

## CHAPTER XII.

Mlle. Bernhardt's visit to America—keen competition among speculators to secure her—Mr. Abbey's princely offer finally accepted—Mr. Schwab proceeds to Paris and engages a company to support her—particulars of her tour in this country.

A NY sketch of Mlle. Bernhardt's career would be inexcusably incomplete if it did not include mention, however brief, of the engagement she is about to play in this country under the management of Mr. Henry E. Abbey. This gentleman's enterprise is worthy of all commendation; nay more: his liberality and downright pluck in embarking so large an amount of capital in that which, after all, is a speculation, demand the recognition which they will doubtless receive at the hands of a generous nation, by the hearty patronage of the theatre-going public, which alone can render the undertaking a successful one. It was indeed an anachronism that Mlle. Bernhardt should have played two engagements in London, not to mention, furthermore, that the inhabitants of two second-rate capitals of Europe had been afforded an opportunity of witnessing her marvellous impersonations, and should yet be a stranger to the boards of the American stage. Surely New York, with its enormous wealth, its refined and rapidly-increasing upper class, its liberality in relation to the encouragement of the fine arts, and its world-wide renown as the Tom Tiddler's Ground of operatic and histrionic celebrities, should no longer sigh inefficaciously for a sight of the idol of the modern stage. But while half of the dilettanti of New York were thus thinking and murmuring, Mr. Abbey was acting, and in May last he went to Europe to open negotiations with the adorable Sarah for a season in America. On his arrival he soon found that he was not the only Richmond in the theatrical field holding out baits of untold dollars with which to attract Mlle. Bernhardt to these hospitable shores. Mr. Stetson, of the Globe Theatre, Boston, was ready and willing to close an engagement with the heroine of the hour for one hundred performances, for which he was willing to pay the princely price of \$100,000. A French millionaire, whose knowledge of matters theatrical was limited to the ordinary experience of those whose place in the house is insured by a monetary pay-