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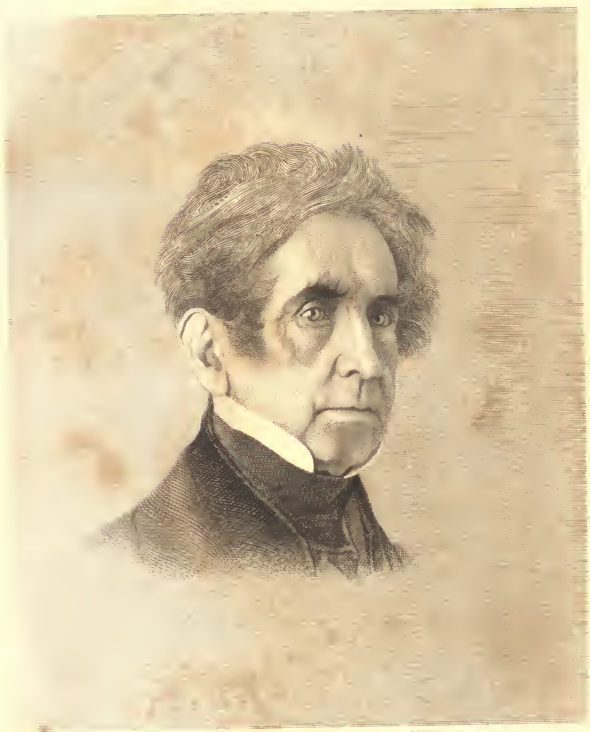












Wm B Wood,

# PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

# THE STAGE,

EMBRACING

NOTICES OF ACTORS, AUTHORS, AND AUDITORS,  
DURING A PERIOD OF FORTY YEARS.

BY

WILLIAM B. WOOD,

LATE DIRECTOR OF THE PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE, WASHINGTON, AND  
ALEXANDRIA THEATRES.

WITH A PORTRAIT.

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We are not all alone unhappy!  
This wide and universal theatre  
Presents more woful pageants  
Than the scene wherein we play!

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PHILADELPHIA:  
HENRY CAREY BAIRD,  
(SUCCESSOR TO E. L. CAREY.)  
1855.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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SOME years since, at the moment when I believed myself on the point of relinquishing theatrical pursuits forever, I made a promise to a friend, since deceased, to prepare the ground-work of an authentic sketch of the progress of the Drama here since I became connected with it in 1798, together with such recollections as might prove of interest or amusement in that connection. The design of my friend was himself to present it to the public for me, in a finished and more literary form. Very opposite, certainly to my wishes, events, quite unexpected, have combined to retain me in the profession until within a recent time, and have deprived me of any good opportunity to fulfil this promise. The death of the friend to whom I have alluded, puts it out of my power now to employ for this record any hand but my own. My 76th year reminds me "that the night cometh;" and this, with circumstances of weight with me, will excuse the fact that I now finally appear before the public as my own unpretending annalist.

No apology is requisite, I am sure, for any attempt, however humble, to leave some record of days and events connected with a high branch of art in America, and to delineate, even imperfectly, the state of public feeling for the last half century, upon a subject which has been from

the earliest times, as it will again hereafter be, of the most animating interest to mankind. The immortality of the Drama is inseparable from the immortality of Poetry, Music and Painting. The caprice of Fashion may give for a time allurements to other and very different enjoyments. The blunders which may be made from the incapacity or ignorance of Directors, may so injure it that it cannot but droop and pine. Managers may be ruined by dozens. Great actors may for a time disappear. But the Drama itself is not dead, but sleepeth. Each new generation must be made acquainted with Shakspeare. Editions of his works succeed each other with astonishing rapidity; and in no country has the great dramatist called forth to his illustration of late years, higher genius, profounder knowledge, or better taste, than in our own.\* No polite education can be attained without some acquaintance with this author; and the youthful reader will soon sigh for a living representation of the wonders of that creative pen. The student of Milton, Addison, Pope, Steel, Dryden, Young, Goldsmith, and all the chiefs of English literature, is hourly brought into feelings of interest for the Drama and its actors. How absurd then to talk of the Drama being nearly obsolete! Let a new Kean, or a new O'Neal, start forth into the mimic world, and the immense and deserved popularity of Rachell will soon cease to be the *latest* wonder. The importance of the stage is greatly undervalued by many who do not, or will not, perceive its immediate connection with morals and manners. A defence of the Drama is no object of the present work; nor is such thought necessary, while among the pillars of the stage may be found the names of Dr. Johnson, Milton, Addison, Young, Dr. Moore, Cumberland, W. Scott, Milman, Coleridge, Joanna Baillie and Holcroft

\* I refer particularly to the excellent editions—excellent too in different ways—of Mr. Gulian C. Verplank, and of the Rev. H. N. Hudson.

Undoubtedly the stage has recently been in a miserable state. And one of the apologies which I make to myself for the present publication, is to give it some benefit in a history for many years, which will be often much by way of contrast with its degraded condition; and which may show that nothing is less well founded than the belief commonly existing and often asserted, that this modern decline is brought about by the improved intelligence, taste and *morality* of a later day, and by the inferiority of the performers generally, when compared with their predecessors, both here and in Europe.

