

MARY ANDERSON AS SHE IS TO-DAY

By Edward W. Bok

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

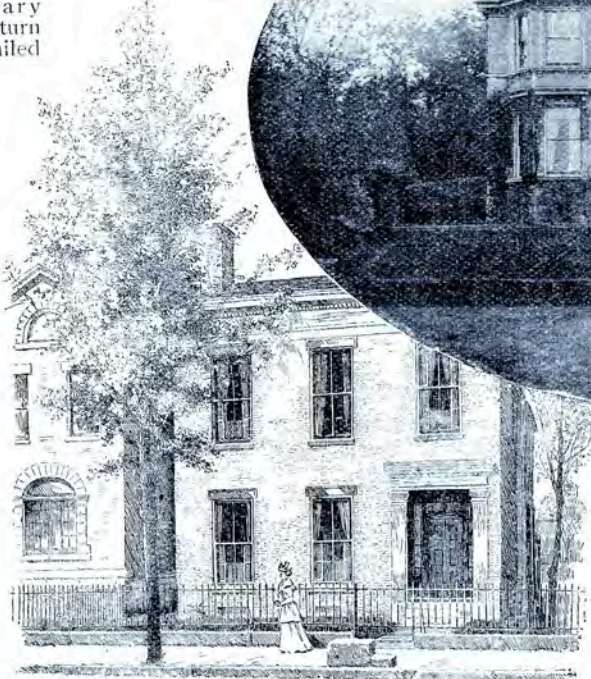


MARY ANDERSON OF TO-DAY
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retire from public life. The facts in the case are that the work was commenced while she was still Mary Anderson, and while England and America were at her feet in adulation of her as an actress. Eight years ago the first chapter was written, and she promised an American friend that she would finish it then. But her illness intervened, and it was laid aside. After her marriage and retirement from public life the friend again urged her to finish the task, and once more she made a promise to do so. But her reluctance to appear before the public in any sense reconquered her, and she wrote only two more chapters. Then the friend who had urged her to write her memoirs, died, and she determined to fulfill her promise to him. The autobiography was again taken up, and completed last summer. It was her wish to have the book appear very quietly. But the persuasions of friends finally prevailed, and although she had put aside the offers of nearly all the American magazines she was finally induced to make an exception in favor of THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, a magazine of which she had always been a reader. She wished that her words might reach the largest audience, so that while telling the story of her life she might reach the ears of hundreds of thousands of young girls and disillusionize them with the glitter and glare of the footlights, and possibly dissuade them from undertaking a career on the stage. This may not have made itself as definitely apparent in the articles published in the magazine as it is in her complete autobiography which is published this month under the title of "A Few Memories." But even in the articles published in the JOURNAL it has been quite clear to the discerning that while Mrs. de Navarro pictured the bright side of her career she never missed a chance to present the contrasting one. Her autobiography simply echoes her wish to dissuade as many young girls as she can from entering the theatrical profession—no matter how gifted they may be. She does not, from any standpoint, believe in the stage as a career for girls, and few can speak from a brighter experience than can

WAS early in 1889 that the American public saw Mary Anderson for the last time on the stage. The effects of overwork had shown themselves during the latter part of 1888, but the actress did not heed Nature's demand for rest, and persisted in fulfilling the professional engagements already made for her. When she reached Washington from Cincinnati in March, 1889, she was a sick woman, but she played her week's engagement at the Capital, notwithstanding. Then she journeyed to Baltimore, where she was to appear, but the physician who was called to administer to her ills forbade her from further work, and ordered a long rest—absolute respite from physical effort and mental care. This advice her broken health impelled her to accept, and Mary Anderson's career as an actress was ended then and there. She laid aside the sceptre as "Queen of the American Stage," which she had held unchallenged for several years, and has never since regretted her action nor sought to take up her professional work again. From Baltimore she proceeded directly to Philadelphia to consult Dr. S. Weir Mitchell. That physician readily diagnosed her ailment to be a breaking down of the nervous forces. She was, in short, the victim of overwork, and was not, as was cruelly reported at the time, and has since been more cruelly repeated, threatened with mental disorder.

A few weeks later came the announcement that Mary Anderson would never return to the stage. People smiled knowingly and said, "Oh, she will come back; she cannot keep away from the footlights." Others in her profession had retired and returned, and Mary Anderson would, they thought. But it is seven years now since she made her declaration, and she has kept her word. Nor is it at all likely that she will ever change this decision. Offers, princely in their nature, are repeatedly being made to her, but she turns a deaf ear to them all. Only the past summer overtures came to her from an American manager which insured a big fortune if she would consent to return to the stage for a brief period. There were six figures in the amount stipulated, and the first figure was equal to the total number of numerals in the whole amount. But it had no effect upon her. She turned away from it easily and without an effort. "No," she said, "I am through with the stage." And that was all.



