

MISS FANNY DAVENPORT.

We extract the following particulars concerning Miss Davenport from "A Portrait Gallery" of the leading actors and actresses of America, published by Richard R. Fox, of New York:--

"It was at the end of the year 1847 that E. L. Davenport, who had attracted the attention of Mrs Anna Cora Mowatt as the leading man in her support during her engagement in Philadelphia, arrived in England with that artist, engaged to sustain her in leading male roles in her performances there. Her leading man shared a portion of the success which fell to her, and when she returned to America he found it to his profit to remain abroad. Among the actresses in the English company which had supported Mrs Mowatt in connection with himself was Miss Fanny Vining, whom the American actor married soon after he resolved to remain abroad. The first result of the union was a girl, born in 1850, in London, and christened Fanny, after her mother. The earliest lessons of Fanny Davenport were of the stage and its literature. Her father returned to America in 1854, and achieved a popularity and fame few American actors have ever excelled. His wife's artistic reputation was scarcely inferior to his own. The girl, brought up in such an atmosphere of histrionism, could not but have imbibed its influence, and it was a matter of course that she should make the stage her profession. She made her *debut* at the Howard Athenæum in Boston, then managed by Jacob Barrow, as the child in *Metamora*, and thenceforth figured from time to time in children's roles, at that or other theatres where her parents were engaged. She enjoyed a meagre experience as a child at Burton's Chamber-street Theatre during the period when E. L. Davenport and Harry Watkins were no more successful in managing it jointly than others had been before them. They christened it 'The American Theatre,' and opening it on February 23d, 1857, baptised it with 'The Star-spangled Banner,' in the chanting of which Mr and Mrs Davenport, their eldest daughter, and the rest of the company took part. Thus, as a feeble vocalist, 'Miss Fanny,' as she was termed in the bills, made her metropolitan *debut*. Before the brief season closed, she played a small speaking part or two, but her real metropolitan *debut* was not made until February, 14th, 1862, when she appeared as the King of Spain in *Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady*, at Niblo's Garden, New York. Her subsequent appearances at various playhouses were received with favour, and her professional position improved steadily until she secured an engagement under Augustin Daly at the old Fifth Avenue, New York. It was in the fall of 1869 she graduated from soubrette at the Arch-street Theatre, Philadelphia, to the crowning height of Lady Gay Spanker at the Fifth Avenue Theatre six weeks after that house had come under the ægis of Augustin Daly, with her courtly father as Sir Harcourt. During the seasons of 1869 to 1873 she was also of service at the Fifth Avenue as Violetta in Colly Cibber's *She Would and She Would Not*, Lady Mary in Mrs Inchbald's *Maids as They Are and Wives as They Were*, and Miss Richland in Goldsmith's *Good-Natured Man*, comedies whose production at that time brushed off an antique hoar that had been gathering upon them in this city for from eleven to fifty-two years. These legitimate labours were from time to time relieved by her Polly Eccles in Robertson's *Caste*, Mrs Madison Noble in *Olive Logan's Surf*, Alice Hawthorne in *Old Heads and Young Hearts*, Effie Remington in Bronson Howard's *Saratoga*, Letitia Hardy in the *Belle's Stratagem*, Rosie Farquhere in Robertson's *Play*, Nellie Wikoff in *Diamonds*, Mistress Ford in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, the Baroness de Mirac in *Article 47*, Georgette in the *Sardou-Jackson Fernande*, and the sprightly Lu Ten Eyck in Daly's *Divorce*. After the burning of the pretty little theatre in Twenty-fourth-street Miss Davenport continued one of the Daly company at the Old Globe Theatre on Broadway until the completion of the new Fifth-avenue in Twenty-eighth-street, and at its opening she was seen as Kitty Compton, the pretty housekeeper, in James Albery's *Fortune*. Upon the production, shortly after, of W. S. Gilbert's play of *Charity*, she was cast for the part of the tramp, Madge, and developed such unexpected tragic power that the manager created the part of Mabel Renfrew in his drama of *Pique* for her. Her performance of this role stamped her as a far superior actress to the parts she had been playing, and since it gave expression to her capabilities she has continued in the line chance thus marked out for her. In 1880 she married Edwin F. Price, a well-known actor, then her leading man and who has since supported her in the leading male parts in her dramas. Miss Davenport, as may be inferred from the examples already given, inherits a strong dash of the versatility of her father. At one time and another, in addition to the important parts already named, she has appeared as Tilburina, in the *Critic*; Rosalind, in *As You Like It*; Peg Woffington, in *Masks and Faces*; Nancy Sikes, in a novel version of *Oliver Twist*; Pauline, in the *Lady of Lyons*; and Agnes Ethel's grand role of Gilberte, in *Frou Frou*; and has created such new faces as Estie, in *Blue Glass*; Boll Van Renssalaer, in Bronson Howard's *Moorcroft*; Francine, of the pearl-gray, in Daly's *Two Widows*; the stately Duchess de Septmonts, in Dumas-Daly's the *American (L'Étrangere in Paris)*, Eugenia Cawallader, in the *Big Bonanza*; Mary Stark, in *Lemons*; Helen Gaythorne, in *Weak Woman*; Mary Melrose, in *Our Boys*; Dianthe de Marec, in *What Should She Do?* Madame Guichard, in *Mons. Alphonse*; Rosaline, in *Love's Labour's Lost*; and the leading roles in Wills's dramatisation of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, Anna Dickinson's startling histrionic conception of *An American Girl*, and still others less noteworthy. Fanny Davenport is an actress of considerable emotional power, the result of certain national gifts of passion trained to usefulness by her extensive experience of the possibilities of the stage. She is seen at her best in the character in which she became first famous, Mabel Renfrew; and at her worst in such classical roles as Lady Macbeth and Rosalind. Until the natural disadvantages of a figure whose robustness has become obtrusive arose in her disfavour, her rendition of the part of Camille was one of the best upon the American stage next to the splendid performance of Clara Morris."