Madame Duse's Francesca seemed to me almost to justify her reputation and her enthusiastic reception by Boston dramatic critics. The play is simple, straightforward and lively, and the text in many places, poetry. The stage setting,—especially of Francesca's chamber,—was a brilliant series of pictures of medieval Italian life,—too lovely, in fact, to be marred as it was by the absurd red incandescent bulb which had to represent the terrible flaming torch of Francesca's apostrophe, and by the preposterous arrows which Paolo could not shoot his own length away. The costumes of the period,—one of the most gorgeous in the history of dress, were effective especially in the scene where the merchant overhauls in Francesca's room his pack of gay brocades. In the acting, too, there were unfortunate slips; e.g., in the performance I saw, Gianciotto forgot for a short time that he was lame, and afterward limped elaborately, in atonement. The killing in the last act, also, was feebly unreal. As a whole, however, the acting was remarkable. Italians gesticulate so spontaneously that, though sometimes inappropriate, their gestures are never stiff. S. Gialani has such a superb voice and did the part of Ostasio so well that it was a pity his character so suddenly dropped from the story. S. Mazzanti was perfect both as Ser Toldo, and as the merchant. S. Rossapina as Gianciotte, was easily the best male part; Madame Duse herself, though her voice is not pleasant, has grace and beauty of physique, subtle expression, and a sad, sometimes beautiful face. Her Francesca was so simply complete that even afterward you could n't tell how it was done. Its most conspicuous virtue, it seems to me,—a virtue which marked the whole performance,—was quietude and sureness and reserved force. The play remains in the mind as a wonderfully delicate rendering of a fiercely tragic masterpiece.

The Theatregoer.