, committing the cruel Jew to his ruinous doom without one moment of compunction. It is especially memorable that this actress was the first and the only Portia of our time, or as far as stage history shows, of any time, who when appearing before the 'strict court of Venice', evinced and consistently maintained the anxiety not to say the solemnity inseparable from the situation and feelings of a person who is to adjudicate upon a question of wealth or ruin and life or death." *

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage. V 1 - 216
Again, we find Hapgood commenting upon the Trial Scene, comparing it with Miss Terry's and admitting its originality and its power:

"The trial act was in some respects high art. Miss Rehan's conception was original, dignified, strong, and it was carried out with a master hand. Even with Miss Terry's beautiful simplicity, matchless elocution, and quiet, melting poetry fixed forever in the memory, it was no less possible to admire Miss Rehan highly. Her reading was more modern, less exquisitely adapted to the spirit of the play, but still noble and powerful. There was more that was threatening, less that was pleading. The 'quality of mercy' speech was in her handling an indignant portent and a warning, not a plea to melt a stone, but it was given with the authority of a noble art. If Miss Rehan had been a shade less kittenish in the early scenes, and a little less the star, it might have been one of the roles to go down in glory to posterity." *

In his general criticism of the part, Hapgood recognised it as fundamentally a success, although he did not care for the Daly production of the play:

"From the pitiful corpse which resulted, in this production of *The Merchant of Venice*, the genius of Miss

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* Hapgood: The Stage in America. 160
* Ibid. 161-162
Ada Behan emerged triumphant. I have named certain faults, all to be summed up in an over-emphasis of her natural gifts of facial expression and voice, and a constant unfairness to her fellow-actors; but through all these errors of vanity and ignorance her talent shone forth and gave us a Portia that was all her own, full of original conception, force, and beauty." * 

Winter gives his impression of the performance as a whole in these words:

"Ada Behan, as Portia, gave a performance combining innate loveliness of spirit with a fine aristocracy of demeanor. It happens that among all Shakespeare's heroines Portia, in the affection of that actress, has ever been the favorite. She merged herself in the character; she was in person, the dazzling white and golden beauty whom the poet has drawn; and in her acting she diffused the double charm of exquisite grace and deep feeling. The resemblance of Portia to Rosalind was discerned and indicated by her, but also she discerned and indicated the difference between them. . . . Ada Behan, who had given the best representation of Rosalind that has been seen in our time, evinced, in her acting of Portia, an exact discrimination between the qualities

* Ibid. 161-162
of the two characters, emphasizing the intellectual element in the lade of Belmont, while freely and fully depicting the romantic, exalted, tremulous and various conditions and emotions appurtenant to love." *

Finally, I wish to quote Joseph F. Daly's transcription of the criticism of Miss Rehan's Portia by a famous Chinese actor:

"In connection with the performance it is interesting to read in the Herald of December 25, 1898, an account of the visit to Daly's of the actor who impersonated female parts in The Chinese Theatre. He was Foo Chong Mai, the descendant of three centuries of great actors, and he was accompanied by the manager of the Chinese company and two of the other players. He was intensely interested in seeing a woman's part played by a woman. It was the first time he had witnessed a foreign drama. After the fall of the curtain on the first act he said: 'Here is the best that the world can give! Better than this is only in the realms of the Gods!' He found simplicity, naturalness, and sincerity the most striking features of the performance. . . .

'But,' he adds, if the test of a great play is the ability to hold the observer even though he is a

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, v.1, 213-214
stranger to the language, "The Merchant of Venice" as interpreted by Miss Rehan is supreme. Therein lay the charming actress' power, in my eyes - the ease with which she possessed me with the spirit of the drama and held me with it spellbound for two hours, even though I was a stranger to the letter. Her first words had a peculiar effect upon me, like that of the music of some celestial instrument, far reaching as the temple gong at midnight, yet rich, mellow and of inexpressible sweetness. I never knew before what roll and rhythm and fire there is in the cadence of your language, and that voice was a revelation. It was all the more amazing when upon meeting Miss Rehan afterwards behind the scene, where Dr. Daly accorded myself and others of my support the honor of a presentation, I discovered that this supernatural voice was really the natural - that it was not, as with us, a Beyond voice brought to perfection for stage uses only, and never used save on these occasions. It was so spontaneous, so unforced. It was like Miss Rehan's acting, wherein she never was so sublime but that great reservations of power lay behind it. It was all so perfectly easy that it was easily perfect. And so joyous! She exhaled happiness even in the dread trial scene. It was there that I mused with Kea-Paow in the folk legend: 'with a smile like that may not a
woman overthrow a city; and wish another a Kingdom?"

"After seeing Miss Rehan in the last act never again will I believe your national costume inartistic. That superb gown of royal splendor, warm with such distinction and charm, challenges our rarest creations of many hues, mellowed in tone with age, and embroidered with gold and silver in designs of the imperial dragon, flowers and birds." *

Although Miss Rehan's general portrayal of Portia called forth favorable press comment, it was her originality in the Trial Scene that made the personation really worthy of remembrance. She showed upon her entrance that she had no conception of such wickedness as that possessed by Shylock, her Mercy Speech was full of indignation and dangerous portent, and the whole scene showed the anxiety naturally associated with her responsibility in the Trial. This was evidently the outgrowth of study upon the character and personality of the Shakespearean heroine that was ever Miss Rehan's favorite, and it was worthy to be established as a precedent to be followed by late Portias.

* Daly: Life of Augustine Daly 632
Ada Rehan as Beatrice

On the day of Ada Rehan's first appearance as Beatrice in "Much Ado about Nothing," December 23, 1896, the New York Daily Tribune contained this notice: "Miss Rehan's advent as Beatrice marks a brave step in her career, and it will inspire much public interest."* On the following day the same paper printed this appreciative comment on the first performance.

"In the production of 'Much Ado About Nothing,' which was ably and brilliantly accomplished last night at Daly's Theatre was the impersonation of Beatrice by Ada Rehan. It might well have been expected that this accomplished actress, with all her resources of vitality and all her wealth of tender feeling, would succeed in this character,—compounded as it is of light and joy, piquant and tantalizing mischief, noble passion, and the ardent fidelity of an affectionate heart. She had made Katherine an image of truth, to be remembered and treasured as long as any tradition of the stage shall prevail, and,—much as the two characters differ,—in Katherine there is the potentiality of Beatrice. She more than justifies the liveliest anticipation. Her ideal was true, her expression of it firm, and splendid, and the amendment, taking its place among the ripest and happiest of her works, was not less indicative of the clarity and

power of her mind than of the affluence of her animal spirits, the delicacy of her woman-like intuition, and the exceeding grace of her dramatic method. In personal distinction, in prodigality of glee, in mental correspondence, and in contiguity of impersonation this performance is extraordinary. It will no eclipse the glittering image of Beatrice that Ellen Terry has set, for all time, in the pantheon of memory; but it will be named after the superb achievement, and it will fill a niche in the same eteely gallery of proud renown."*

Joseph Frances Daly says Rehan based her conception upon the descriptive lines "disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes" but yet it showed that she had been "born under a merry, dancing star."* A similar comment is made in a more verbose comment in which the Tribune describes Beatrice as Miss Rehan conceived her:

"Beatrice is not one of the 'milky rabble'; but underneath the brilliant exterior, her gay, imperious, defiant manner ('Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes'), she is one of the most affectionate and generous of women. He has long been secretly inclined toward Benedick, as Benedick, in turn, has secretly been inclined toward her, and, therefore, she is readily awakened, and by a simple stratagen, to the knowledge of

*Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 604

her love. That is the ideal interpreted and conveyed by Miss Rehan, who has had the wisdom to apprehend the essential soul of Beatrice, not entirely, or even considerably, from her relation to Benedick, but largely from her relation to Hero."

Before the performance of "Much Ado About Nothing," Horace Howard Furness sent Miss Rehan a letter of counsel concerning the interpretation of one scene, showing in the letter his high regard for the art of the actress:

"Dear Ada Rehan,

"A letter from him whom Mrs. Gilbert (bless her) calls The Master tells me that you are to act Beatrice, and it delights me. A delight which is purely unselfish—for even if I see you therein, which is doubtful, I cannot hear a single word. Therefore I am all the more anxious for Beatrice's sake that you should not malign her and Benedick by wrongly emphasizing one little phrase, which, so far as I know is universally misunderstood. 'Tis in the scene in the church when Beatrice and Benedick are left alone after poor Hero has been led away by the Friar—'It is a man's office—not yours.' This is generally accepted as bitter sarcasm, which I think is utterly wrong.

"It is really a confession of love, and should be

uttered sadly—almost tenderly. Had it been sarcasm, Benedick would have been stung to the quick—whereas it elicits almost a declaration of love on his part.

"It was a man's duty inasmuch as the quarrel should be taken up by a brother—or a cousin, or a very near relation. The privilege of that relationship Benedick had not then, but were he Beatrice's accepted lover—then he might claim the right of vindicating Hero's honor. And in Beatrice's words there should be heard the faint echo of an exquisite confession of love.

"Of course I am gabbing like a tinker to one whose thorough Dramatic instinct had detected all this at once, but I tremble lest this instinct should be overborne by tradition, and hence the impertinence of thus writing this up and remember only that I am,

"Yours full of admiration and regard,

11 Oct. 96

Horace Howard Furness."*

Although I found no comment upon the reading of this particular line, Miss Rehan's success in this Church Scene is recorded in the New York Daily Tribune:

"Miss Rehan had carried the scenes of the 'merry was' against Benedick with that profuse and exhilarating vivacity in which she excels; but it was in the church

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 605.
scene that she crowned her triumph, by a magnificent outburst of passion, not turbulent, nor combative, not hysterical, but that of a woman's outraged mind and suffering heart, - which, while it impelled the dramatic action swiftly to a brilliant climax, also operated to illumine the whole character and disclose it as intrinsically the soul of woman-like virtue and honor. The applause of the audience broke forth with ardent vehemence, at that point, and ratified and signalized her victory."

John Rankin Towe is never enthusiastic over Miss Rehan's acting. Of her Beatrice he says:

"If Miss Rehan had learned the secrets of this old school, her Beatrice would not have been so markedly deficient in the air of personal distinction naturally associated with the brilliant Lady Disdain. Her impersonation, although rightly spirited, was somewhat over-robust and broad in humor. It was, in a manner, a replica of her Lady Teazle. Beatrice stands upon a much higher intellectual plane, and her wit is of a keener and higher order. Not that Miss Rehan failed to give emphasis to her lines; on the contrary, in her eagerness to make the most of every point, she delivered her thrusts with a deliberation and serious intent which almost conveyed a suggestion of malignity, entirely

inconsistent with the character. Be trice was half in love with her antagonist when she rated him most sharply. In the church scene, Miss Rehan won her audience by a fine display of honest womanly indignation, but she never really 'got into the skin' of Be trice."