Connected with the motives and reasons I have already disclosed for publication, it will not I hope be deemed unworthy that I number among them the desire of holding out to the young and unreflecting a plain view of the difficulties and dangers of a profession, seen of course, by those who look upon it from without, under illusive lights, and strangely misunderstood, both by its admirers and enemies. And to those who take up a theatrical work with no further motive than to be amused with the follies, eccentricities, vices and miscarriages of actors, a theatrical career longer than common may give some clearer views than they have entertained of an actor's life and difficulties, and increase the measure of mercy towards these often mistaken and ill-judged laborers in search of fame.\*

\* The false judgment of the world with regard to actors is that perhaps which he only shares with other public servants. He is hardly estimated worse, by anybody, than the lawyer is by a large though ignorant class. In his letter to Lord Mansfield, Junius only represented the very common opinion: "As a practical profession," says this writer, "the study of the law requires but moderate abilities. The learning of a pleader is usually on a level with his integrity. The indiscriminate defence of right and wrong contracts the understanding while it corrupts the heart. Subtilty is soon mistaken for wisdom, and impunity for virtue. If there be any instances upon record, as some there are undoubtedly, of genius and morality united in a lawyer, they are distinguished by their antiquity, and operate as exceptions." Who would believe that

The favored actor, every reader will see, needs all his judgment to guard him against the dangers of *being popular*; while the *unfavored* claim some compassion, when found morose or unbending. Indeed, none but an actor can conceive how much he may be made to suffer, and often most undeservedly. He commences his career in doubt and terror; pursues it in constant anxiety; trembling at every step for the preservation of the little reputation which his toil and privations may have gained him, and which he feels may be destroyed by even the slightest and most unintentional offence; by public caprice; by successful or unworthy rivalry, the sufferings of impaired health, or of domestic affliction. He feels himself shut out from other professions. After having once embarked on the stormy stage, like the soldier he becomes unfitted for any other than his wonted duties. Among those who have quitted the theatre for other pursuits, how few have ever been even moderately

this man is speaking of a profession which Mr. Burke justly styles the noblest of all professions, and the professors of which, in all the active relations of government, trade, commerce, social and domestic life, is the first authority invoked in every case of doubt or difficulty. Though so harshly censured, he is not without his justification; and the answer of Holcroft to this malignant portrait of the legal practitioner will suggest to every thoughtful observer of just feelings much that will make a palliation for the actor's deviations: "Still the law and lawyers! Poor and thread-bare sarcasm! Laws are imperfect. Lawyers are but men, subject to catch the passions, nay the vices, with which it is their miserable lot to be in daily contact. Their temptations are innumerable. Their failings not a few. *But what are the clients who tempt them?* Many are honest. But many are tyrants, that would crush the helpless; wretches devoured by avarice; fools blinded by anger; knaves, the dupes of their own cunning villany, that trample down the boundaries of every social compact, and triumph most when most they are destructive. They come hot in project, bent on revenge, eager after mischief; and the lawyer's ear is assailed, bewildered, tormented by the passions, follies, fears, falsehoods and depravities of his clients. That which Omnipotence attempts not, they require of him—to change the nature of eternal right, and make the worse the better cause, or he and his profession must suffer all the obloquy which baffled rage and malice can impute."



prosperous! I speak of those who have previously attained a gratifying position on the stage. From this dangerous ground, when forbidden to advance, there is seldom left a chance to retreat. Could these pages impress this painful truth on a single youthful aspirant to histrionic fame, one of their best objects would be attained. The young enthusiast views only the bright spots of the picture; he sees the favored actor received with smiles and plaudits; glittering in fine dresses, and talked of with delight. He little dreams of the days and nights of painful toil, the mortifications and insults to which he has been exposed for years, perhaps, before he attained even a moderate estimation. In private life, if he should be of a prudent and honorable turn of mind, the chance is he will be stigmatized as haughty, morose or reserved, by the careless of his own profession, as well as the prodigal part of the world. If liberal and free-hearted, he fails to save money; and the same persons hold him wasteful and unprincipled. Even Garrick was called miserly, although his friend Dr. Johnson, the highest authority every way, affirms his belief that Garrick gave away more money, in proportion to his means, than any other man in England. It is notorious that most of the severe personal attacks made upon this performer during his latter years, were fully traced to unprincipled scribblers, whose unceasing importunities had tired out even *his* liberality. Of the professional sufferings of an actor, some little idea may be formed by any person who feels himself compelled *only to appear* cheerful at a social party, for a few moments, where no effort is expected from him and no disappointments felt if he proves silent, gloomy or reserved. But the poor actor, while writhing under severe physical pain and anguish day after day, and month after month, must rise from his bed of sorrow to encounter the severity of winter, in a dress only suited to the torrid zone, and not only appear gay and happy, but be expected to communicate a part of this feeling to the audience; or, what is far

worse, he must rouse himself from the bedside of some beloved object, whose life perhaps hangs upon a thread, and hurry into the din and forced labor of a theatre, doubtful whether his return may be in time to close the eyes of perhaps the last remaining object of affection upon earth.

