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David Scott Mitchell.









# Souvenir Nance O'Neil



Nance O'Neil  
as Lady Teazle





*Very Sincerely  
Meredith*







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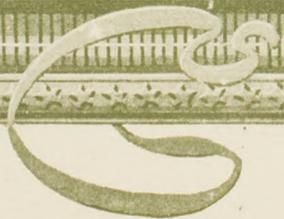
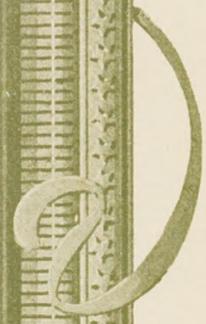


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**T**HE celebrated critic, Allan Dale, made a prediction in his paper, the "New York Journal," December 6th, 1896, as follows:—"The most interesting point about a not uninteresting performance at the Murray Hill Theatre was the appearance of an absolutely unknown actress, who by sheer innate dramatic value dominated a large audience and stamped herself indelibly in many memories. NANCE O'NEIL is the lady's name, of which I had never even heard until I went to see McKee Rankin in "True to Life." You are all destined to hear of MISS O'NEIL in the future, however, unless I am singularly mistaken, or unless the young actress misdirects her career. NANCE O'NEIL is one of those rare young women whose fragrantly feminine personality has the power of swaying men and women without recourse to petty stage tricks. You will be told that MISS O'NEIL is still quite untutored. I say let her thank her lucky stars that she is so, and let her remain so. To be tutored means to be mistress of all the hideously stupid "business" that is rapidly opening up the stage to ridicule. Nobody would call MISS O'NEIL untutored if she mopped tears from her forehead, ran her fingers through her hair to express emotion, gurgled throatily every time she felt tearful, and walked up and down like a caged tigress?" From such an education let her hold herself aloof, and, in the meantime before she is tempted, go and see her in her adorably untutored condition. Who knows if you may get the chance to do so six months from now." And a few months later James O'Donnell Bennett, of the "Chicago Journal," said:—"I wish I could say that I 'discovered' NANCE O'NEIL. I wish I could make you believe I toddled way over to the Academy yesterday afternoon, to see that always admirable actor, McKee Rankin, and that by chance—just by the merest chance—I stumbled upon NANCE O'NEIL and found in her the spark of true genius. But NANCE O'NEIL has been discovered already by the New York critics and playgoers. These playgoers and critics put away their unkindness and merciless cynicism. They accepted NANCE O'NEIL and rejoiced in her because, despite her uncouthness, they saw in her work an utter naturalness, a courageous fidelity to the simple, honest methods of ex-

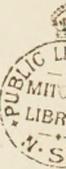
pressing the big emotions. NANCE O'NEIL'S face is expressive and tremulous with emotion. The figure is lithe and gives her a certain distinction of appearance. Her voice—and about it there can be no quibble—is strongly vibrant, rich and flexible. Next to her capacity to feel and express, it is her most precious possession. Above all, she has the fine, brave abandon of true genius. Her eyes suffuse like a child's when she is sad. Her mouth hardens and her lips are cruel when she is bowed by the heaviness of misfortune undeserved. In a word, she is utterly natural. To quote the title of the play she is 'True to Life.' I believe that some day you will be proud of her. And then I shall be proud too, for, though I didn't discover her, I have done the next best thing, I have tried frankly to help her along."

Dating from the period, less than four years ago, when the greatest Dramatic Critics in the United States gave her credit for being more than an ordinary actress, her progress in the profession has been of the most surprising nature, and it is even difficult to believe after witnessing any of her remarkable fine portrayals that but six years ago she made her *debut* on the stage. In that time she has run the gamut from novice to star, a fact that has possibly only once been paralleled, and that by the other celebrated American Actress, Mary Anderson.

MISS O'NEIL was born within sight of the "Golden Gate" in San Francisco, California, October, 6th, 1874, was reared in Oakland, California, attended Snell's seminary in the same City, from which institution she graduated with high honors in her 19th year. Her young life since adopting the stage as a profession has been a busy one, made up of hard study, constant rehearsals, long journeys, and a personal supervision of all the little details of dramatic productions which the theatre going public demand. At the present writing MISS O'NEIL has in her repertoire, and will present during her Australian season, which will end on or about December 1st, 1900, the following plays:—"Magda," "Camille," "School for Scandal," "Peg Woffington," "The Jewess," "Elizabeth, Queen of England," "Oliver Twist," "Guy Mannering," "Scarlet Letter," and "Macbeth." NANCE O'NEIL'S tour is under the personal direction of Mr. McKee Rankin.

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