Although her success in the part was not comparable with other Shakespearean achievements, Miss Rehan's Beatrice was worthy of attention and consideration.

Ada Rehan as Mrs. Ford.

"Another Shakespearean character in which she subject of this essay proved proficient and charming is Mrs. Ford, in The Merry Wives of Windsor." This role was played by Miss Rehan from January 14, 1898, she appeared for a second time in the part. Her performance this time was much improved."

Mr. Winter describes the actress's ideal of Mrs. Ford:

"The right personification of Mrs. Ford involves innate purity and spontaneous, univocal moral worth, combined with a buoyant spirit of frolicsome mischief, and an arch, demure, piquant manner. Miss Rehan entered fully into the spirit of the part and flashed through the piece like a sunbeam. The reality of that embodiment was especially vital."

* Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 361
** Winter: Shadows of the Stage V. 2, 265.
*** Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 3 404.
as in Sylvia, Miss Rehan presented a woman in whom an exuberant and sportive animal life transcends all other attributes. And, indeed, one way or another, subject to various modifications, that element enters into all of her comedy assumptions, particularly the blooming damsels and spirited widows of the comedy of today."

The first report of the personation in the New York Daily Tribune contains this paragraph; witnessing this exuberance of spirit:

"Mr. Aly's production of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' effected last night at his theatre, in the presence of a great and delighted crowd of spectators that filled every part of the house, has been accomplished in a spirit of entire sympathy with the purpose and tone of the comedy....... Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page were played by Miss Rehan and Miss Dreher; and these sprightly and sparkling ladies promoted the mischief with a delightful eagerness and most contagious merriment and dashed through their sportive scenes with jubilant enthusiasm. The reading of the letters had a particularly brilliant effect. Miss Rehan was the more coquettish and dashing of the two performers; but Miss Dreher marked in a judicious way the riper experience

* Winter: Shadows of the Stage, V. 2-55- 256.
and superior maturity which properly appertains to Mrs. Page."*

Mr. Winter wrote a general criticism of the Mrs. Ford of Ada Rehan as given in 1886 and in 1898:

"Ada Rehan's personation of Mistress Ford was, necessarily, one of the subsidiary performances of her brilliant career...... The character of Mistress Ford being, as it is, based upon intrinsic goodness, fine animal spirits, a buoyant temperament, and eager aptitude for piquant mischief and banter, was easy of representation for Miss Rehan, and she carried it with delightful ease and exhilarating humor, - speaking the words with arch significance and limpid fluency, and inspiriting the action with a continuous flood of sunshine and merriment. She was, in seeming as well as in fact, too young (twenty-six) for the part, when first she played it (1886), and though she and Miss Dreher (also then too young), as Mistress Page, dashed through the sportive scenes with jubilant enthusiasm, promoting mischief with delightful eagerness and contagious merriment, their proceedings lacked sense of conviction. Miss Rehan's performance was much improved when repeated

in 1898, but it was, at best, merely a passing incident."

This declaration is born out by the fact that it was the beauty of the women and of the effect in general that impressed Brander Matthews:

"Beautiful were both the Merry Wives and beautiful was sweet Anne Page - indeed I do not think I ever saw three prettier women on the stage together than Miss Rehan, Miss Dreher and Miss Kingdon. Beautiful too were the costumes and the scenery, especially the first act."**

Towse says that Shakespeare "never would have suspected that these dazzling young beauties, in their silks and laces and sparkling gems, were those noted gossips, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, whom Fat Jack himself, in a letter of courtship, was compelled to admit were neither beautiful nor young."***

Beautiful, mischievous, and spirited was this Mrs. Ford, but though she was charming and interesting, she did not conform to the demands of the text, and therefore could not be called true of great.

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 3-404.
** Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 396
*** Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 345-346
Ada Rehan as Helena

Miss Rehan played Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream in America, and also in London in 1895 where it "made a distinct hit."* In this difficult role Miss Rehan again showed her brilliancy, although it never ranked among her outstanding impersonations.

In "The Wallet of Time" the ideal of the part as interpreted by Miss Rehan is defined:

"In Helena, who is not less noble than affectionate, the violent infatuation of love for Demetrius, struggling against self-esteem and prevailing over reticence of character and maidenly reserve, creates a state of grieved passion not less afflicting to its victim than touching to her sympathetic observers. Miss Rehan struck that note with perfect precision, and it is seldom that the stage presents such a form of gentle, forlorn, and winning sweetness and beauty as the Helena of that actress was, when seeking to break away from the wrangle of lovers in the forest, dejected and submissive, asking only that she might be allowed to go, and saying in the soft accents of hopeless sorrow, 'You see how simple and how fond I am!'"*

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly 583.
* Winter: The Wallet of Time V. 2-151-152
In "Shakespeare on the Stage," the same winter gives us a conception of the beauty and the difficulty of this part:

"The group of these four fowlers, when she parts were acted by Ada Rehan, Virginia Dreher, John Drew, and Otis Skinner, made a romantic picture, much enjoyed and not to be forgotten, in which the strength, freshness, and grace of young manhood vied with the rosy bloom of ripe, sensuous, dazzling beauty,—the most brilliant figure being Miss Rehan, as Helena, regal and lovely in a Grecian robe of delicate salmon pink. The part is exceptionally exacting, and only a charming personality can endear it to the auditor."*

Of Rehan's Helena, William Archer records:

"Where Mr. Daly gives her unmutilated lines to speak Miss Rehan, as Helena, croons her verses very beautifully. She makes a noble and a memorable figure. The one thing I regret in her performance is a sudden lapse into a school-girl Americanism at the line 'Nor longer stay in your curst company.'*

Once more we find Towse giving praise to this actress but grudgingly:

* Winter: Shakespeare on the Stage, V. 3-273-274
* Archer: Theatrical World of 895-252.
"Miss Rehan was a charming Helena to the eye, but was unimpressive in the serious passages, while her reading of the blank verse was monotonous. It was not until her quarrel with Hermia that she did herself justice. This she made delicious with a dash of her characteristic comedy."

The beauty and sweetness of Helena seem to have been the earmarks of this embodiment in which the actress successfully touched the sources of tenderness and of mirth.

**Ada Rehan as Julia**

Ada Rehan first took the part of Julia in "Two Gentlemen of Verona" in 1895. She presented it with a spontaneity and smoothness that showed perfect mastery of the character.

William Winter writes at length of this personation:

The thing that is perfectly well done seems always easy to do. The finer the quality of art, the more spontaneous appears to be its method. Ada Rehan's impersonation of Shakespeare's Julia was definite in design, distinct in form, flexible in movement, sustained with exquisite repose and grace, and marked with the ease of spontaneity. That completeness of identification was the close denotement of her genius, her intuition, her

* Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 349-350.
conscientious study, her facility of constructive art, and her versatile executive power. The 'fine issue,' as Shakespeare said, is the sign of the spirit that is 'finely touched.' ..... Miss Hehan, without being in the least intrusive filled the play with her presence. Not a single detail was over-wrought. The part was never thrust into undue prominence. The spirit of the actress was that which not advances but retires. Yet the effect was that of a spacious and splendid nature,—of opulent womanhood, beauty, and truth, a delicious, enchanting personality pervaded the piece. Julia conquers by condition rather than deed—by what she is rather than by what she does. Miss Hehan made her very gentle, even in her raillery, and so mild in temperament and ingenuous in manner that her assumption of petulance could not conceal the drift of her affection or the warmth of her heart. The action toward the love-letter and the resolve to follow the vagrant Proteus were purely woman-like, and the soliloquy upon Silvia's portrait was spoken with a depth of passion and a wistful tenderness that carried it directly to the Heart."

This same critic declares, moreover, that:

* Winter: Shadows of the Stage V. 3-315-316.*
"No stronger proof of her superiority as an actress could be afforded than her performance of Shakespeare's Julia. She has acted supremely well in greater characters, but in those greater characters there are wider opportunities. It is easier to succeed with Rosalind than with Julia."

"Ada Hehan's Julia," says Towsle, "like her Viola, exercised the personal fascination of the actress."* Miss Hehan first appeared in this part in February 25, 1895. The succeeding summer when "Two Gentlemen of Verona" was given in England.

"Miss Hehan's Julia is a charming performance which would have been more charming still had she had Shakespeare's character instead of Mr. Daly's to study and realize. Miss Hehan is coming more and more to abound in her own sense, or in other words, is lapsing into a sort of peculiar and seductive staginess. This is no doubt inevitable in an actress of her personality and temperament. I record the fact I do not reproach her with it. She speaks her verse, for the most part, delightfully, though she now and then baffles the ear with inarticulate interjections, and her pleasing is not always perfect."*

* Towsle: Sixty Years of the Theatre 359

* Archer: Theatrical orld for 1895 236-237.
Winter writes of "Two Gentlemen of Verona: "there were many merits in Augustin Daly's sumptuous revival of Shakespeare's neglected comedy, but the chief glory of it was Miss Rehan's poetic personality, which animated and used all its scattered charms into one ideal of womanlike loveliness and grace."*

Ada Rehan as the Princess of France

Daly's production of "Love's Labor's Lost" held the New York stage for two weeks only from March 29 till April 11, 1891. It was produced in a few other cities on the usual tour preceding the trip abroad. In "Ada Rehan, A Study," Winter leaves this record of the role of The Princess of France as assumed by Miss Rehan:

"The Princess of France, in "Love's Labor's Lost," is not the best, although the chief of the female characters in that juvenile yet remarkable Shakespearean comedy, but it is one that requires a royal distinction of manner combined with the enchantment of woman's beauty; and with those essential attributes it was invested by Ada Rehan...

Ada Rehan dressed the Princess in a garb of appropriate opulence; bore the state of royalty with gentle dignity; spoke the playful lines with a winning piquancy of manner;

* Ibid 239-240

and in particular, suffused the part with a certain glamour of enticement which made it prominent among its fellows, and readily explained and justified the sudden capitulation of the young King of Navarre. Not many pictures have been shown upon the stage that were comparable with the picture made by Ada Behn's princess and her ladies, sitting upon the lake shore and listening to the music, 'If love make me foresworn!'*.  