Garrick used to remark that the privileges of an actor's life were to be *petted and pelted*. This is true of some favored performers; while the life of others resembles that of the politician, commencing in phenzy and continuing in a wild and ceaseless struggle. Garrick's own memoirs furnish evidence how deeply even this cherished favorite was compelled to suffer in feeling, and in that which some persons affected to consider more dear to him—his purse. The case of John Kemble is not less striking; and how deeply public outrage had sunk into the heart of this favored and honorable man, may be inferred from the following anecdote related to the writer by one of the parties. It will be recollected that on the retirement of this eminent actor from the stage, a magnificent dinner entertainment was given to him by the noble and literary leaders of London. On this occasion, Mr. Kemble may be said to have received honours till then unknown to modern actors, and reminding us of the days of Roscius and Paris. An audience, such as was hardly ever gathered in a theatre before, had recently contributed their portion of respect to the man to whom the stage owed so much, and had rendered his few last farewell nights of acting the most pleasurable of his life. The prolonged and enthusiastic shouts of a thronged and splendid audience were graced by every demonstration which garlands of laurels and other tributes of admiration could show. On the morning after these memorable scenes had closed, by his "Adieu to the Stage," he called at the book-store of a friend, who, congratulating him upon the events of the previous evening, said, "Mr. Kemble, if any public man had ever reason to feel unalloyed pride, you must have been that man last night." "Very true, John," replied the great trage-

dian, taking a pinch of snuff, "it was certainly all very fine; and yet I could not help recollecting that the rascals were once going to burn my house."\*

But however bright may be the hours of sunshine which the successful *actor* enjoys, the life of *the manager* is one of continued storms and clouds. A mild and happy sunset few experience. The quick sensibility necessary to constitute an actor of any pretensions, imposes on the person who controls him a most delicate task; while the regulation of the inferior performers becomes in other ways quite as difficult. Indeed, the slavish Director of such a strange community as a theatre, finds no moment of repose from anxiety and care, but recalls at every step the melancholy and disheartening truth:

"Vain is his task who strives to please you all."

So many motives combine to tempt ardent persons into the whirlpool of management, that any attempt at discouragement from this pursuit would be hopeless. Yet I may say, that in the long catalogue of theatrical directors within immediate recollection, a small number only—being those who have had the prudence to retire after a few fortunate seasons, have obtained a moderate competence; while, except in the cases of Davidge and Ducrow, scarcely a single instance occurs to me of a *persevering* manager dying in comfortable circumstances; from the grand Italian Opera of London, down to the lowest of the minor theatres. The result has been the same, whether they have been under the judicious control of such men as Lewis and Bannister, under the fantastic schemes of amateur committee men, or the more

\* Alluding to the circumstance of a number of persons connected with the infamous O. P. riots visiting Mr. Kemble's residence, which they were about to set on fire; an intention which with some difficulty they were prevented from putting into execution. Many of this mob were by no means of the lowest class; and some of them aspired to the character of gentlemen.

vulgar management of mere traders in acting. That this view of the manager's risks is not overdrawn, will perhaps appear by facts related in the following pages; and by this among others, that in one case the conflagration of an hour destroyed the fruits of twenty years of intense labor and of some good fortune.

Let me, however, not be thought to imply a want of kindness and indulgence in the audience towards managers generally. Such an imputation would in any case be untrue; and it would in my own case be singularly absurd at this moment, when I am about once more to draw on their stock of indulgence. For myself, I may declare, with no less of truth than of satisfaction, that I cannot recall a single instance, throughout my long theatrical career, of more than a momentary collision with *any actor of talent and worth, or with any auditor of common respectability.*

Mr. Dunlap's History of the American Theatre, discusses ably and amply the rise and progress of the Drama in the northern section of our country. My endeavor will be to describe the more southern theatres of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Alexandria. In what I have to say I would gladly avoid bringing myself very personally before the reader. But on reviewing the scenes of earlier years, I find my own life and fortunes so materially interwoven with the management and success of these establishments, as to compel me to make more frequent mention of myself than I can well reconcile, either to my taste or feelings. Perhaps, however, an old and not unfaithful public servant may be permitted the occasional use of the first person, in presenting a brief view of the circumstances which placed him in a situation where he necessarily became a prominent actor, and that in the scenes which he describes he may claim, on the score of past services, indulgence for stating with frankness the events of his professional life.

As it was my practice, from my first introduction in the theatre, to make some records, I have thought it advisable to

print as part of my memoirs some of these just as I penned them at the time. A portion of them are in the form of letters and memoirs, which I insert much as I wrote them. Of course these documents will detract from the rigid unity of a narrative; but as contemporary records they will perhaps present a more animated and truthful view than would be given by a more labored effort prepared at this later day.

And here let me say once for all, that I have made no effort, and that I disclaim all pretensions to accomplish a formal history. My life has not been that of an author. It has been passed in unintermitted devotion to the business of actor and manager; and while not unfamiliar with literature, that department of it which belongs to facility of composition, and to grace of *written* style, has of course received very little of my study. In addition to this, the stage, and all connected with it, can be understood only by observation or incident. Anecdote and brief detail are what is chiefly needed, for these ask but slight attention; and slight attention is all that the writer of dramatic annals is likely to receive. He must of course ever remember that he is producing a work to be read but once, and then to pass into the oblivion which no book of this nature, saving only Colly Cibber's life, ever escaped.

For myself, and my present volume, I can have no higher ambition than that in this, my first appearance in the humble part of a chronicler, in which I am brought before the public, I may be received with a portion of that favor with which so many of my former efforts have so often and so long been honored.



# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE STAGE.

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## CHAPTER I.

1797.