HER LOUISVILLE HOME

THE statement has been made, during the publication of Mrs. de Navarro's autobiographical articles in THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, that the writing of her memoirs was, in a sense, a reversal of her determination to

Mary Anderson. But even the unusual success which she attained showed her the other phases of an actress' life—those phases which confront ninety-nine out of every hundred girls who go upon the stage. And these phases are so dangerous, so full of pains, trials,

disappointments and griefs, that the results, no matter how brilliant, are not worth the ordeal necessary to reach them. It is to Mrs. de Navarro's lasting credit as a woman that she has the courage of her convictions, and gives them utterance openly and fearlessly. I have digressed from my story with this paragraph because I think that what I have said here is due to Mrs. de Navarro and her purpose in giving the interesting story of her life to the public. And now to resume the story I started out to tell:

A MONTH'S complete rest, combined with Dr. Mitchell's professional care, did much for the prostrated actress. On April 3, 1889, she left Philadelphia, and sailed from New York and away from her native land on the following day. For an entire year she sought seclusion in England and devoted herself to mending her badly-shattered health. Then, on June 17, 1890, she was married, without the least ostentation, at the Roman Catholic Chapel of St. Mary's, in Hampstead, to Mr. Antonio de Navarro, a friend of over ten years' standing—both of herself and of her family. The young couple traveled in Europe for awhile, and then returned to England to settle in a cozy home of their own at Tunbridge Wells, an hour's ride from London.

In 1893 death came into this happy young woman's life, and carried off her stepfather, Dr. Hamilton Griffin, who had been both father and manager to her—her own father, Charles Joseph Anderson, having died in America in 1863, when he was but twenty-nine years of age, and the future actress only four. The following year, on December 7, 1894, death came even closer to Mrs. de Navarro, taking from her her new-born son after but a few hours of life. For a long time Mrs. de Navarro was seriously ill, and for a few weeks the gravest doubts of her recovery prevailed. But she rallied, and safely passed through the only sorrow that has entered into her married life.

FOR one need only spend a few hours with the Mary Anderson—it seems strange to call her aught else, so I adhere to the familiar name—of to-day to see how

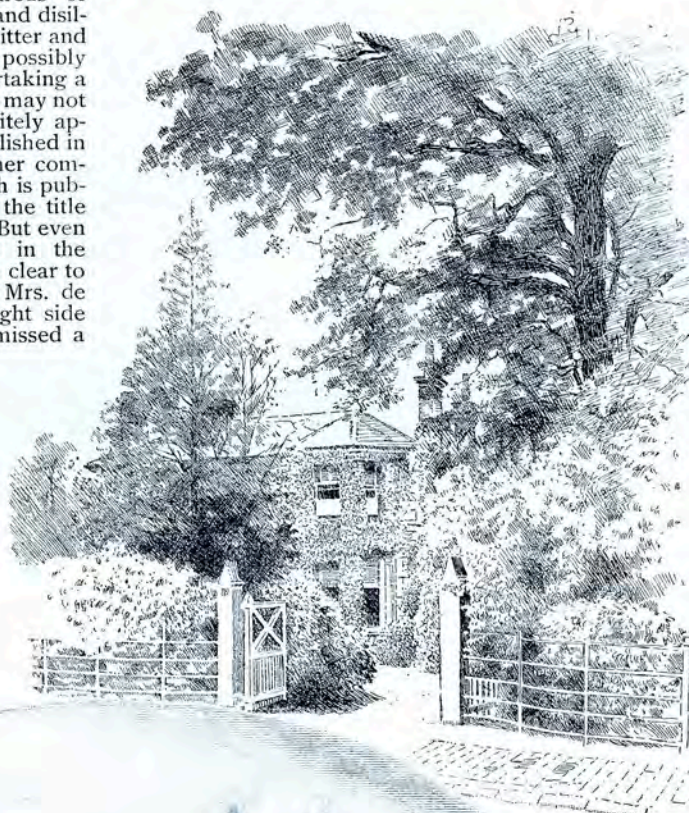
thoroughly happy is her life. There is no mistaking true married happiness when one meets it, and one certainly finds it in the Navarro household. Husband and wife have spent nearly six years together, and they are lovers still. Their life seems a continuous honeymoon. It is a world for two in which they live—not a selfish, contracted world, but a world of perfect understanding, perfect union and ideal love. Their interests are one; their thoughts seem to belong to each other. It is the life of true comrades which these two lead, and it has the strength of true affection about it. To picture such an ideal, sacred union as exists here in cold type seems incongruous; surely, it is impossible. One can only see it, and almost catch its glow. But there

the pen must cease. It is a memory to carry away, but not a recollection to describe.