*Ada Behan as Miranda*

Augustin Daly made one other Shakespearean revival of interest- the revival of The Tempest. Winter gives the only description I found of Ada Rehan as Miranda:

"On April 6, 1897, at his theatre in New York, Mr. Daly produced "The tempest." Miss Rehan was then resting but on April 19 she reappeared and impersonated Miranda—giving a performance at once delicious to the senses and noble to the mind. In a spiritual point of view the predominant quality of Miranda is innocence, but physically she must fill the ideal of a beautiful woman. Miss Rehan removed the character from insipidity and made it an image of natural happiness. A simple manner was consistently preserved, and the portial language was spoken with delicious purity of articulation and with exquisite grace. An intermittent touch of seeming involuntary playfulness made the embodiment piquant with a young girl's joy. In

Miss Rehan's treatment of "Miranda's first prospect of Ferdinand, in her frank consent to be his wife, and in her rapture of wonder at the first sight of Alonzo, Sebastian, and the rest of the nobles, ingenuous directness and bland, innocent, open exultation—the same tantalizing, bewitching quality, frankly humorous in its effect, which in recent years has composed the entire character of Golataea, and given to it a theatrical success—was the vitalizing attribute. Simplicity, the lovely crown of all art, has not at any time been more comically exemplified than by this rare actress, in this most exacting trial of her professional resources and elemental power. The character of Miranda is perhaps more a dream than a fact, and more a passive image than an active personality; but it requires the intuition of genius for its perception together with a rare nobility of physical womanhood, for its adequate embodiment. The stage records show Miss Rehan in sixteen of the women of Shakespeare. In some of them—such as Katherine, Rosalind, and Viola—she has shown more power and exerted a greater enchantment; in no one of them has she been more true than in Miranda."


Her Katherine, her Rosalind, and her Viola were placed beside those of the great Shakespearean interpretations of the century, by many of her contemporary critics.

George Bernard Shaw writes his impression of the actress:

"The drama, with all its heroines levelled up to a universal Ada Rohan, has seemed no such dreary prospect to me; and her voice, compared to Sarah Bernhardt's voix dor, has been as all the sounds of the woodland to the clinking of twenty-franc pieces...... Her treatment of Shakespearean verse is delightful after the mechanical intoning of Sarah Bernhardt. She gives us beauty of
tone, grace of measure, delicacy of articulation; in short, all the technical qualities of verse music along with the rich feelings and fine intelligence without which those technical qualities would soon become monotonous. When she is at her best, the music melts in the caress of the emotion it expresses, and thus completes the conditions necessary for obtaining Shakespeare effects in Shakespeare's way."

The importance of Miss Rohan's Shakespearean accomplishment is told in William Winter's words. He speaks first of Katherine, Rosalind, and Viola:

"Seldom in stage experience has it been reserved for the same actress to be victorious in presenting characters so essentially unlike as those three of the women of Shakespeare. She also impersonated the frolicsome Mrs. Ford, in The Merry Wives of Windsor, the sparkling Princess of Love's Labor's Lost, and the passionate, gentle forlorn Helena of A Midsummer Night's Dream....... To have made each of these figures distinct to have interpreted each character, making it no less charming than clear, and to have spoken the lovely language of Shakespeare in tones that were soothing to

* Literary Digest V. 52-289 (1916)
hear and that are precious to remember, is to have gained a laurel that cannot fade, and to have been a blessing that will always be remembered.*

The characteristic that gives Miss Rehan the greatest claim to remembrance as a representative in Shakespearean comedy was, it seems to me, her originality. Although she understood and gave true consideration to precedent and to stage tradition, it was to her own clear understanding that she went for her ideals. In every case the result was the presentation of a living woman and that is the reason that her characters caught and held the interest of the public and of critics. For the first time in stage history Katherine seemed a plausible and a worthwhile woman. She dared to depart from recognized interpretation when she conceived Rosalind as a woman of realms terrestrial. Her picture of Viola, although full of imagination and portry, was essentially womanly. In the same way each of her lesser portrayals was significant because it made the heroine a woman in whom the audience might feel a sincere interest. Through her originality then, Miss Rehan gave to the women of Shakespeare a

* Winters Shadows of the Stage, V. 3-318-319.
vitality with which they have seldom been imbued.

William Winter tells us that Rehan's Portia was the first to maintain the natural anxiety of such a scene as that of the Trial. Norman Hopgood declares that had the actress been more dignified in the first scenes the interpretation would have gone down to posterity. Winter also says that Rehan's Beatrice, though it did not eclipse Terry's, will long be remembered close after that impersonation. Towse writes that she never lived that part of Beatrice. Rehan's Mrs. Ford, although sprightly and full of vivacity, was, according to Winter, merely a passing incident in her career. Towse says that Shakespeare never would have recognized his creation. Matthews was attracted by the beauty of the actress in the part—an attribute not required of an actress in the role of Mrs. Ford. Both Archer and Winter record the attractiveness of Ada Rehan's Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." As Julia in "Two Gentlemen of Verona," as The Princess of France in "Love's Labor's Lost," and as Miranda in "The Tempest" she gave understanding interpretations of these lesser Shakespearean women.

As a Shakespearean actress alone, Ada Rehan gave proof of her right to remembrance in Theatrical history.
Chapter VII

Rehan's Interpretations in Old Comedies

Ada Rehan, as we have seen, accorded high rank as a Shakespearean Actress. In another field of equal difficulty she attained success. This was the field of Old Comedy. "No actress," writes William Winter, "has a happier faculty or a more flexible method of infusing herself into the old forms." Moreover, he says at another place, "For many a day the standard of dramatic art that she erected in Shakespeare's Rosalind and in Farquhar's Oriana, in Lady Teazle, Peggy Thrift and Letitia Hardy will maintain itself with inexorable authority upon the Stage." **"It was in this field of Old Comedy that Ada Rehan "not only preserved but bettered the brilliant traditions of Peg Woffington and Dora Jordan." ***

Ada Rehan as Hypolita

The first old comedy part in which Ada Rehan appeared was Hypolita in Colleen Gibber's "She Would and She Would Not"

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* Winter: Shadows of the Stage v.2 --242
** Winter: The Wallet of Time v.2 160
*** Winter: Vagrant Memories p.241
It was produced on January 15, 1883. J. F. Daly records of that performance, "Miss Rehan's tall and slender figure and her touch of bravado were well suited to the adventurous Hypolita, disguised in cavalier's dress, in pursuit of her discarded lover; and Mr. Drew's Don Philip, perplexed and harassed by that designing young person, now indignant, now puzzled, now quizzical, was forcible and picturesque." * He also says that Miss Rehan was the first actress since Mrs. Scott-Siddons that Daly had found who could play the part.

In 1886 "She Would and She Would Not" was presented both at home and abroad. In England it was the hit of the season;** and in Germany the critics "found the acting a revelation."* At home, Miss Rehan's acting was characterized as "piquant and full of sparkle."*** Winter says of it: "No one on the American stage, since the halcyon days of Mrs. Barrow and Mrs. Wood, has approximated to her brilliancy of expression of the gay audacity and elegant insolence of Hypolita, when masquerading as Don Philip, and denouncing him as an imposter in the home of Don Manuel." ****

Ada Rehan as Lady Teazle

Miss Rehan's Lady Teazle in Sheridan's "The School

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* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly pp. 356-357
** Ibid p. 376
*** New York Daily Tribune, Bun., Feb. 14, 1886
**** Daly: Life of Augustin Daly p. 500
for Scandal" is of more interest than her first old comedy characters.

"On January 20, 1891, the curtain rose upon what was destined to be a companion piece to Daly's Brilliant Shakespearian revivals." The play was repeated fifty times this season.

Both Daly and Winter declare Miss Rehan's conception of the character to have been based upon that followed by Dora Jordan. Of this ideal, Daly writes, "Lady Teazle—the female role which stands out most prominently in English comedy—is a superstructure of light follies built upon solid ground. Daring to the very brink of danger, but absolutely confident in herself, she could play with the schemes of the profligate as easily as she did with the fears of her husband and emerge from every ordeal leaving a conviction of her honesty even in the heart of the depraved. A natural solid virtue showed through the glaze of fashion. That was Mrs. Jordan's conception and it was Miss Rehan's.

Mr. Winter tells us that "Dora Jordan, who followed Elizabeth Farren, depicted her as a tantalizing compound of affectation and nature; the robes and the manner were artificial; but the brown cheeks, the cherry lips, and the mischievous laughter, and the rustic freedom of the country girl were deliciously perceptible through the customs, airs, and trappings of fashion. This would seem to be the right method of playing the part, and this was the method pursued
by Ada Rehan.*

I found no definite description of Miss Rehan's costuming in this character, but Winter tells us that "No previous representative of the part, upon the American stage, has dressed it so richly as it was dressed by Ada Rehan."*

Of the early scenes as played by this actress, the same critic says: "In the scene of the wheedling of Sir Peter, and in the scene of the ensuing quarrel, Miss Rehan passed with superlative skill from enticing blandishment to petulant impatience, and then to open revolt and satirical mockery. That famous episode has not been better filled by anybody."**

Of these scenes Towse says, "In her quarrel with Sir Peter she adopted the methods of low comedy, descending almost to the level of Jenny O' Jones. Her 'country girl' was too much in evidence." This critic seldom agrees with those who praise this actress.

In the book, "Ada Rehan, A Study," William Winter pictures her screen-scene:

"Her impersonation of Lady Teazle pleased by its brilliancy, but it was her noble dignity and tender grief, at the close of the screen-scene, that made the performance deeply impressive, and commended it to an exceptional place in remembrance. She embodied Lady Teazle as a woman

*Daly: Life of Augustus Daly, 500
*Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, 123-124
*Touse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 354-355
of self-respecting mind and tender heart—a sweet woman deeply touched and sharply wounded with a sense of misconduct and shame. The moral nature of the thoughtless young wife is aroused to the knowledge of duty, and she perceives her ingratitude and perverse unkindness, and she suffers in a spirit of profound contrition. Ada Rehan was, at the supreme moment, natural, simple, intense; an image of honest sorrow and gentle pathos, and her portrayal of Lady Teazle is rightly described as womanlike, true, vivacious, fascinating with a buoyant ripple of enticing levity in the lighter scenes, treated throughout with a subtle perception of the author's meaning, and made symmetrical and distinctive with the unerring skill of trained dramatic art."

Daly quotes a critic as describing the scene of the screen as being "beautifully simple and splendidly effective."

He also quotes a statement declaring that "her acting at the climax, after the fall of the screen, had the true dignity of aroused tenderness of a good heart that is suddenly awakened to a knowledge of duty."

