

# A NOTED ACTRESS ILL AND IN WANT

## Johnstone Bennett Deserted Except by One True Friend.



Johnstone Bennett.

San Francisco Chronicle

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**L**OS ANGELES, August 15.—The Record says: Miss Johnstone Bennett, only four years ago the most famous American impersonator of male characters, is now ill, bankrupt and almost deserted. Unable to help herself, this woman, who has had thousands of theatergoers at her feet and who has made and spent fortunes, now has just one friend to cling to and must ask aid of the Actors' Fund to keep her from want. Miss Mary Graham, who was a member of Miss Bennett's own company when she starred the country in "A Female Drummer," has come to California with the broken-down actress, her only faithful friend. Suffering with an incurable case of tubercular laryngitis, which has eaten away the rich tones of her one-time glorious voice and sapped the strength of her still youthful frame, Miss Bennett has only the memories of a most eventful life to cheer her.

The real life of most actresses may read prosaic enough, but Miss Bennett came upon the world "cast up from the sea." Years ago a vessel out of Hamburg was wrecked just off the coast of New Jersey. Washed ashore on a piece of wreckage were the bodies of a man and a woman, richly clad, and with them a little girl, still alive. When brought to life she could say was "Mary," and Mary she remained, not knowing the name of her father and mother nor her own age and nativity. Adopted by a kindly family by the name of Bennett, the little waif chose to fill out her own with the maiden name of the woman who had befriended her, and the infant rescued from the waves grew up "Johnstone Bennett."

Miss Bennett was most successful in male roles, and so completely did she fill the part that she finally secured a valet instead of a maid for her between-acts changes. "As these had to be made, to save time, right in the wings before the stage people," Miss Bennett declared, "I saw nothing out of the way in the arrangement, especially as a man could be so much more useful."

But her days of glamour are over, and, dying and deserted, Miss Bennett awaits the end in her pinched quarters in Los Angeles, leaving the world as she came into it—alone.