A little more than a year ago their home at Tunbridge Wells was leased, and since then Mr. and Mrs. de Navarro have been wanderers upon the face of the earth, so to speak. They go where they please; they stay as long as they please. Sometimes the fancy of the one or of the other takes them across the

Channel for a stay in Paris. At other times their tastes lead them further into Europe, and they wander on the continent. Last summer they chose a quiet nook at Malvern Wells, one of those idyllic spots in the Worcestershire country of England where life seems well nigh perfect. Here, in a comfortable but unostentatious private hotel resembling a French *pension*, the Navarros spent three months, crossing over the country now and then to Broadway, a place made famous as an artists' resort by Frank Millet, John Sargent, Edwin Abbey and Albert Parsons. After the

beauty of autumn left the hills of Worcestershire they journeyed to London, and spent a couple of months with Mrs. de Navarro's mother and sister, whose home is



THREE VIEWS OF HER TUNBRIDGE WELLS HOME

there. And so their days are happily spent: it is a season in one ideal spot, then a season in another, and with friends at hand wherever they may choose to go they can enjoy their own company, or that of others, as may best suit their pleasure.

Mrs. de Navarro's love of woods, fields and streams, in which her husband joins, will doubtless lead them to finally settle in one of those idyllic rural spots in which England abounds. In fact, there is now such a place to which their inclinations tend—a spot in the south of England, a typical English snugger, nestling in a beautiful country, where bowery lanes, and round green hills, and thatched-roof cottages abound. It is a picturesque house, smothered in roses and concealed among trees. Once it was the home of a great painter. To point it out on the map would be to reveal a confidence, while to present a picture of it is not. Hence, one of the illustrations to this article portrays the nook which some day, most probably, will be the spot selected by the happy young couple for their home.

BUT to see and to talk with Mary Anderson as she is to-day brings one no suggestion whatever of the once-famous "Queen of the Stage." Nothing about her recalls her past triumphs in the histrionic art, unless it be her beauty and her manner. She is now thirty-seven, in the full flush of perfect, mature womanhood. One not having seen her since she abandoned her professional career will observe that her tall, graceful figure is more rounded—with a slight tendency toward stoutness. Six years have made no changes in the beauty of her features except to ripen and soften it. The girlish fairness has been transformed into a more mature, womanly beauty. Her vivacity of manner—always one of her most delightful characteristics—has not been modified in the slightest degree; the same heartiness of spirit and healthy enthusiasm, so well remembered by those who knew her intimately; the same wholesomeness of thought; the same merry laugh—as if she laughed because she enjoyed nothing better in the world; the same quickness and readiness of speech; the same animation of the eyes are unchanged unless they be further accentuated, and in their development made more winsome and attractive. But of the actress nothing remains. Her past is her past, and unless one recalls it neither its trials nor triumphs seem to come back to her. And even when the past—her stage career—is brought up the results are not exactly satisfactory, considered from a conversational standpoint. She recalls her successes, of course; Mary Anderson is not the woman to forget the kindnesses that were showered upon her. But that part of her life is past—to her—and nearly lost sight of. Not a portrait in her surroundings presents or suggests her as an actress. Of all the hundreds of character photographs taken of her she does not possess a single one. Nor has she a program of one of her performances. The names of the American theatres where she scored even her greatest successes she can recall only with apparent effort. So thoroughly blotted out are the details of the most important epochs in her stage career that when she was asked, only recently, the date of her last appearance, she replied that it was at the time of the inauguration of President Hayes, twelve years wide of the actual occurrence! Nor does she seem in any way to incline toward refreshing her recollection of the chief incidents of her brilliant dramatic career. She is simply too happy in the living present to pay much heed to the dead past.

IT is only natural to believe that one who figured so prominently in the stage history of this generation should, even when retired from it, feel an inclination to see the efforts of others. But in this Mary Anderson also differs from her fellow-actors. The theatre does not even appear to hold for her any unusual degree of fascination. In fact, she may be said to attend the theatre very rarely. She is more frequently absent from the conspicuous or noteworthy theatrical productions than she is in attendance upon them.

"But you must enjoy the play keenly when you do attend!" I suggested to her.

"I enjoy it, but not more so than my husband, or my mother, or any one else who likes to see a good play well acted," she replied. And there was no enthusiasm in the voice whatever.

"And you never long for the life again when you see it before you?" I asked.

