

Bernhardt Loses Fight for Life; Dies in Son's Arms

Famous Actress Expires Shortly Before 8 in Evening—Last Message Sent to Americans.

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fore the curtain more than 200 times by a wildly enthusiastic audience, and many times, in other parts of the world, she was obliged to answer scores of curtain calls at a single performance.

Closely Woven With Dramatic Incident.

The long life-story of Bernhardt is almost legendary. Closely woven with dramatic incident, off as well as on the stage, it was set down by herself in a lengthy volume published many years ago, and, as one of her critics has said, "through the pages of the book peers the face of a woman who is little tired, weary of her own reputation, and blessed with more than her share of the vanities of the sex." As she and others have told the story, it is summed up here:

The date of her birth, the record of which was destroyed in flames of the Commune in Paris, was commonly accepted as October 22, 1844. Her mother was Dutch and Jewish, and her natural father a French official.

As a child Bernhardt spent much of her time with relatives in Paris, and at the age of 12 was sent to the Grand Champ convent, Versailles, where she made her debut in a little miracle play given by the children. Even at this early age, the pale and sickly child is said to have displayed the fits of temper which were characteristic of her stage career.

A Passionate Desire to Become a Nun.

After a year or two at the convent, she conceived a passionate desire to become a nun. To this her mother recorded unqualified opposition, and suggested a theatrical career instead. "She's too thin to be an actress," said her godfather. "Let her be a nun."

"I won't be an actress," little Sarah categorically exclaimed. "Rachel is an actress. She came to the convent and walked around the garden, then she had to die because she couldn't get her breath. They fetched her something to bring her around, but she was so pale, oh, so pale. I was very sorry for her, and the nuns told me that what she was doing was killing her, for she was an actress, and so I won't be an actress. I won't."

But fate had determined otherwise, and at the age of 14 Bernhardt was sent to a conservatory. At the end of the first year she won second prize for tragedy. A subscription among the players at the Comedie Francaise enabled her to spend another year at the conservatory, and upon the completion of this she carried off second prize for comedy. Her first public appearance was at the Comedie Francaise in August, 1862. She took a minor part without any marked success.

Gains Popularity as War Nurse.

Five years later she emerged from laborious obscurity with her first definite success at Comedie Francaise, a French translation of "King Lear," at the Odeon, then as Queen in Victor Hugo's "Ruy Blas," and above all as Zanzett in Francois Coppee's "Le Passant," which she played in 1869. Then came the Franco-Prussian war. Bernhardt increased her popularity by becoming a war nurse. In 1871 she was made a life member of the Comedie Francaise. She clashed repeatedly with M. Perrin, the manager, over the roles she should take, and once in a fit of pique fled from the theater and decided to give up the stage. She plunged into sculpture. Her first piece, "After the Storm," finished some years later—won a place in the Salon. She returned to M. Perrin only to break with him again, incurring a forfeit of 4,000 pounds, which she paid.

She invaded England, receiving a

tremendous ovation, then toured Denmark and Russia. Next she came to America, where her success was instantaneous. She toured the United States and Canada eight times in some 35 years and appeared several times in the larger cities of South America.

Syndicates Deny Use of Theaters.

Breaking with the theatrical syndicates, which denied her use of their theaters, when she refused to come under their terms she was compelled to appear on one of her American tours in tents, convention halls and armories. She vowed never to appear in a theater again, but on subsequent visits she came to terms with the syndicates.

The great actress was a grandmother when she last appeared in America and had suffered amputation of her right leg. Upon her arrival in New York in October, 1916, it was evident to the group of friends and admirers who gathered to welcome her that she walked with extreme difficulty.

While playing in New England she contracted a severe cold which prompted her to take a trip south for her health. A few weeks later she underwent an operation for infection of the kidney, and although more than 70 years of age she enjoyed complete recovery and remained in America for several months.

The injury to her knee which compelled the amputation of her leg in 1915 was attributed, to many different causes. For years before the amputation the plays in which she appeared were altered to hide the fact that she was able to walk only with great difficulty. The operation was performed in Paris and upon her recovery she reappeared on the stage to receive the greatest ovation of her career. Her manager announced that henceforth she would interpret only motionless roles.

At French Front in World War.

During the world war Bernhardt made several trips to the French front and gave a number of performances for the soldiers. This, she declared, was the "incomparable event" of her life.

The memoirs of Bernhardt sedulously avoid any mention of her marital experience and only in the middle of the bulky volume does she mention casually the existence of a son. One of her critics declared that "she never seemed to find the man who could master her."