Early dramatic friends yet surviving—Birth at Montreal—Put to school to Mr. Hardie—First visit to the theatre in New York—Description of some of the company—Mr. and Mrs. Henry—Mrs. Morris—Mr. Hallam—Mrs. Pownall—Early pursuits and blighted prospects—The great scrip speculation—Ill-health and other misfortunes—Visit to Philadelphia—An interesting fellow-lodger—The author gets into prison and meets with distinguished company—A venture for the stage—Visits Annapolis and meets with great kindness—Terrors of a novice—Diary—First appearance—Illness—Southern Hospitality—Harwood.

OF all the author's early dramatic companions there only remain Mr. Blisset, and the author's relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Darley. The former, I learn from Professor Gibson's interesting "Rambles in Europe," resided lately in the Island of Guernsey; and his numerous and ardent admirers will learn with pleasure that he is enjoying the ease of a genteel competence. Mr. Darley may still be seen posting through the city of Philadelphia with his well-known rapid step, seemingly little worse for his long theatrical labors. Well directed economy has enabled him to retire in time from the turmoils of a profession which he never loved, to the quiet comforts of a happy home. Surrounded by an affectionate family, at the head of which is still to be seen the once lovely and interesting Miss E. Westray, now the respected Mrs. Darley. It is not un-

frequently a source of pride and satisfaction to hear these remnants of past times honorably contrasted with the melancholy careers of those who, entering upon life in different pursuits, and with infinitely greater advantages, have neglected or abused them.\*

My father's family Bible—a fine old edition of Baskett—records his marriage on the 29th October, 1768, to Miss Thomizen English; and my own birth on the 26th May, 1779, at Montreal, with my baptism on the following 6th of June, by the Rev. Mr. De Lisle. My father had gone to Montreal prior to the breaking out of the Revolution, from which place we returned to New York, just in time to see the embarkation of the last of the English troops on the cessation of hostilities. As a child, I was put to school to the late James Hardie, an excellent man, of very fine education, whose memory I am sure must yet be held in most respectful remembrance by all his pupils who survive. Introduced to the sight of it by my father, a serious and pious man, who was considered so fit a person to be a guardian of youth that he retained with credit during many years, (occupying it at his death,) the place of Master of Trinity church school, New York. I was influenced in early life to believe the theatre not only harmless, but instructive. Carefully selecting such performances as he conceived most suited to the age of the parties, he occasionally allowed me the enjoyment of a play; my companions being often the sons of the Bishop of the diocese, and of the other principal Episcopal clergymen of the city, with whose families my father's close connection with Trin-

\* Since writing the notice of the few surviving veterans of the stage, death has deprived me of the last of them in the decease of Mr. Darley. I remain now, too truly, "*The last of the old guard!*"



ity church brought me into frequent intercourse. I mention this last circumstance only as showing the estimation which the drama held in those days; an estimation well founded, indeed, when Washington, Hamilton, Knox, Steuben, and many other public characters of the highest distinction, joined with the most respected citizens of all ages of life in New York in composing the audience.

The first stage performance I ever witnessed will not easily be forgotten. It took place in the John street Theatre, New York: the play, "The School for Scandal," with the comic opera of the "Poor Soldier," favorite entertainments of General Washington, who with his family aids, Genl's. Hamilton, Knox, Col's. Webb, Lear, and I think other officers, were present. Henry, the Manager, requested permission to take me under his charge, and seated me on his knee in the orchestra during the evening. The time flew in unalloyed delight, until the fatal green curtain shut out all hope of further enjoyment. I can well remember that it was a common circumstance to see Henry in the orchestra, seated next the leader, giving his aid to the band, himself a good musical performer, when not otherwise engaged in the business of the evening. He was said to possess more than respectable musical acquirements.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry were the first performers who ever made a lasting impression upon me, particularly the lady, a perfect fairy in person. She usually came full dressed to the theatre, in the old family coach; and the fashion of monstrous hoops worn at that day, made it necessary for Mr. Henry to slide her out sideways, take her in his arms, and carry her like an infant to

the stage entrance. The carriage was a curious and rather crazy looking affair, and lest the gout, which rendered it indispensable to him, might not be generally known as an excuse for such a luxury, he decorated the pannels with two crutches, crossed; the motto—“*This or These.*” Mrs. Henry’s acting in *Lady Amaranth*, *Wild Oats*, and his in *John Dory*, are both fresh in my memory at this distance of time. They must have been excellent, for I have no remembrance of *Rover*, the principal character, though acted by Mr. Hodgkinson. Notwithstanding the merits of the performers, Mrs. Morris, I am well convinced, was generally considered the greatest object of attraction in the company. This she owed, perhaps, to a tall, imposing, well-formed person, and a very mysterious manner. At a later period I became more and more satisfied that she had been greatly overvalued; her enunciation was wretchedly imperfect, and her education still worse. She was one of the numerous fortunate instances of mere personal attraction being accepted as a substitute for more important mental qualifications. Her best performances must have been smart farce characters, and second class comedy; although I can remember her at Philadelphia, as the *Euphrasia*, *Lady Teazle*, *Lady Townly*, &c., long after Mrs. Merry’s accession to the Chestnut street company, in that place. From the earliest period I can also recollect the apparent want of a retentive memory in this lady, and her frequent dependence on the prompter in characters she must have acted hundreds of times. From my knowledge of her great professional pride, it is quite certain this was a natural defect.

Mr. Henry was, no doubt, more than a good actor.