* Ibid. 125-126
**Daly: Life of Augustus Daly 500
***Ibid.
Towse writes of this episode, again refusing her much praise, "In the screen scene her pretense of yielding to Joseph's wooing was so plainly fake that it could never have beguiled that astute gentleman into a declaration. After the discovery, her profession of penitence was made with an elaborate deliberation which precluded all confidence in her sincerity, but there was genuine snap in her biting retort upon the discomfited Joseph. Her Lady Teazle, however, cannot be counted among her conspicuous successes."

Towse, however, as not alone in his disapproval of this interpretation, for the opinion of the critics concerning the Lady Teazle of this actress were various. William Winter was one of her admirers. He writes: "Ada Rehan's way—diversifying the current of mocking mirth with occasional spontaneous outbursts of rustic earnestness—relieved and mellowed the metallic sparkle and icy hardness of the part with a glow of sincere feeling. The country girl was merged in the coquettish young wife and dashing woman of fashion; but though merged, she was not obliterated. Her bright spirit continually flashed through the mask of measured lines and elaborate demeanor. The vanity of a young and handsome woman, suddenly elevated in social rank and made giddy with social applause and

*Towse: Sixty Years of the Theatre 355*
with the sense of conquest, was strongly emphasized in this performance, but Lady Teazle was shown to be a person of frank, downright, normal sense, such as the invincible Joseph's sophistries were powerless to contaminate, and at the climax of the comedy every shred of diddlemulation fell away from her, and she stood forth an honest, natural, simple, affectionate woman, humble, contrite, and more than ever lovely."

Hapgood, on the other hand, accuses Miss Rehan of playing too much the "star" in this performance, "Miss Rehan has unusual gifts, but it is worse than futile to force a whole play to be nothing but a background. Some of the grossest instances were in the scenes between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle. When Miss Rehan spoke, Sir Peter obediently pretended he was dead. When he spoke, Miss Rehan went over to an interpolated musical instrument and pounded for the attention of the audience. She gave an imitation of a trotting horse in one place, and went through another variety turn in imitation of a peculiar mode of speech."**

In England, the comedy was first produced on November 13, 1893, and here again, the critics were evenly divided concerning Miss Rehan's Lady Teazle.** A favorable account appears in The Theatre for December 1, 1893, "That this

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*Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study. 124
**Hapgood: The Stage in America 154-155
***Daly: Life of Augustus Daly 573.
guileless girl, all fun and frolic and heedlessness, is the
Jay Teazle of Sheridan, is perhaps too revolutionary a proposition to be at once accepted on all hands; but that she finds the Sir Peter of Mr. Farren a faultless artistic foil and the complement of the picture, can be questioned by none."*

Mr. Archer is one of the critics who is not enthusiastic about this revival, in spite of the reception it received at the hands of the British public, "This Lady to the Teazle is neither a fine lady in manner born, nor a country girl aping the fine lady. She is simply a nervous, restless, self-conscious woman, always striving after effect, never still for a moment, and never natural. She skips, trips, and frolics through the part; she nothing, in Lewis Carroll's phrase, but 'gyre and gimble'. By dint of pauses, suspensions, nods, backs, and elaborate eye-play and by-play, she tried to throw each line into special relief, as though Sheridan's wit would otherwise be apt to escape notice. Did you ever try to read a book through a small and powerful magnifying glass, enabling the eye to take in only two or three words at a time? Miss Rehan's treatment of her dialogue reminded me of this slow and jerky process. Slowness, indeed, was the general defect of the revival... With all sympathy for Mr. Daly and all admiration for Miss Rehan, it

* Theatre, N. S. v 31, 344 (Dec. 1, 1893)
is impossible to regard this revival as well advised or well executed.... It is only right to add, however, that the first-night audience were of a different opinion, and applauded the whole performance without reserve."

Although we find critical opinion concerning Rehan's Lady Teazle so diversified, it is significant to note that more than one saw in it the ideal conceived and followed by Dora Jordan. Moreover, the popular favor granted the interpretation shows that the actress succeeded in putting life into this famous old comedy rôle.

**Ada Rehan as Letitia Hardy**

Miss Rehan first appeared as Letitia Hardy, in Mrs. Cowley's "The Belle's Stratagem,"--a play that saw its first presentation at Covent Garden, on February 22, 1780*--on January 3, 1893. In this role she obtained a "triumphant success"*, according to the New York Daily Tribune printed on January 4. In this same issue was this description and critical estimate of the part:

"Her portrayal of Letitia Hardy's assumed awkwardness was easily perfect. Her adroit use of the milk maid song cast a glow of delicious humor, commingled at the same time with the perplexing spell of a latent refinement, which over that image of rosy rusticity; and it was quite possible

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* Archer: The Theatrical World for 1893—276
  * Winter: Shadows of the Stage, v. 3. 73.
to sympathize with Doricourt's bewilderment when he said that he had seen in her eye and expression that seemed to mock the folly of her lips. The essential attribute of Letitia Hardy is feminine fascination—and that was imparted to every fibre of the embodiment. In the masquerade scene the victorious air was sustained with inflexible refinement and a deviating grace, and those exquisite speeches about the ideal woman—so easily spoiled and so difficult to deliver—come off in rippling tones of the most musical voice and the most melodious English now heard upon our stage. In demeanor likewise—in the preservation of a certain stateliness and high-born isolation—the actress was at her best and unimpeachable. No one of her predecessors as Letitia Hardy (looking back, at least, as far as the springtime of Mrs. Barrow) has acted the part with more intrinsic loftiness and grace of bearing, or with a more fortunate assumption of rustic silliness in the hoyden scene, and no one of them has made it more essentially diffusive of woman-like allurement. It was a very brilliant effort, and it had the great charm of ease.*

"The piquant aspect of the character of Letitia Hardy was heightened and made the more delightful in Miss Rehan's impersonation, because of the emphasis that she laid upon the gravity, making the personality genuine and imparting to Letitia's stratagem a momentous importance. In actual life no woman really approves of levity and laughter over affairs of the heart. Those are serious things; and throughout all her performances in artificial comedy, whether old or new, Miss Rehan has been felicitous beyond precedent in her fidelity to that instinct of earnest womanhood. The common practice of the stage has been, in such characters as Letitia, to aim only at sparkle and dash. The victorious excellence and artistic superiority of Miss Rehan's assumption were obvious in its union of glittering impetuousity and merry witchery with true passion, woman-like tenderness of heart, and many sweet ways and innocent wiles with which a loving woman involuntarily commends herself to the object of her love. The embodiment was not a frolic, but a round, coherent, truthful, fascinating portrayal of human nature."

*Winter: Shadows of the Stage. v. 3.—81-82*
Ada Hehan As Julia

Miss Hehan appeared for the first time as Julia in "The Hunchback" by Sheridan Knowles, on November 29, 1892. J. F. Daly claims that "the effect of the performance was magical." William Winter wrote of the scene of this interpretation that it "well-nigh surpassed precedent."*

This critic gives a description of the part, "Miss Hehan's portrayal of Julia, in the tempest that precedes the signing of the marriage contract and in the stillness that follows it, was full of fine significance,—the depth and strength of a woman's heart thoroughly aroused. Her treatment of the incident of the torn letter again manifested that deep tenderness which is one of the central charms of her temperament,—a tenderness which was not that of placid, mournful reverie, but that of despairing passion. Her patrician bearing, her mute grief, her childlike sweetness in the tremulous assertion of self-respect, and above all, her lovely kindness and trust, during that exciting scene with Clifford, when the discarded lover became the reverential servant, were completely in harmony with the purpose of the play. In modulation, symmetry, and sincerity, Miss Hehan's interpretation of that scene well-nigh surpassed precedent. In the almost frenzied abandonment of passionate protest with which the comedy

*Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 562
*Winter: Shadows of the Stage, v. 3—136-137.
culminates her demeanor was magnificent, while her delivery of the exhortation to vaster—alter—copious, fluent, passionate, tempestuous, yet artfully restrained and guided away from blatant excess—was at once a triumph of elocutionary art and a fine example of sustained interpretation. If knowledge of woman's heart be a matter of consequence to the observer of life, there was an opportunity for study of that subject. The author of The Hunchback manifested a deep and wide appreciation of his theme, and in Ada Rehan the beauty of his delicate work found a true interpreter."

To the deep understanding of and the ability to depict the emotional responses of women, Miss Rehan added the charm of buoyant gaiety. Earlier in the same essay, Winter writes:

"Ada Rehan entered with profound sympathy into her experience of Julia, and her presentation of that heroine, in her ingenuous girlhood and amid her rural surroundings was effected in a mood of buoyant gaiety and frank sweetness, without any hint of that demure roguishness in which the actress is so signally expert, but which, in Julia would be inappropriate. The skill with which she invested artlessness with piquancy was conspicuously obvious. Her assumpt—

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*Winter: Shadows of the Stage, v. 3—136-137
tion of the artificial fine lady evinced the same kind of subtle discrimination—because the artificiality was made to be superficial, and the pure soul of the u spoiled girl was shown through it, as through a transparency. Character is developed rapidly, and mind is matured quickly, under the stress of deep feeling."

Joseph Francis Daly feels that "in the character of Julia Miss Rehan attained a height of passionate power not reached in any of her previous efforts."**

Although the English public were enraptured with Miss Rehan's Julia, some critics seemed to feel that the part was not worthy of an actress of Miss Rehan's calibre. Archer tells us that "Not even Miss Rehan could lend grace or distinction to its incurable mediocrity of invention, thought, and style. There were striking moments in her performance but even technically it was not one of her best."*

The writer in The Theatre for August 1, 1893, is more vehement in his protest, "Neither is Julia fit employment for an actress like Miss Rehan. Her genius is the genius of gusto in acting. Figure, face and bearing breathe something decisive, alert, and strong. It is not

*Shadows of the Stage v. 3.—135-136
**Daly: Life of Augustin Daly. 562.
***Ibid. 569.
****Archer: The Theatrical World for 1893--193
It is not that in comedy her foot is on her native heath and her name's Macgregor, whilst in emotional ordeals we as yet scarcely recognize her. or the acting was all that it could be, and a finer picture of a woman torn hither and thither by affection and resolve, and gradually reaching the condition of one dist rought, there could not be. Not the actress but the part was utterly at fault. julie is anything, nothing—the sport of the winds—and, for so flighty a creature, miss Kehan's personality is too deep, too rich, too strong. To lavish power and resource like hers on such miserable puppet as this wire-pulled doll of Sheridan kn wles is to drain heart and head in the vain hope of giving human attributes to a machine. And Mr. Daly's nod means the sheer waste of exactly so much inestimable genius spent in the endeavour.*

Tribute to miss Kehan's talent were thus paid by those who protested most severely agai st the presentation. All were agreed that miss Kehan was an actress capable of giving life to a part if the author had succeeded in giving it a body.