"Oh, dear, no! It doesn't appeal to me in that way at all. When I see a Shakespearean play the thought never occurs to me that I played a part in it myself once. I guess it must be that I never played that part very well. And now, come and I'll show you a grand view. Come on, Tony"—to her husband. The prospect of a climb up a steep hill seemed to interest her more than all the plays and players on the stage.

"Now, isn't that grand; isn't that sublime?" she said enthusiastically as one beautiful afternoon we stood upon the summit of a hill, and miles of English landscape lay in the valleys beneath us. Neither her husband nor myself could talk after the exertion of the hour's climb. But she could and did. We simply nodded, and puffed and sparred for breath. Then, for just a single moment, the actress came up before me, as she recited, in the sweet-toned voice with which so many are reminiscently familiar, some beautiful lines of Tennyson's. And as she stood there with God's sunshine pouring full upon her face, her figure erect, her eyes sparkling in appreciation of the delightful landscape, and her cheeks flushed from the exercise, she presented a picture that I wish all Americans could have seen.

"I love to see acres of blue sky," broke in upon my reverie. "I just adore God's pure sunshine. Oh, it is so good to live! But, come on! Now we'll do some climbing," and looking far down the path ascended, we men wondered by what name our fair companion called what we had been doing to reach that present height!

But no outdoor exercise seems too much or too great for Mrs. de Navarro. She delights in the open air, a vigorous walk, a hard climb, a drive in the teeth of the wind, or a brisk gallop in the saddle. Lord Tennyson, who was one of the warmest admiring friends of the fair American, always found delight in having her accompany him on his strolls over the great rolling downs near Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. Lord Tennyson's family became greatly attached to her upon her first visit, and are her closest friends. Each summer she visits the family, who look forward always with the pleasantest anticipations to having her as their guest. The present Lord Tennyson himself aided her and her husband in preparing her memoirs for publication, and read the entire manuscript, proffering many suggestions which the authoress gladly availed herself of.

As I have said, Mrs. de Navarro is happiest when outdoors. She attires herself for her outings in a costume which has greater regard for the comfort of its wearer than for style or appearance. "I look disreputable, I know," she said one day when starting for a walk, "but we don't care for style, Tony and I, do we, Tony? We go in for comfort." And they get it, too. The weather, however bad, never deters them from taking their walks or drives. They simply dress to discount the discomforts it offers.

SOCIETY—the society with the large S—sees next to nothing of Mrs. de Navarro now. When she goes to London from the country the society she cares for is that of her own family circle, and the little groups of friends, the painters, poets and authors, who were among the first to give her greeting when she came to England. Her chief amusement is to go to the picture galleries of every town she visits. The gray old cathedrals of England, and the quaint streets of gabled buildings interest her immensely. Her enthusiasm is greatest when she can ramble about

helpmeet and inseparable companion. The two are never apart. Charming a woman as Mary Anderson is, her husband, Antonio de Navarro, is none the less attractive in his strong and manly character. He comes of good stock, and his gentle breeding manifests itself. Although generally called Antonio de Navarro, his full baptismal name is Antonio Fernando Navarro de Viana. On his father's side he comes of noble Spanish and Italian lineage, one of his ancestors, Pedro Navarro, accompanying Columbus on his second voyage to America in 1493. In statecraft and military and naval history the Navarro family is prominent in three countries: Spain, Italy and America. Antonio Navarro (appointed by Philip II) was Admiral-in-Chief of all the naval forces in America in 1579. On his mother's side the husband of Mary Anderson comes of old Dutch stock: the Dykers family. He is the eldest son, and is now thirty-six years of age. He is a graduate of Columbia College, in New York, a member of the New York bar, and previous to his marriage practiced law. In personal appearance he is the exact opposite of his wife. He is shorter in stature, with dark eyes and black hair strongly suggesting his Spanish lineage. He can truthfully be called a handsome man. His manner is retiring, his whole style of deportment being typical of that quiet reserve and modesty which distinguish good breeding. He has linguistic accomplishments, speaking three languages with equal fluency. In music he shares his wife's fondness, and performs on several instruments, excelling upon the organ. He is well-read, widely-traveled, and, in consequence, a delightful conversationalist.