The impression he made in *Eustace*, *St. Pierre*, *John Dory*, *Dumont*, *Major O'Flaherty*, and many others, has never been eclipsed by later representations; and I cannot attribute my high impressions of him to the fact that we sometimes fancy the first theatrical exhibition we have seen the best. When *Venice Preserved*, *Road to Ruin*, *Country Girls*, &c., were acted by Wignell's admirable company in 1797, I seemed to feel that it was the *first* time I ever saw these plays acted.

The mysterious manner alluded to in Mrs. Morris was not confined to the stage, but the chariness of her exposure to the vulgar eye of day was very amusing. So inveterate was her dislike to being seen in daylight, that Mr. Morris obtained from a near relative of mine permission to put up a little gate in his garden, by which Mrs. M. could pass from her lodgings in Maiden Lane direct to the theatre, without a circuit of Broadway. On the few occasions of her showing off freely as a pedestrian, I can truly assert that much more curiosity and bustle were excited than latterly at a Fanny Ellsler or a Fanny Kemble. She seemed to realize the boast of Bolingbroke—

“Being seldom seen,  
She could not stir, but like a comet  
She was wondered at.”

The walk of half a dozen miles, which the less artificial actors of modern times sometimes bodily execute, between the rehearsal and dinner, would have puzzled Mrs. Morris not a little, from the fact of her indulging, among other peculiarities of dress, in a pair of heels of such dangerous altitudes as required the utmost caution in her locomotion. A pair of these extraordinary elevations kept as a curiosity, and now

in the possession of the writer, will bear a bold comparison with the stilted heels on which some of our Sunday beaux have the rashness to venture their walks.

Mr. Hallam was at this time a formidable rival of Henry in tragedy, and greatly esteemed as the high comedian of the corps. In Lord Ogilby, Sir Peter Teazle, he also held a high rank. Mrs. Henry, previously well esteemed at Bath as a principal singer, was probably the first lady of decided superiority in that department in the American theatres, and added, by the accomplishment, to her talent in other walks of the Drama. This rendered her a prodigious favorite. Indeed, she well needed a strong hold on public favor to protect her from the occasional disgust and resentment excited by her silly and capricious conduct. Scarcely a week passed, but a change in the performances was rendered necessary by some captious objection to a character, a slender box sheet, or a stinted proportion of applause. Of the other performers, with one exception, little impression remains. Mr. and Mrs. Harper, Marriott, Wools, &c., were no doubt of the common file, but the exception was one of a superior order indeed. Mrs. Pownall (once the popular Mrs. Wrihten, of Drury Lane, and long admired both as a stage vocalist and a concert singer,) had recently been added to the company. She was a person of great and general ability. Perhaps this might, in her case, as in many others, have been rather a disadvantage. Elliston and Hodgkinson were striking instances of the misfortune of extraordinary versatility, which never allowed them to attain absolute perfection in any one walk, but entailed upon them an increasing and

often thankless labor, while Mr. C. Young in England, and Mr. Cooper here, more wisely discovered the value of being limited to a dozen or fifteen parts. No greater error can be committed by a young actor, than grasping at a widely extended list, to each of which he can of course bestow but a limited degree of study. Mrs. Pownall was probably one of the ablest representatives of singing chambermaids then in London, and of course on this side of the water appeared little short of a wonder. Talent of a high degree of excellence seems to have descended to several later branches of her descendants; at the head of the list stands her grandson, Mr. H. Placide.

At the early age of twelve I was removed from the school of my old friend Hardie to the commercial office of a gentleman,\* under whose care it was then contemplated I should permanently remain. The period alluded to will still be remembered by many as the scene of the famous *scrip speculation*; and the worthy and valued gentleman in whose service I was placed was an active, and, unfortunately for himself, a very responsible party in these large operations. Their fate and history may be classed with the South Sea affairs, certain bank speculations, and other manias of which railroads, canals, merino sheep, mulberry trees, and other things, have from time to time been the subject. The strange delirium seemed to seize all ranks and classes at this time. No one was exempt from it. The man of large capital and the proprietor of a dollar note, seemed equally insane; though the principal speculators were men of great talents and character.

\* The late Mr. John Pintard.

When the speculation had reached its highest point of phrenzy it suddenly burst, and doomed my friendly protector to an imprisonment of many long years. It was a source of real pleasure to me that not long since, after a separation of more than 35 years, I had the pleasure of meeting this venerable gentleman in excellent health, though far beyond his 80th year.

The misfortunes of my friend, and death of a relative from whom I once had some expectations, made it necessary for me to apply myself to business; and a servitude of nearly six years, in one of the principal commission establishments in New York, completed my mercantile education, and very nearly ruined the little health I brought into it. From my childhood I was possessed with the strongest desire to become a painter, a wish my father strenuously opposed, on the ground of its being a slow and unprofitable profession, but probably besides, from my not having given any evidences of decided talent. The duties of a counting-house were no otherwise painful than that they compelled me to a confinement and position at the desk, particularly unsuited to one thought to be threatened with pulmonary disorder. The effects of this counting-room servitude were sadly evident for many after years, and probably rendered more tedious my progress in the theatre, which under more favorable health could not have been very rapid. Feeble and dispirited, I was easily induced to try other climates, and a voyage to the West Indies rather increased than lessened my physical difficulties. On my return, I became interested with a small commercial charge connected with persons resident in Philadelphia, to which city I for the first time directed my steps,

taking lodgings at the Indian Queen tavern, at that time a popular establishment. While residing at this house I became known to several very odd characters, but certainly found among them none more noticeable than a strange, gaunt, six foot officer of the name of Smith, whose peculiar character well justifies a more particular notice.