ADA KEHAN AS PEGGY THRIFT

On February 16, 1884 "The Country Girl" by Wycherly was produced—for the first time in fifty years,—at Daly's Theatre. It contained Miss Kehan's "matchless

* Theatre, n. s., v. 31—104 (Aug. 1, 1893.)
"The right actress for the part," declares Joseph Francis Daly, "needs not only youth, beauty, intelligence, and vivacity, but the faculty of displaying every side of girlish nature, and of being ingenuous, artful, hoydenish, demure, innocent, timid, and headstrong, all at once. In the days we write of, there was none but Miss Rehan equal to it."

William Winter says of the character as portrayed by this actress, "The result was a comical image of demurely mischievous girlhood, and that was personified by Ada Rehan in a mood of bewitching ingenuousness and rippling frolic. The ideal is that of an apparently simple girl, who, in the practice of the wiles of love and courtship comically develops a sudden and astonishing dexterity. The mixture of candor and quaintness in Miss Fehan's manner, concealing all the faults of the character, which, incidently, are vanity, coquetry, and deceitfulness."

This neglected comedy was not only welcomed back to America as a result of the enlivening genius of Miss Rehan, but the critic for The Theatre, February 1, 1894, bears witness to the genius of the one who was responsible for its success:

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*Drew: My Years on the Stage. 115.
**Daly: Life of Augustin Daly. 365.
"Miss Rehan has worn 'the lovely garnish of a boy,' for had she not wooed Orlando in As You Like It as no Rosalind of the past, the present, or the future ever did or—as we happy ones believe—even could! But not even the witchery of Rosalind outdoes the charm of roguish Peggy. There are pictures which, once seen, are seen forever; performances which, breathed a moment, remain as fragrant memories. Such a picture is Miss Rehan's 'Country girl' and such a fragrance does it exhale.

'Lovable, entirely and supremely lovable, is this rustic innocent, whom her boorish old guardian, avaricious of her wealth, and jealous for her charms, entrenches behind laced hat and dainty coat and breeches. We laugh—yes, because in the guileless Peggy's shoes stands the mistress of comedy, and Peggy is meant to cut the quaintest of figures, and art like Miss Rehan's enchains us, and we follow perforce wherever it leads. But, mingled with the laugh is such a tenderness that merriment is not the true feeling this Peggy inspires, although it's claim to immediate and continuous expression proves irresistible.

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"But Miss Rehan could make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and 'The Country girl' in her hands assumes a virtue it (in the original) has not. Indeed, Peggy,
the romp, the mischievous imp, the child of nature, and Peggy, ripe for love and feminine to the fingertips through all her masquerading as a boy, makes quite the prettiest and most captivating creature that even Miss Rehan has given to the stage."*

After the performance of this old comedy in Germany, the *Berlin Staatsbourger Zeitung* contained this paragraph, "The Country Girl"... gave the public a fine opportunity to admire the art of the American players, who by their intellectual acting and ready grasp of all comic situations made a happy impression on the audience. Chiefly was the exquisite 'natural art' of Miss Rehan in the part of Peggy admired and enthusiastically embraced."

In France also, this play met with a warm reception. Miss Rehan in paying Peggy Thrift had revived to the satisfaction of four countries a part that dates back to 1675. This was the oldest of her Old Comedy roles and it was one of her most successful.

**ADA REHAN AS ORIANA? SYLVIA AND MISS HOYDEN**

Miss Rehan first appeared as Oriana in Farquhar's "The Inconstant" on January 15, 1889. She brought to that

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* The Theatre, N. S. v. 32—Feb. 1, 1894—108
part "abundant life and magnetism, and confirmed the critical impression that she was always at her greatest in classical comedy."* Winter tells us that in this character, "the actress displayed a depth of feeling and a power that would be appropriate and not inadequate even to the delicate, beautiful, exacting part of Shakespear's Ophelia."*

This same vitality was infused in another part created by the same writer. From a New York paper Mary Caroline Crawford quotes the following interesting paragraphs in regard to Kehan's Sylvia in Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer—produced in February 1835,

"I am called Captain, Sir, by all the drawers and room-partner in London," said Miss Ada Kehan at Daly's Theatre last night. And bravely she wore her red coat and sword, the martial twist in her cravat, the fierce knot in her periwig, the cane upon her button and dice in her pocket. The audience was in ecstacies.

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"But the honors of the evening rested with Miss Virginia Dreher, who looked radiantly beautiful in a web of lace and gold, and with Miss Ada Kehan, who had the bold step, and the rakish toss and the impudent air of your

* Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 482
true military gallant. She was not Peg Woffington perha s, but she was a charming woman in disguise and the town will be curious to see her.**

Finally among her old comedy presentations, Miss Hoyden is worthy mention. Vanbrugh’s Hoyden is one of the earliest of a type of character frequently seen up on the stage since his time. Of Miss Rehan’s assumption of the part, Mr. Winter says; "Ada Rehan as Miss Hoyden invested it with a charm at once gleeful and gentle, which will long endear it in happy remembrance.... The modern actress must possess great comic vim who can revert to the primitive type, as Miss Rehan did, and still make it effective."**

CONCLUSION

Ada Rehan achieved success in four countries as a representative of old comedy. The genius that brought her this success is pointed out by Forest Izard when he says: "The plays are never professionally revived nowadays; and Mr. Daly succeeded mainly through the conspicuous ability of Miss Rehan to give her characters, whatever their dress or speech, naturalness and vitality."**

* Winter: Shadows of the Stage, v. 3--131-132
* Izard: Heroines of the Modern Stage, page 220
Joseph Daly tells us that Ada Rehan was the first actress since Mrs. Scott-Siddons that his brother had found capable of playing Hypolita in "She Would and She Would Not". Winter declares that she was the most brilliant Hypolita since the early days of Mrs. Barrow and Mrs. Wood. It is certain that her success in the part was great. At home the piece was popular. It was the hit of the season in London. In Germany it was hailed as a revelation. Critics are more widely disagreed in regard to Rehan's Lady Teazle. Daly and Winter both say that she followed Dora Jordan's ideal and allowed the country girl to be perceptible through the fine lady. The later critic says she was never surpassed in the scenes of wheedling Sir Peter and the quarrel that follows it. Towse disagrees with him and declares that she resorted to methods of low comedy in these scenes. Norman Rapgood dislikes the actress' tendency to draw all the attention at herself. In England the same disagreement was found. In spite of the avowed approval of the audience, Archer feels with Rapgood that Rehan was too much the "star". A writer in The Theatre calls the personation charming and irresistible in spite of the fact that the conception was not Sheridan's. Rehan's picture of Letitia Hardy was a true portrayal of
human nature that had not been rivalled since the spring-time of Mrs. Barrow, according to Winter's action in the New York Tribune. This same Winter declares that her Julia in Knowles's The Hunchback well-nigh surpassed precedent. In England the mediocrity of this play was lamented by William Archer and the writer for The Theatre who feels that the placing of Rehan in the part was a wasting of inestimable genius. When Ada Rehan appeared as Peggy Thrift, "The Country Girl" had not been produced for fifty years and J. F. Daly says Rehan was the only actress of her day equal to it. The Theatre called this interpretation Rehan's prettiest and most captivating contribution to the stage. The Berliner Staatsburger Zeitung admired the exquisite natural art of Rehan as Peggy Thrift. As Oriana, Ada Rehan, we are told by J. F. Daly, confirmed the impression that she was her greatest in classical comedy. Her Sylvia was charming, bold and rakish, and attracted much interest, says the critic of the New York Times. In taking the part of Van Brugh's hoyden she revived the original of the many hoyden parts that have appeared on the English speaking stage.

nineteenth century actress

No other English-speaking actress has rivalled this achievement in Old Comedy. In variety and quantity it was unique in its day. Mrs. John Drew
MADE ONE outstanding Old Comedy interpretation— Mrs. Malaprop is "The Rivals". No other contemporary actress attracted attention in the field. The fact that Ada Rehan was the representative for her day of these old classics gives her a right to remembrance among actresses who made worthy contributions to nineteenth century acting.
CHAPTER VIII
ADA REGAN IN MODERN COMEDY

The success of Miss Rehan in Shakespeare—the same would be applicable to Old Comedy—is not considered of as much consequence by William Winter as her contemporary portrayals. Of this he writes, "that this lovely actress can move easily in the realm of the imagination is proved by her fluent and sparkling performances of Rosalind and Viola; but it is more significant, for the great body of contemporary playgoers that she can speak in the voice, and look through the eyes, and interpret the spirit of the passing hour."*


A general suggestion of Miss Rehan's powers in modern comedy is given in this paragraph quoted by Winter from Lippincott's Magazine, and entitled A First Impression:

"Three of four years ago, in purposeless wandering about the streets of New York of a winter's evening with an English friend, the editor of the principal dramatic journal of London, we found ourselves standing in front of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, attracted by the title of the play, "The Arabian Night". It suited our vagabondish humor, and we entered the house, for the first time, to see it. As we took our seats, there were two women upon the stage: one was about making her exit by the middle upper entrance, speaking her line as she went off. It was, 'I shall be back in five minutes'. Having heard it spoken, our friend exclaimed, 'why, she's a first rate'. The young girl who had thus extorted the admiration of the most dreaded if not the most brilliant of British critics was Ada Rehan. No line could apparently
be more tame or less effective,—"I shall be back in five minutes," But as spoken it teemed with expression, giving the command of the stage to the speaker, and winning for her a general burst of spontaneous applause. She was running, not walking, off the stage; as she reached the curtained exit, she drew its heavy drapery about her, framing herself within it, delivering the words somewhat after the following fashion: "I shall be back"—a most absolute, emphatically stated—"in"—doubt, pause for reflection, consideration,—"five m-i-n-u-t-e-s." To that bare and barren line the actresses had imparted a volume of thought, and had so shown the resources of her art as to command the most generous praise of a most judicious critic. What else she had done in doing that was to broadly express her own personality, making it apparent to every intelligent auditor that she was a girl—for she was still but a girl—of strong character, whose acts were inspired by thought.*

ADA REHAN AS MAID MARION

Augustin Daly's production, on March 17, 1892, of Tennyson's "The Foresters" was considered the most important event of the dramatic season. Moreover, it was said that his was the only company in America capable of

* Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study, 197
handling the "bewitching pastoral scenes."*

Tennyson himself had anticipated that Miss Rehan would "play her part to perfection"*; and Theodore Watts, "the friend of poets and their most valued critic" was reported by the London Times as saying in this regard:

"Nor would it be easy to imagine any character more suitable to bring out the peculiar and fascinating piquancy of Miss Ada Rehan's acting than that of the heroine of this play. Of this acting, the special quality is perhaps, that when her forces are fully focussed in a dramatic situation, as they will be in many a one in this play, her command over all bodily expression, both of face and limbs, is so perfect that it is impossible to say whether the movement is born of the word, or the word of the movement, and although the dramatist had not this actress in his mind when he drew the heroine, the character harmonizes with the unique charm of his genius as entirely as though it had been created for her."*

The reception of the comedy gratified all expectations. A brilliant company watched the first performance,*

*New York Daily Tribune, Sun., March 20, 1892
***Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 535

*New York Daily Tribune, Fri., Mar. 18, 1892
**Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 536
and the recalls were enthusiastic.* Of miss Kehan's favor in the part of Marian Lee Daly says, "Praise was bestowed, without reserve and without exception upon her performance."*

Brander Matthews was "especially pleased with the song miss Kehan sang in the first act and with the very artistic simplicity with which she sang it."*

The New York Tribune for the day following the performance contains a paragraph of descriptive praise concerning miss Kehan's imputation:

"The characters in this comedy were creatures of flesh and blood to the author, and they come out boldly, therefore, on the stage. Marian Lea is a woman of the Rosalind order—handsome, noble, magnanimous, unconventional, passionate in nature, but sufficient unto herself, humorous, playful, and radiant with animal spirits. Ada Kehan embodied her according to that ideal. The chief exaction of the part is simplicity—which yet must not be allowed to degenerate into tameness. The sweet affection of a daughter for her father, the coyness yet the allurement of a girl for the lover, the refinement of high birth, the lithe bearing and the free demeanor of a child of the woods, and the predominant dignity of purity and honor—these are the salient attributes of the part. miss Kehan struck the

*Ibid. 539*
true note of the outset—the note of buoyant health and
read frelic and a-rightly adventure—and she sustained
it evenly and firmly to the last. Ever eye must have
been pleased with the frank, careless, cheerful beauty of
her presence, and every ear soothed and charmed with her
fluent and expressive delivery of the verse. In this,
as in all the important representations that Miss Rehan has
given, the delightful woman-act is conspicuously
present. She can readily impersonate a boy. No actress since
Adelaide Neilson has done that so well. But the orning
excellence of her art is its expression of essential
womanhood. Her acting is never trivial, and yet it never
obtrudes the tedious element of dry intellect. It
refreshes, and the spectator is happier for having seen her.
Many pleasant thoughts were scattered in many minds by
her performance of Midarian, and no one will ever
part with the remembrance of it."

When the play was produced in England, William
Archer wrote, "Miss Rehan has seldom looked handsomer than
in the robes of Midarian, and I have no doubt she brings
out all there is in the character there is in the part. She
speaks her lines, whether prose or verse, with a curious
slow graniloquence, for which I do not exactly erosee thereason;

*New York Daily tribune, Fri. Mar. 16, 1892. (Winter)*
but it is not ineffective. Unfortunately, she is not so careful either of metre or emphasis as she ought to be. In more than one place she murdered the verse by inserting small words not in the poet's text, and she made several slips of accent, such as this:-- 'We make but happy memories to the forest,' whereas the emphasis should clearly be on the 'happy'.

Although as noted above, the part in its entirety was not written for Miss Rehan, the scene of Marian's witnessing the combat between Robin Hood and Prince John Tennyson wrote and inserted for Ada Rehan, to whose vivacious temperament it is fitted."

Later productions of "The Foresters" were not so successful as this, its first representation. This presentation is significant to this study because it shows the actress' ability to succeed in poetic part, pastoral rather than dramatic in nature, for Tennyson never was a dramatist. It also shows the fact that this great literary genius recognized in her an actress of unusual merit.

ADA REHAN AS VALENTINE OSBREY

One of the widely praised interpretations done in modern comedy by Miss Rehan was that of Valentine Osprey in "The Railroad of Love". It was first produced in

* Archer: Theatrical World for 1898—235-236
* Winter: Shadows of the Stage—v1— 280-281
New York in 1887. Edward Dithmar said of its worth, there was a scene then, full of passion and emotion, which lifted the comedy far above the level of frivolous entertainment. The picture of Drew and Miss Rohan exchanging soft words from either side of a half-open boudoir door remains vividly in the memory of folks who saw "The Railroad of Love when it was a new play."*

Of the merit of the interpretation of this part, Winter says that "Miss Rohan's expression of the resentment of offended pride and wounded love, in the scene of the misunderstandings in the piece is remembered for its splendid sincerity, its fine fervour and the absolute simplicity of it."*

In this lay, as a result of a misrepresentation, Valentine thinks her lover untrue and sends him a scathing letter. When she learns his innocence, she detains him with her, by a great effort, while the letter is being intercepted. Of this episode we read this paragraph which shows that Miss Rohan applied her deep understanding to all of her impersonations, "The structure of the situation rests on unwarranted panic—since Valentine might take for granted her lover's pardon—but the situation itself is fraught with formidable significance and suffused with

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*Drew: My Years on the Stage 108
"Winter: Shadows of the Stage. v.2.--256
passionate excitement. Miss Rohan made it important and impressive. Her denotement of the conflict of passion when writing the letter lifted Valentine quite to the high level of Julia in a kindred passage in "The Hunchback", while her subsequent contrition and dismay, her effort to subdue a feverish apprehension, and to conceal her anxiety under a playful manner, together with her grieved yet gay trepidation while imposing upon her lover the frivolous task of going a bit of embroidery, were all made confluent in a current of singular sweetness, and were swathed in the tremulous April atmosphere of smiles and tears. Altogether, that assumption of character, not inaptly representative of contemporaneous young women in the sentimental aspect of their lives, was remarkable for equally for the variety and sparkle of its constituent parts and for the mingled force and piquancy of its art; for it was an image of airy banter, satirical raillery, piquant archness, demure mischief, sanguine sarcasm, irrational, tantalizing, delicious feminine caprice, nobility of mind and passionate ardor of heart."

After the American production of the piece, --which, by the way--was witnessed by Henry Irving and Ellen Terry--Charles Dickens the younger declared that if Miss Rohan did not make the greatest comedy hit London had seen he would be "very much surprised".

*Winter: Ada Rehan, A Study 44-45
*Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 445
The piece was given in London at the Gaiety Theatre on My 3, 1888, and it remained for the above writer to be surprised. The scenes between Miss Rehan and Mr. Brew were applauded; some critics gave the acting high praise; and yet it did not succeed.

Some comments were unfavorable to the task of Miss Rehan. In The Theatre for June 1, 1888, is found this comment upon the costuming of the play, "The ladies dresses too, strange to say, show the same inharmoniousness of color; and Miss Rehan, with all her gifts, has generally one, at least, unbecoming robe. It is a pity she does not do herself full justice on this point, as she has a fine figure and presence such as would do credit to Worth's creations."

However, this criticism was mostly confined to the external attributes of the presentation. Clement Scott and Percy Fitzgerald both praised the acting of Miss Rehan highly. The former gave the actress distinction in her realm of comedy when he said, "Acting of this kind, so beneath the surface, so distinctly opposed to the commonplace, and so eloquent with the finest touches of woman's nature, we do not believe has been seen since the death of Aimée Desolée."

* The Theatre, n. 3, v.20---June 1, 1888
* Izard, Heroines of the Modern Stage, 223
In _The theatre_ for June 1, 1886, Fitzgerald writes this paragraph, "Miss Rehan has a peculiar unique flavor in her acting, which it is really difficult to describe,—a sort of perpetual petulance and 'flouting'; a drawing—on that wears off, with curious alternations of seriousness and fun which supply a piquancy. ...Miss Rehan, it is said, is of Irish extraction. Whatever be the secret, it is certain her style has a singular originality and power. Audiences find her irresistible."*

William Archer called Miss Rehan the "swan-like Valenti ne Osprey."** For years the part remained in popular favor, and proved by its popularity that it merited the praise it received.

**ADA REHAN AS JENNY O'JONES**

"Red Letter Nights", an adaptation from the German, was produced on March 12, 1884, and it ran until the close of the season on April 27. In the Daly additions to the play, was the famous "Jenny O' Jones scene" that "caught the town at once."*** Of the scene, Daly writes, "The youthful Tony (Miss Rehan) in order to break up the international match" proposed for her, disillusionizes her foreign admirer

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*Fitzgerald: "The Railroad of Love". Theatre N. S. v. 20—316
**Izard: _Heroines of the Modern Stage_
***Daly: _Life of Augustin Daly_ 366
by assuming the tomboy and romping through the nursery rhyme and dance of 'Miss Jenny O' Jones'. This impersonation followed so close upon her Peggy, disclosed new phases of her gift for depicting the hoyden. What had been demure now became boisterous, and all the delicately guarded limitations of feminine wilfulness in Peggy were airily overstepped by the insolent Tony, and yet all was done without striking a jarring note."

Of the significance to Miss Rehan's reputation of this scene in which she became known far and wide, William Winter records, "It is a violetn expedient of humor,—it is much as if Rosalind should pretend to be Audrey,—but it is exceedingly droll, and seeing that the actress whose art can touch such extremes of character and of poetry as Katherine and Rosalind, Ophelia and Peggy Thrift, Julia and Marian Lea, can also create and sustain an illusion in the domain of downright broad farce, the observer is naturally impressed by that rare and fine capacity of impersonation. It is that faculty, authenticated and made irresistible by personal charm, that has made Ada Rehan a leader in her profession, and has prompted this tribute to the grace, humor, tenderness, and beauty of her acting, and to the auspicious worth of her artistic powers."*

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Daly: Life of Augustin Daly, 366-367
Winter: Shadows of the Stage, v. 2--263
Miss Rehan was popular in hoyden parts—a fact that seems strange considering her merit as Rosalind and Viola. It shows, however, the unusual versatility of her genius and is therefore significant when considering the abilities of the actress."

ADA REHAN AS KATE VERITY

In striking contrast to her success as Jenny O'Jones is Miss Rehan's assumption of Kate Verity in Pinero's "The Squire". This part contains no humor, and although she was essentially a comedian, this role comprised "one of the great successes of her career."

She showed almost tragic power in its presentation, and called forth laudatory comment on her efforts.

In Lippincott's Magazine is found this statement of concerning Miss Rehan and Charles Fisher, "But there are two notable scenes in "The Squire" in which the audience are forced to the recognition of the presence of two great and notable artists." He goes on to declare that in one of these scenes, "the acting of Miss Rehan and Mr. Fisher was incomparably beautiful, unmarred by a single defect, and characterized by the highest intelligence and profoundest feeling for their art."