WHEN she is in London Mrs. de Navarro is always surrounded by members of her own family. Her mother, Mrs. Griffin, lives away up in the north-western part of the city—Haverstock Hill. When she comes to town Mrs. de Navarro and her husband make it their stopping-place. Her younger half-sister, Miss Blanche Griffin, even prettier of face than her fond and famous sister, lives with her mother, while her eldest brother, Joseph Anderson—who, it will be remembered, married one of the daughters of Lawrence Barrett—lives not far away in a home of his own. Like his sister, he

also renounced the stage some years ago, and is now attached to one of the English newspapers. Her stepbrother, Frank Griffin, likewise lives in England. So that on her side it is, indeed, a reunited and almost complete family whenever Mrs. de Navarro finds her way to the English metropolis. Mr. de Navarro's family resides in America—most of the time in New York City. This fact, and her love for her native land, will not unlikely bring Mrs. de Navarro back to America on a visit some time, perhaps soon. She has a wish to come, and so has her husband. But naturally they prefer spending most of their time in England. Rural life is so infinitely more pleasant there than anywhere else in the world, and when she wishes to see her mother and family she need only go to London.

She has property there; her closest affiliations are now there. Who can cavil at her, then, for staying where she finds life so ideally happy?

AND so one must leave the Mary Anderson that was and the Mrs. Antonio de Navarro that is, happy as a queen in the love of

her husband, and with her kin close to her. Happier by far is she as a

wife than when, as an actress, she received the plaudits of two continents. She presents, unquestionably, the most remarkable example ever known of voluntary and contented relinquishment of a brilliant career crowned with fame, wealth, the homage of the public and the favor of great men and illustrious women. Mrs. Kendall, a close friend of the Navarros, spoke truthfully when not long ago she said: "Mary Anderson's retirement is the most absolute that has been heard of in our profession or in any other. It entitles her to public respect quite as much as any of the brilliant work she ever did. It is characteristic of her. She has kept her word. She has not coquetted with the public. She never did that. But she has done what we all say we will do, but what so few of us, perhaps none of the rest of us, ever do, she has maintained the privacy of her retirement. She has resisted all the attractions of publicity, and strictly maintains the sanctity of private life. We should honor her for her consistency."

THE idea must not be had, however, that it is from any disrespect to the public that she withdraws from its gaze. She simply believes (and who shall deny her the right to the belief?) that she gave to the public an adequate return for its liberal bestowals and loyalty; she yielded to it as much of her life as she felt she could or should spare. The rest of her life she gives to her husband and those who are dearest to her. If the urgent persuasions of her friends prevail she may write occasionally for the public, since she has demonstrated that she can interest and charm with her pen. A diary, in which she has kept a record of her life since her marriage, is delightful reading, and it is not improbable that she will allow this to be published. But whatever other talents, gifts or charms may be hers they will be given expression only for her family and her friends. No one can say this is selfishness, for I venture to say that not a more generous woman lives to-day than Mrs. de Navarro. Were she vain she would not have retired while the world was ringing with praise of her beauty and talent. Had she felt the fascinations of publicity she would not have divorced herself from the public. For Mary Anderson is not an ascetic. She enjoys living, and that is what she is doing to-day.



THE PROSPECTIVE HOME IN DEVONSHIRE

the places where history was made. Under competent guidance she explored old London to its very core not long since. She enjoys that sort of thing much more than the fêtes which were once held in honor of her as a tragedy-queen. It was better fun for her to dine off beefsteak pudding at Dr. Johnson's old haunt, the "Cheshire Cheese," than to be the chief guest at a banquet in Mayfair. There was more delight in rambling through the precincts of the Temple, and visiting Middle Temple Hall, where, as they say, a performance of "Twelfth Night" was given under Shakespeare's direction before Queen Elizabeth, than to enact a Shakespearean heroine to a cheering audience. And such are her chief delights and diversions.

MARY ANDERSON'S loyalty to the church of her faith has always been one of her most prominent and beautiful characteristics. Never during her stage days did she permit her fatiguing work to interfere with her devotions. Sunday morning, in whatever city or town she happened to be, found her at worship. The nearest Roman Catholic church was her temple, where she passed at least two hours invoking spiritual guidance. It is the same now. If anything, her devotion to the church is greater. During all of last summer each Sunday morning she attended the little Catholic church at Malvern Wells, at early mass, singing in the choir while her husband supplied the accompaniment on the organ. She has a rich, liquid quality in her voice that is easily and prettily distinguishable in a quartette. When she was first attracted to a public career, as she has made clear in her autobiographical papers in THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, it was to the operatic stage her mind first turned. Now, with leisure at her command and only her own inclinations to follow, she has undertaken the cultivation of her voice under one of the best vocal teachers in London. This talent, she explains, she means to use in the future in singing in small Catholic churches wherever her travels may lead her. In this way, fortunately, perhaps, the public—or a small part of it—may see her again.

NOT a little of the happiness which is Mary Anderson's to-day comes from the fact that she married the right man. That her husband has proven his right to her affections admits of no doubt. For nearly ten years he was her suitor; for six years he has been her devoted