He was remarkable, among other peculiarities, for living several years after the passage, in an Indian fight, of a *rifle ball through his body*, the wound of which remained for the rest of his life unhealed. He was a man of rather abrupt manners, but possessed a kindly heart, and was unquestionably very brave. These valuable soldier-like qualities, however, were somewhat obscured by vices, not unfrequently the result of military associations, and particularly at the period alluded to, when the officers who were absent from the field were usually shut up in some miserable fort, without books, good society, or any of the other safeguards against gaming and intemperance. In both of these habits poor Smith indulged to no small extent, notwithstanding the absurdity and danger of their union. The writer, at that time a youth of nineteen, sometimes accompanied the captain to the faro table, merely as a spectator; for to do Smith justice, his advice to avoid gaming was uniform and earnest, although he wanted firmness to avail himself of these wholesome precepts. The suffering from his wound was frequently very severe, and there is little doubt that he fled to the gaming table and the bottle, as a temporary relief from physical anguish. His remarkably good fortune encouraged and enabled him to continue this disreputable career.

One instance of his "luck" may be worth mentioning. On a stormy winter's night, the writer accompanied him to a faro bank, (well remembered by many persons now living,) then kept in a small street in the neighborhood of St. Augustine's church, North Fourth street. Smith played long and wildly; his companion grew tired of looking on, and urged him to return home. This he good-humoredly refused, or delayed to do, until long past midnight, when his repeated visits to the side-board rendered his further efforts to play impracticable. I had observed that the Captain frequently won, but was not aware to what extent. I had likewise remarked that two well known partners of the bank had kept their eyes constantly on him, and had left the room together at the moment he quitted the table, and prepared to leave the house. The manner of these fellows was so singular, that I could not resist an impression that some foul play was intended; and slipping out of the room was fortunate enough to find two watchmen, who, on the promise of a good fee, agreed to wait at or near the door, and accompany the visitors to their lodgings. This precaution was fortunate, for we had not gone thirty yards on our way, when suddenly the two gamblers bolted out of an alley, and appeared as if intending to stop us. The watchmen, from different sides of the street, came up, looked silently on for a moment, then continued sauntering within a short distance, until the hotel was reached, evidently to the mortification and disappointment of the worthy partners. The helpless state of the Captain, with my own youthful weakness, must have fallen without a struggle, between these brawny knaves, whose eyes, the next time they encountered



the party, cowered and shrunk from every glance of recognition. Arriving safely at the hotel, the Captain was assisted, full dressed, to bed; for he was gone far beyond the power of disrobing, and I deemed it advisable to turn the key upon him until morning. After breakfast, on releasing the prisoner, I discovered that he had been the favorite of fortune on the preceding night, to an extent he had never imagined. All his pockets had received more or less of the winnings, which had been drunkenly thrust into the first place at hand—and no less a sum than \$800 was taken from the dress of this infatuated man. It is almost needless to say he was quite oblivious of all that had passed on the preceding night. With the advance of day, came headache, reflection and regret. Then solemn resolutions of reform—resolutions, alas! too soon forgotten or broken. The Captain was a man of quick, but uncultivated mind, and among his oddities he professed and felt the utmost abhorrence of punning, a species of wit or waggery much more generally indulged in at that time than at a later period. Yet did this anathematiser of puns perpetrate one himself on his own misfortunes, and which was very often repeated for years after his death. At the hotel table one day, in the course of conversation, a gentleman (ignorant of Smith's history,) was alluding to the vaunt of a boasting Grecian, who bravely wished for a window in his breast, that the purity of his thoughts might be evident to all the world. The Captain, who, to speak honestly, was rather unclassical, turning to a friend, drily remarked: "O yes, yes! a window in the breast is all very well, if there are not too many *panes* in it," placing his hand upon his wounded and aching bosom,

through the centre of which the rifle ball had passed. Upon the favorable reception of this pun, the Captain, instead of appearing pleased, absolutely blushed for shame, soon quitted the room, and was always grave on being reminded of it. If a classification of this species of humor were attempted, the Captain's might be called an "involuntary pun."

During the writer's stay at this house, a deputation from one of the native tribes arrived in the city, and were quartered at the Indian Queen. On their arrival the guests naturally were attracted to the door, in order to obtain a sight of the new comers—among the rest, Smith. Several of the party had passed into the house, when a principal chief (who seemed engaged in issuing directions to the others) turned to enter; but had scarcely advanced two steps, when he suddenly stopped short, and fixed his eyes firmly upon the Captain, who reached out his hand in friendly action to the stranger. Another moment's pause ensued, when the chief, still holding Smith's hand, exclaimed, with an expression and vehemence altogether unlike the usual Indian stoicism—

"Ha! ha!—No! no!—I shot—I shot—I kill you!"