The same writer says of the depth of the personation

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*Winter: A Study of the Stage. V. 2. 263.
**Crawford: Romance of the American Theatre 374
***Winter, Ada Rehan, A Study. 200-201
****Ibid. 204
and its success in the hands of Miss Rehan: "With all the
deepest and strongest the actress has to do, and with them
she does as one born to love, suffer, endure, as one who
has long loved, suffered, and endured. From the rise of the
curtain to its fall Miss Rehan is, in presenting strong, passion
ate or tender phases of character, almost faultless. And it is
the best evidence that could be offered to the perpetuity of
her success that she had intelligence and feeling sufficient
to enable her to portray as admirably as she does a character
so at variance with the natural sources of her art. It proves
that thought informs and labor shapes it."*

It was Miss Rehan's understanding of character, then,
—a characteristic of her personal character as well as of
her impersonations,—that brought her success in the most
poetic or the most broad comedy, and in the pathos and
tragedy of serious drama.

**ADA REHAN AS PIERROT**

In her assumption of the role of Pierrot in "Pierrot
the Prodigal", produced in February 1891, Miss Rehan
successfully portrayed a character in a field of drama
new to her and new to the American Stage—the wordless
drama. This evidences her power—often praised before—to
express subtle emotion through delicate facial expressions.

*Ibid.* 290
by-play, and gesture.

William Winter describes her presentment in detail in his book, "Ada Rehan, A Study". "In her embodiment of Pierrot the prodigal Miss Rehan discarded the glamor of feminine enchantment and addressed herself directly to intellectual perception of the dramatic art. In this respect her performance was one of peculiar interest and value—because, while in itself various, subtle, and delightful, it directed attention to the principles which are at the foundation of the art of acting. Her embodiment of Pierrot was an example of, pantomime—and pantomime is the basis upon which acting rests.... To forego the use of voice was, on the part of Miss Rehan, to make a great sacrifice; for voice is one of extraordinary sweetness and power. She not only made that sacrifice, but appeared also in the plain person and face of the traditional clown.

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"Ada Rehan, assuming to be a boy, seemed to have ceased to be a woman. There was no trace of the feminine manner. The abandonment to masculine indentity never indeed became indelicate, but it was absolute. The play is divided into three acts. In the first Pierrot has to express the unrest of the vacant, unsatisfied heart, and then the sudden fever of irrational passion, followed by the wooing
of the coquette; and after a time of painful hesitation between the loss of his unwavering love and the robbery of his parents, the boy's moral collapse and the surrender to temptation. In the second act he has to learn what it is to be discarded and despised, because he has no more money, and he has to feel the bitterness of anguish and self-contempt that comes of knowing that his idol was not worthy, never sincere, never even able to understand his love or appreciate his sincerity. In the last act he must be the image of abject destitution and remorseful penitence, tottering back to his father's threshold and falling at his mother's feet. Ada Rehan bore the strain of this impersonation with a power that never faltered and a fidelity that never erred. Pierrot had to carry the weight of the piece; and as there is incessant movement and much change, the exaction of feeling is severe. She was deliciously impetuous and comic in the writing of the boy's first love letter; feverish almost to delirium in the moment of the robbery; touching in the discovery of the coquette's turpitude; and simply pathetic in the forlorn destitution and misery of the prodigal's return. No one could play this part without being possessed of innate refinement, humor, and tenderness; and no woman could play it without possessing, in addition to these attributes, the grace of consummate professional skill. Miss Rehan's success in
terrot may well be recorded as a triumphant evidence of her brilliant powers and her thorough professional equipment. In the sympathy, the freedom, and the poetic charm of that performance, she suggested the sincere, picturesque, subtly and flexible art of Jefferson."

The complete identification with the character of this boy is proof that she realized the difference between assuming the part of a woman masquerading as a boy, and the interpretation of a male character. This wordless play showed Miss Keohan to be a powerful protrayer of emotions.

CONCLUSION

In modern comedy the critics praised Ada Keohan for her poetic picture of Maid Marian in "The Railwayers". Both Tennyson and Sir Theodore Watts anticipated her success in the part, the latter saying that this actress could perform such a part so perfectly that one could not tell whether the movement were born of the word or the word of the movement. J. E. Daly says the interpretation met with universal praise among critics. Brander Matthews admires the artistic simplicity of her song in the first act. William A. Archer objects to Keohan's treatment of the verse, but says the actress no doubt brought out all the character the part contained. As Valentine Drey in "The Railroad of Love" Keohan gave a picture of contemporary womanhood. Edward A. Dithmar records that one scene between Keohan and Drew was played so well that it would remain a vivid memory to all who saw it.
all who saw it. William Winter remarks upon the impressiveness of the performance and calls it absolute simplicity of art. The play was not a success in London in spite of the fact that Clement Scott places the characterization with the work of Aymée Desloe and F. W. Fitzgerald calls it irresistible. The modern hoyden was depicted in the presentation of Jenny O'Jones in "Red Letter Nights," and showed according to Joseph F. Daly, new phases of Rehan's gift for picturing this type of character. Winters values this interpretation because it showed the actress able to bridge extremes in character. If she could play Rosalind she could be no less successful as Jenny O'Jones. Still another phase of Rehan's power is shown in her portrayal of the almost tragical Kate Verity in Finero's "The Squire." Her success in this role is significant from the fact that it was so far removed from the natural tendency of her art. Mary Caroline Crawford calls the interpretation one of her great successes.

A writer for Lippincott's advances the opinion that some of the scenes played by Ada Rehan and James Lewis were unmarred by a single defect. One of the greatest tests of Rehan's ability was her assumption of the role of Pierrot in "Pierrot the Prodigal." This was the advent of pantomime upon the American stage. Winter says that Rehan carried it the part with unfaltering assurance and without the aid of
voice told vividly the story of the wayward son, losing every mark of feminity in creating the picture.

Many and various were the characters of modern comedy interpreted by Rehan. The ones reviewed in this chapter show the range of her accomplishment which included poetic conceptions, pictures of contemporary womanhood, the modern hoyden, the tragic heroine, and the pantomine figure of Pierrot. This versatility and the breadth of appeal and the influence exerted by her made her as an interpreter of contemporary dramatic literature, made her an important factor in the life of her time. She acted parts written by Tennyson, Pinero, and Schonthan. Henry James and Oscar Wilde were both desirous of writing parts for her. Her work in modern comedy in itself was a significant accomplishment for which she would probably have won mention although she could not have been called as great as she became as a result of her achievements in the realms of Old Comedy and Shakespeare.
Chapter IX

Conclusion

A survey of critical opinion establishes Ada Rehan among the outstanding players of the nineteenth century. In four countries critics recorded her genius: Izard and Winter name her with Peg Woffington and Dora Jordan; Odell says that English critics placed her with Ellen Terry as the two great contemporary Shakespearean actresses; Clement Scott says her power had not been equalled since the days of Aimee Descoele; Davis, Marshall, Adams, and Howard extol her genius; Hapgood mingles praise with his blame; and Archer confines his adverse criticism largely to faults consisting of such things as a misplaced pronoun or a slight misplacement of stress in a phrase; and even Towse, who censures her most harshly, admits that some of her acting was brilliant.

The most unanimous praise was given to her Katherine which was the first of her three outstanding Shakespearean achievements. In America, Winter, Izard, Daly, Eaton, and Towse united in calling her brilliant. Her two Petruchios, John Drew and Otis Skinner, praised her acting. In England, Marshall, Odell, Fitzgerald, Adams, and Archer left record of her achievement. Irving and Coquelin among actors, and Browning among literary men also testified
to her genius. Many anonymous articles in her praise appeared in both countries. Actresses from the time of Sarah Siddons and Mrs. Pritchard had attempted the role with varying degrees of success. No one had succeeded in making the part more than a clever foil to _Petruchio_. Ada Rehan’s subtle picture showed that she had an understanding conception of a loving and lovable woman whose apparent termagany was the result of her rebellion against the necessity of accepting a lord and bowing her naturally independent will to his. From her first scene it was felt that once tamed, _Katherine_ would make a wife superior to her more docile sisters. Her submission to _Petruchio_ was gradual and thorough and wholly consistent. This conception of Katherine has become an ideal of the stage and will always be associated with the name of Ada Rehan.

Rehan’s second Shakespearean success was another proof of her art. No one before had played _Rosalind_ as she played her. Most previous conceptions of _Rosalind_ had given an unreal, far-away, touch to the picture, which accorded with the judgment of the Shakespearean student. Rehan disregarded both of these traditions. She pictured a woman appreciable and of this world, and the interpretation was immediately heralded as a revelation both at home and
in England. She had early played Celia to Adelaide Neilson's Rosalind, and at the time when she appeared in the greater part, that actress' conception was the only one of the day worthy to be placed beside Ada Rehan's. Later both Ellen Terry and Mary Anderson assumed the role. Rehan's Rosalind was superior to Terry's and of at least even merit with Anderson's. As an artistic accomplishment Rehan's Rosalind is generally acceded to be greater than her Katherine. At home the interpretation received comment from Winter, Izard, Daly, Towse, and Hayes. During its English production numerous periodicals printed enthusiastic articles, among which are found paragraphs by such men as Adams, Howard, and Odell. Actors were lavish in their praise of this conception. Terry, Irving, Coquelin, Bancroft, and Mallet expressed their appreciation in letters to the actress of her manager. The most harsh criticism is found in an anonymous article in Blackwood's. Rehan's Rosalind remains a tradition on the English-speaking stage.

Ada Rehan made a third Shakespearean interpretation of note. This was her Viola. The two outstanding features of this character were her subtle depiction of her love for the sentimental Duke and her understanding of and feeling for Olivia. Again womanliness was a conspicuous
characteristic of the conception. Although Viola was a poetic picture, it was none the less human. This interpretation, although outstanding, was possibly not quite so great as Rehan's other major Shakespearean portrayals. The praise of this interpretation was neither so general nor as a general thing so enthusiastic. In America Winter and Izard are favorable in their comments while Towse feels that Viola was out of Rehan's range. In England some commentors place the interpretations by the side of Rosalind and Katherine while others are not so confident of its merit. Odell and Archer praise it, the latter feeling it to be more pleasing than Rosalind although he does not declare it to be so great. This picture of Viola rounded out Rehan's achievement as an interpreter of Shakespeare and it showed her capable of eminent success in three of the most difficult heroines in Shakespearean comedy.