"There was in her," he continued, "the making of a superwoman, and although she met Victor Hugo and the greatest intellectual potentates of her time the superman, who alone could hold her, never entered her life."

Years ago a jealous rival of her theatrical career published a satire entitled "The Story of Sarah Bernhardt" in which the love affairs of the actress, real and alleged, were shamelessly laid bare. Bernhardt resorted to the horsewhip to punish the author.

Son Shows No Inclination For Career on Stage.

Mme. Bernhardt's natural son, Maurice, showed no inclination to fol-

low the profession of his mother and after spending a short time in the French army he married a Russian princess. She died after bearing him a daughter and Maurice Bernhardt took a Parisienne as his second wife.

Many stories have been told of the fabulous sums accruing to the famous actress, especially in America, but authenticated figures show that the gross receipts of each tour were in the neighborhood of \$500,000, of which she usually received 50 percent. A large part of her earnings was reinvested in theatrical enterprises, and at one time she owned or controlled half a dozen playhouses in Paris.

Of the more than 200 parts Bernhardt essayed during her long stage career, perhaps the boldest experiment of all was the title role in a French production of Hamlet, which met with such unmistakable success that she was prompted to appear again as a man in "L'Aiglon." Her repertoire, in addition to the plays mentioned, included "Joan of Arc," "Fedora," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," "Sappho," "Theodora" and "Hernani." Her greatest successes, however, seemed to center in the Hugo and Sardou dramas, both tragedies and comedies. Many of these plays were written around her, and "fitted like a glove."

A physical description of Bernhardt is difficult. In her youth she undoubtedly was what might be called beautiful, although from the French standpoint her slimness was against her. The greatest interest in the actress, aside from her art, was the tenacity with which she clung to her girlish appearance. At 75 she might have passed for a woman of 30, so well had the features of her younger days been preserved.

Harmony of Features Makes Her "Divine Sarah."

Bernhardt seems to have had no dissensions about her appearance. By themselves her features—high cheek bones, aquiline nose, and lips parted above an almost masculine chin—were not pleasing, but taken together they comprised the harmony of expression which gave her the title of "the Divine Sarah." She admitted on one occasion that the effect of her long white face emerging from a long black sheath was by no means pleasant. "In this rig I look like an ant," she said.

Bernhardt was the most famous, for her death scenes, but it is doubtful if her breathless, spellbound perhaps, audiences ever knew that many of them were played while the actress was suffering almost unbearable agonies from her various physical ailments, of which she never was heard to complain.

Patience seemed to have been one of Bernhardt's inborn characteristics. She would spend weeks and even months trying to correct technical faults in some member of her company, and then, if the subject failed to improve, she would explode and have nothing more to do with him either on or off the stage—not even speaking to him under any circumstances.

Keen interests in heart affairs.

She always displayed a keen interest in the heart affairs of her troupe, and delighted in holding a "cupid's court" in her private car, at which she would require aggrieved swains and the objects of their affections to submit their differences—Bernhardt to be the final arbiter.

Bernhardt Liked to Visit This City

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her art, though one noticed that she had grown somewhat out of the vogue familiar to the public and had been graven on the minds of fervid theatergoers as the ideal representation of the ever "Divine Sarah."

Photo Taken on Street.

On one of Madame Bernhardt's more recent visits to Omaha, 20 years ago, Louis Boswick, commercial photographer, then staff photographer for The Omaha Bee, was assigned by Col. T. W. McCullough,

then managing editor, to get a photograph of the actress for a feature story.

Boswick made his way to the railroad station, where he attempted to pose the "Divine Sarah," but she declined most emphatically.

Boswick knew the driver of the cab which had been engaged to transport the actress from her train to the theater.

"Put down the top of the cab," he urged the driver, "so that she may enjoy the sunshine, and then when you go to turn from Tenth street into Farnam, just rein in your horses for a second. That's all I will need."

Eats Dinner on Car

He was right. The cabbie did it for his friend, and the enterprising Boswick made his snapshot which he speedily developed and printed.

The camera man took a proof of the picture to the special car of the madame, where she was delighted with the result.

White Doesn't Mince Words in Giving Facts

"You do ze cheeks so well," she told him. "You make ze cheeks what you call eet—plump."

So pleased was she that Boswick was permitted to photograph her to his heart's content, in many poses.

And he was invited to take dinner with her, dinner at which were served exquisite viands, a dinner which Boswick still recalls with pleasure.

On September 8, 1918, the divine Sarah appeared at the Orpheum theater for the last time. She gave two short sketches, "Du theatre au Champ d'Honneur" and "La Dame aux Camelias."