This odd address was followed by a still more pleasurable expression of countenance, and a warmer pressure of the hand. The Captain could make nothing of all this, but suffered the chief to lead him into the hotel, and take a seat by his side. After another long stare, and another grasp of the hand, the chief, aided by his interpreter, proceeded to state, that during the day and action in which Smith received his dreadful

wound, his allotted station had been a particular tree, from behind which he kept an anxious watch upon the officers passing up and down the line, the destruction of whom he made his sole and important duty of the day. Observing Smith (who acted as adjutant) pass and re-pass frequently, apparently with orders, he determined to deprive his enemies of the services of so busy and active an agent. Once or twice the adjutant rode within rifle distance, but not in a sure direction. At length, however, his patient enemy perceived him galloping swiftly towards the tree, and when within a short distance discharged deliberately a rifle, which in his hand seldom failed. He gladly saw that his aim was true. The bridle hand fell, yet the rider kept his seat, and his horse turned into the wood, the chief fully satisfied of the success of his ambushade. It afterwards appeared that the ball had passed completely *through his breast*, yet not striking a vital part. Smith described the shock of the ball, and a deadly faintness, which for a very short time allowed him to keep his seat. A wounded soldier came upon the same track in the wood, assisted the Captain to dismount, placed him on a bank, and administered the only remedy in his power, a full pint of brandy. This applied externally as well as internally, in some degree stopped the bleeding, and the timely arrival of a small detachment that way, and removal from the ground, gave him the speedy advantage of surgical aid. To the astonishment of surgical and military men, the wound was so far relieved in a few weeks that he reported himself for duty, and lived to be in actual service at the time of the strange rencontre we have been speak-

ing of.\* The chief frequently expressed the utmost satisfaction at the recovery of his former foe, and would fix his eyes immovably upon him for minutes together, as if almost doubtful of his reality. At table he looked to Smith for the supply of every want, and up to the very moment of final departure from the city, appeared nearly indifferent to attentions offered by any other than his wounded friend. It is painful to state, that the Captain's career, after this period, was short. The waste of strength, from an unhealable wound, with his dissipated habits, soon closed a life evidently little valued by its owner.

Let me now return from this episode to the personal history from which I wandered. At this early period of life, when impressions are strongest, I formed an acquaintance with a man ten years older than myself, and to whom I became strongly attached. He possessed considerable knowledge of the world, with manners more than usually attractive. In a moment of thoughtless confidence I permitted myself to incur a trifling obligation to him, when a circumstance occurred, giving rise to an unjust suspicion of interference unfavorable to his pursuit of a favorite object. Nothing could be more unfounded than the charge, yet so firmly was it fixed in his mind, that he resolved to avenge it in a manner most mortifying to my feelings, far distant, as he well knew me to be, from relatives or friends. While seated at a public table, and wondering at not having seen my friend for several days, a

\* The case is not without parallel. A recent number of the London Times records that, at the battle of Nivelle, Colonel Barnard was shot through the lungs with a musket ball, and was again on the battle field of Bayonne a month afterwards.

servant whispered in my ear, very mysteriously, that a person required an immediate interview. This person I quickly found to be a very civil officer, deputed to wait on me with a writ, at the suit of my dear friend C., for the sum advanced to me. Very little pleased at this untoward termination of our connection, I briefly stated my utter inability to liquidate the demand. The man proposed bail being entered. I had no one upon whom I could call. He regretted this very much. He spoke of my youth, and very palpably hinted at the suspicion of my nonage. Wounded deeply by a most unhandsome act, I took no notice of this kindly hint, but prepared, very much to his surprise, for my walk to the debtors' prison, at the north-east corner of Sixth and Prune streets, where my appearance caused a sensation, but not one unfavorable to me. Mr. H., the keeper, was a person to whom we might well apply the poet's character of a kind-hearted custodian,

"This is a gentle provost. Seldom when  
The stolid jailer is the friend of men."

He showed me to a small retired room, no doubt to prevent my mixing with the inmates generally, or to prevent my being seen unnecessarily and under extreme excitement. The evening, night, and part of the ensuing morning, were passed gloomily enough in my solitary apartment, when at length he called to inquire whether I had made any arrangement for my meals, or intended to board with his family, which he rather warmly invited me to do. His gentle manner softened my spirits, and it was agreed that to avoid exposure, my meals should be furnished in my room. In this way I passed *seventy days* of the oddest sort of imprisonment that can be well imagined. Mrs. H.,

the wife of my keeper, had by some means learnt that a very young person was held in confinement, and made some excuse to visit me with the servant who brought my meals. She appeared shocked, and made various attempts to learn something of my age, as she could readily perceive the affair had more to do with passion and feeling than with business. Her kindness, however, received little return, save my sincere acknowledgments for her kind intentions, and a request that she would, with Mr. H., visit me occasionally. This invitation was a fortunate one for me, and made me acquainted with one of the best women I have met with through my whole life. So unwilling did I appear to make any effort towards leaving the prison, or even my room, that she suggested to Mr. H. the necessity of my taking some sort of exercise, in the apparent delicate state of my health; and it was proposed that I might walk the prison yard from six to eight o'clock in the morning, at which hour the other prisoners were allowed the bounds. He added that I should find but one gentleman there, and it was not necessary for me to notice him in any way. Well, on the coming morning at six my door was opened, and I at length ushered into the fresh air once more. At the first turn I met the *gentleman*, who proved no less a person than the late Honorable ROBERT MORRIS, a man whom this nation holds in deserved gratitude for his great services in the war of Independence, but whose private financial transactions, very different from his public administration, had recently proved disastrous and led him to this sad place, where he passed months, and I believe years. His person was neat, and his dress, although a little old-fashioned,

adjusted with much care. The portrait of this remarkable man, "The financier of the Revolution," engraved for the Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, has always been esteemed an uncommonly correct likeness, and such I regard it. One side of the Prune street debtor's prison was neatly laid out as a garden, and well kept, affording an agreeable promenade for the luckless inhabitants of this Bastille, during a large portion of the day.