This Shakespearean success was the result of understanding and study. She went to the poet for her inspiration, and as a result she gave to the stage not conventional figures but women. This was true in her less prominent Shakespearean assumptions as well as in her more widely praised interpretations. In the days before she entered the Daly Company she appeared with Booth, McCullough, and Adelaide Neilson, and gave intelligent
pictures of heroines of Shakespeare both in tragedy and in comedy as a result of the fact that she had given them particular thought and study. Later as Portia she established a notable precedent in her demeanor during the Trial Scene and in her delivery of the Mercy Speech. Her Beatrice, her Mistress Ford, her Princess of France, and in fact all of her interpretations of Shakespeare bear witness to the originality of her genius.

If Ada Rehan had left no more than her accomplishment in Shakespearean roles she would have left to stage history a notable achievement. Add to it her work in Old Comedy and there can be no question as to the merit of the actress. No one since the days of Peg Woffington has succeeded as did Ada Rehan in placing Old Comedy before the public in so acceptable a manner. At home and abroad she made these old plays popular. Her Peggy Thrift in "The Country Girl"—a play that had not been seen for fifty years—was acclaimed in America, in England, in France and in Germany. Her Sylvia in "The Recruiting Officer" called to mind that of Peg Woffington. Her conception of Lady Teasle was likened to that of Dora Jordan. She had no rival in her day in the field of Old Comedy and no one since her time has been so successful in popularizing these plays of the past. The fact that
she stands alone in her century as an interpreter of the old forms would of itself give Ada Rehan a claim to a worthy place among actresses who have made notable contributions to the nineteenth century stage.

It seems strange that an actress outstanding for her presentation of the heroines of Shakespeare and of Old Comedy should meet with a success no less marked when attempting the women of modern plays. Yet such was the case with Ada Rehan. In this field she proved her ability in poetic drama, in burlesque, in broad farce, in comedy of contemporary life, in serious drama, and in pantomime. Here she showed her versatility. Contemporary playwrights expressed their approval of her genius by their desire to write for her. Among the plays in which she appeared are found compositions by Schonthan, Sardou, Pinero, and Tennyson. Schonthan wrote a play, "The Countess Guuki", expressly for Ada Rehan. Her outstanding characteristics of vivacity and subtle coquetry had ample scope in this comedy. Tennyson inserted a scene in "The Foresters" for her special benefit and he recognized the share that her acting had in bringing success to his pastoral drama. Other contemporary writers who expressed the desire to write for this actress were Oscar Wilde and Henry James.

Ada Rehan's versatility is thus seen to have been remarkable. Winter records one hundred sixty parts played by her between 1873 and 1898, and she added a number of
interpretations after that time. Many of these roles were widely played and came to be very well known. She made successful parts as divergent as Rosalind and Jenny O'Jones, Katherine and Kate Verity, Viola and Pierrot. She made three outstanding Shakespearean interpretations; she infused life into the old forms; and she presented contemporary dramatic material successfully. Ada Rehan was an important factor in the theatrical life of her day. This is emphasized by the fact that among contemporary actors she was recognized as a genius. Irving called her one of the dignities of the stage with whom it was an honor to act; Terry could offer no improvement for her Rosalind; Coquelin and Mansfield expressed a desire to appear with her; Duse was enraptured by her acting; Bernhardt wished to engage her for her company; Mrs. Bancroft called parts of her Rosalind perfect art; Jane Hading imitated her Katherine; and Mlle. Mallet praised her. These plaudits she received from those who were great in her profession at the time when she was on the stage. Any record of the theatrical life of that day must of necessity give to Rehan considerable mention.

It has been the aim of this paper to show that Ada Rehan deserves to be ranked with the great English-speaking actresses of the nineteenth century. The record of her
genius, her accomplishment, and her recognition shows that she was noteworthy in modern comedy, that she should be classed with Peg Woffington as a player of Old Comedy, and that her Katherine and her Rosalind are worthy to be named with the Portia of Ellen Terry, the Juliet of Adelaido Neilson, and the Rosalind of Mary Anderson.
APPENDIX

Rehan's Interpretations

3. Agnee Constant: Across the Continent.
5. Annis Austin: Love on Crutches.
6. Annie Leigh: Enoch Arden
7. Aonda: Around the World in Eighty Days
8. Aphra: The Wooden Spoon
9. Armine: Victor of Rhe
10. Artina: Hero
11. Barbara Benson: Poor and Proud
12. Barbara Hare: East Lynne
13. Barbee: Our English Friend
14. Baroness Vera: The Last Word
15. Beatrice: Much Ado About Nothing
16. Bianca: The Taming of the Shrew
17. Big Clemence: L'Assommoir
20. Celia: As You Like It
22. Cherry Monogram: The Way We Live
23. Clara: Across the Continent
24. Cora Darlington: The False Light
25. Cordelia: King Lear
26. Countess: The Stranger
27. Countess Hermance: The Countess Gucci
28. Desdemona: Othello
29. Diana Jovita Castro: Two Men of Sandy Bar
30. Dina: A Priceless Paragon
31. Diana De Lascur: The Sea of Ice
32. Donna Antonina: The Royal Middy
33. Doris: An International Match
34. Druda: The Ice Witch
35. Elizabeth: The Golden Farmer
36. Eloise Woodruff: Becky Mix
37. Elvira Homton: New Lamps for Old
38. Emma Torrens: Serious Family
39. Ethel Grainger: Married in Haste
40. Etna: The Great Unknown
41. Eva Manhattan: Our First Families
42. Eva Hillington: The Lone Man of the Ocean
43. Fanny Elkton: Zip
44. Fidele La Crosse: A Heroine in Rags
45. Flonda Vaughn: Bonny Kate
46. Floss: Seven-Twenty-Eight
47. Georgette: Fernande
48. Georgiana Tedman: Dandy Dick
49. Georgina: Jane Eyre
50. Gertrude: Ben McCullough
51. Grace Barkaway: London Assurance
52. Grace Roseberry: The New Magdalen
53. Harriet: The Jealous Wife
54. Hebe: Pinafore
55. Helena: A Midsummer Night's Dream
56. Hetty Fetherstone: The Orient Express
57. Hypolita: She Would and She Would Not
58. Isabelle de Neale: Divorce
59. Isabelle: Wives
60. Jeanne de Cornay: Serge Panine
61. Jenny O'Jones: Red Letter Nights
62. Jenny Kibble: Girls and Boys
63. Jo: The Lottery of Love
64. Julia Latimer: The Flying Soud
65. Julia: The Hunchback
66. Julia: Two Gentlemen of Verona
67. Juliana: The Honeymoon
68. Kate Verity: The Squire
69. Katherine: The Taming of the Shrew
70. Kitty: *The Arabian Night*
71. Lady Anne: *Richard III*
72. Lady Garnet: *The Great Ruby*
73. Lady Gay Spanker: *London Assurance*
74. Lady Jane: *A Crown of Thorns*
75. Lady Mary: *Rosedale*
76. Lady Nell: *Lords and Commons*
77. Lady Sarah: *Queen Elizabeth*
78. Lady Teazle: *The School for Scandal*
79. Lady Valeria: *All that Glitters is not Gold*
80. Laura de Beaurepaire: *White Lies*
81. Laura Cortlandt: *Underneath the Gaslight*
82. Laura Hawkins: *The Gilded Age*
83. Laura Livingston: *Escaped from Sing Sing*
84. Letitia Hardy: *The Belle's Stratagem*
85. Lilth Em'ly: *Little Em'ly*
86. Leo: *The Transit of Leo*
87. Louise: *Cartouche*
88. Louise: *Under the Snow*
89. Louise: *Frou-Frou*
90. Louise Goodwin: *Across the Continent*
91. Lurline: *Naiad Queen*
92. Lu Ten Eyck: *Divorce*
93. Madam Sans Gene: *Madam Sans Gene*
94. Madelon: *The Carpenter of Rouen*
95. Madelon: Fanchon
96. Marguerite le Roque: Romance of a Poor Young Man
97. Marie: The Marble Heart
98. Marie de Mancini: The Youth of Louis XIV
99. Marie-Comines: Louis XI
100. Marian Lea: The Foresters
101. Mary Clark: The Charter Oak
102. Mary Netty: Eurs
103. Mary Standish: Pique
104. Mary Watson: Dick Turpin and Tom King
105. Mathilde de Latour: Miss Multon
106. Maud: Musette
107. Meg Merrilies: Guy Mannering
108. Miranda: The Tempest
109. Miss Hoyden: Miss Hoyden's Husband
110. Miss Hoyden: The Relapse
111. Morgiana: The Forty Thieves
112. Mrs. Castlemaine: The Golden Calf
113. Mockworld: The Knav
114. Mrs. Ford: The Merry Wives of Windsor
115. Mrs. Jassamine: A Test Case
116. Muttra: Zanina
117. Naomi Tigbe: School
118. Nell Gwyn: Sweet Nell of Old Drury
120. Nelly Beers: Love's Young Dream
121. Nisbe: A Night Off
122. Nichette: Camille
123. Nora Drew: The Kerry Gow
124. Odette: Odette
125. Olivia: Twelfth Night
126. Ophelia: Hamlet
127. Oriana: The Inconstant
128. Pauline: Lady of Lyons
129. Pauline de Beausejour: Americans Abroad
130. Pearl Curtlandt: Under the Gaslight
131. Peggy Thrift: The Country Girl
132. Philina: Mignon
133. Phrone: Dollars and Sense
134. Pierrot: Pierrot the Prodigal
135. Portia: The Merchant of Venice
136. Princess Ida: Lorle
137. Princess of France: Love's Labour's Lost
138. Psyche: Cinderella at School
139. Queen Elizabeth: Richard III
140. Queen Elizabeth: Mary Stuart
141. Queen of France: Henry the Fifth
142. Rosalind: As You Like It
143. Rose: Little Barefoot
144. Rose: *The Prayer*
145. Rose Fallon: *A Flash of Lightning*
146. Roxane: *Cyrano de Bergerac*
147. Ruth Tredget: *Charity*
148. Selina: *Needles and Pins*
149. Stella: *The Enchantress*
150. Stella: *The Little Detective*
151. Sybil Hawker: *Brass*
152. Sylvia: *The Recruiting Officer*
153. Tekla: *The Passing Regiment*
154. Thisbe: *Quits*
155. Tika: *Heart of Ruby*
156. Tilburina: *The Critic*
157. Tony: *Red Letter Nights*
158. Triphenia Magillicuddy: *The Golden Widow*
159. Hrsula: *Much Ado About Nothing*
160. Una Urquhart: *Love in Harness*
161. Valentine Osprey: *The Railroad of Love*
162. Viola: *Twelfth Night*
163. Virginia: *Virginius*
164. Virginie: *L'Assommoir*
165. Winifred Wood: *Jack Sheppard*
166. Wilson: *East Lynne*
167. Xantippe: *The Wife of Socrates*
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