Her previous engagement here, according to W. P. Byrne, of the Orpheum theater, was for five days beginning Monday, April 14, 1913. At that time she was supported by Lou Tellegen who filled an engagement here two weeks ago, and gave a different play each performance.

where she planned to build a magnificent tomb crowned with a marble statue of herself, the arms outstretched as if beckoning to harassed fishermen imperilled by the storms.

Death had a weird fascination for Bernhardt, and for years she contemplated it with what appeared to be an uncanny humor. The wish she most often expressed was that she might die in the midst of her triumphs. "I shall play until death," she said, "and the death I hope for is the death Sir Henry Irving died."

Her English contemporary died on tour, being stricken with apoplexy after a performance in 1905.

Toward the end of 1922, it was thought this desire might shorten her life considerably, for while she was dangerously ill in her Paris home, she pitted her iron will against the physicians and prepared to resume her part in a new play by Sacha Guitry that she was playing in when stricken. She felt the end was near, her sick-room attendants said, and wanted to be acting a leading role when death rang down the curtain.

White Doesn't Mince Words in Giving Facts

strength afterwards. Billousness, headaches and indigestion pulled me down and kept me miserable. Pains in my stomach from sourness, gas and bloating, and heart palpitation, robbed me of all comfort, and I was nervous as a cat. I could get but little sleep and felt as rundown as a wornout motor.

"But the Tanlac treatment brought me up on my feet with a bang, and rain or shine I'm on the job every day. I revel in my meals now and never have an ache or a pain. My friends are always complimenting me on my fine health, and every time I come back with a boost for Tanlac."

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"I was stricken with the Flu and didn't seem able to get back my

Photo Taken on Street.

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White Doesn't Mince Words in Giving Facts

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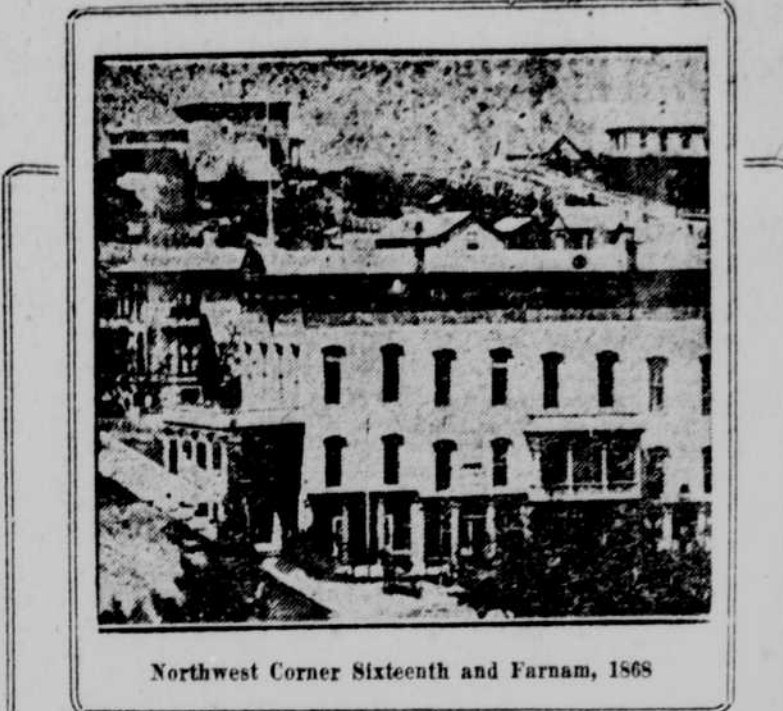
Photo Taken on Street.

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Photo Taken on Street.



Northwest Corner Sixteenth and Farnam, 1868

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Jenny Lind sang there with flickering lamps for footlights. In 1868 John R. Porter held police court in the first floor offices.

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The shame of a blemished face!

blood-cells! That is what you need when you see pimples staring at you in the mirror. Blackheaded pimples are worse! Eczema is worse yet! You can't try everything under the sun—you'll find only one answer, more cell-power in your blood! The tremendous results produced by an increase in red-blood-cells is one of the A. B. C.'s of medical science. Red-cells mean clear, pure rich blood. They mean clear, rosy, lovable complexions. They mean nerve power, because all your nerves are fed by your blood. They mean freedom forever from pimples, from the blackhead pest, from blotchiness, from skin eruptions, from that tired, exhausted, run-down feeling. Red-blood-cells are the most important thing in the world to each of us. S. S. S. will build them for you. S. S. S. has been known since 1859, as one of the greatest blood-builders, blood-cleansers and system strengtheners ever produced. S. S. S. is sold at all drug stores in two sizes. The larger size bottle is the more economical.

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