Mr. Morris appeared cheerful, returned my salutation in the politest manner, but in silence, continuing his walk, and dropping from his hand, at a given spot, a pebble on each round, until a certain number which he had in his hand was exhausted. For some mornings the same silence prevailed, until at length, observing my languid deportment, he suddenly stopped, inquired whether I was ill, and added, with something like severity: "Sir, this is but an ill place for one so sickly, and apparently so *young*." He seemed to wait for some kind of explanation, which I found myself either unable or unwilling to give—and then passed on. From this time he spoke to me almost daily, and always with great kindness. On one occasion he unbent much more than usual, and offered some remarks which embraced much good counsel. In more than one instance he favored me with friendly notice.

While I offer this little picture of the morning *walking* party, on one side the prison, I must not forget a *riding* party on the other, nearest to Fifth street, in this department, which I was occasionally permitted to overlook. Mr. James Greenleaff, with Mr. Nicholson, for many years Controller of the finances of Pennsylvania, who had been the partner of Mr. Morris's

enterprises, and with them of his misfortunes, had the privilege of forming a very small circle, and indulging himself with a rapid ride, on a fine horse, each morning at the period alluded to. This gentleman died in Washington, a few years since, at a very advanced age. It was quite amusing to observe with what skill habit had enabled him to make those swift evolutions, within so very limited a space.

But such were not *all* the indulgences of my situation. My keeper, Mr. H., was at this time pit door-keeper at the Chestnut street theatre. In a conversation with his excellent wife, I happened to regret my inability to witness a play now and then, when she good naturedly told me I might go to the theatre if I pleased, taking care not to be seen by Mr. H., who might disapprove the license I was using. With this whimsical restriction, I visited the theatre once or twice a week during my detention, and on one occasion did not arrive *at home* five minutes before the arrival of my "gentle provost," who might have felt offended at not being in our confidence. My prosecutor, meanwhile, had become partly ashamed of his conduct, and requested a legal gentleman, (since one of my valued friends,) to say that any arrangement I should offer would be accepted, and he would be glad to have the whole affair forgotten. So would not I, and a sharp uncivil reply was sent. An unexpected visit from my father, and other circumstances, restored me to freedom soon after. It will seem scarcely possible, but the reader may believe me sincere when I assure him that I never obeyed a summons more reluctantly than that which called me from *the quiet* room which I had actually grown fond of. A strange circumstance



was, that from the near relations of this very false friend, I afterwards, in another part of the world, received the most generous and hospitable attentions, under severe illness.

There were two other persons among the prisoners, a little remarkable for anatomical peculiarities. The one was called a Swede or a Dane, I forget which, of extraordinary bodily strength, which he took much pride in exhibiting. Nor were his powers by any means confined to his limbs. He possessed (as Mr. H. assured me,) the remarkable dental construction attributed to Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, namely, formation of the jaw in one solid piece, yet marked as if in separate teeth. Now, although I firmly believe the truth of this statement, the reader will excuse my answering either for the King or the Captain. On one occasion, I mingled with the crowd who were assembling to witness one of his exhibitions, and actually saw him perform the following feat. He placed the large table at which the boarding prisoners dined, before him—then stooping down, he rested the underledge upon his knees, until he had fixed his teeth firmly on the edge of the table, which he in this manner *lifted fairly from the ground*, entirely without the use of his hands—an effort of strength in the teeth and neck, I presume, rarely equalled. Upon his release he gave public exhibitions in New York and elsewhere, of his muscular powers, for some time, with little success, and finally died a wretched outcast from society.

The other was a poor German, formerly serving among the Hessian troops, in the English service, during the war of Independence. In an action which took place about twenty years before the time I am speaking of, he received a musket ball just below

the knee, and finding the wound heal readily, he entertained serious doubts whether the lead really remained with him. From time to time, however, he suffered considerable pain, although *not* in the part where the hurt was received. Sent to prison by an inhuman countryman of his, for a debt which his ill health and misfortunes made it impossible for him to pay, he was the object of much sympathy in the prison. One morning, after a day and night passed in extreme pain in his limb, he rushed into my room to receive congratulations on his discovery of the cause of his twenty years' suffering. He held in his hand the ball which had occasioned him so much agony. He stated that a violent spasm in the ankle led him to have the part carefully examined, when, to his surprise and relief, he discovered his plague, which, strange to say, had worked its way from the knee, down the leg, to the opposite side from where the wound was first received. A slight incision released him from his leaden tenant, which presented a curious appearance. I know of nothing it can be so nearly likened to as a ball of scarlet silken shreds, for exactly thus the long grown fibres which surrounded it appeared to me. The joy of the poor Hessian at being rid of a twenty years' torment, may well be conceived. I saw him frequently afterwards, freed entirely from any appearance of lameness or debility.

In after years I repeatedly met my venerable fellow prisoner, Mr. Morris, on the street, and longed to pay to him the tribute of my respects, but I was deterred by the fear of reviving painful recollections.

Returning to New York, a sudden thought flashed across my brain, and surely, for the very first time

without health or the aid of able friends, I bethought me of *the stage*. Some circumstances had brought the well-known theatrical manager, Mr. Wignell, to my mind; as an old friend of my father, and with all a boy's impetuosity, I determined to try my fortune with him, certain at least of a friendly reception, however my attempt in acting might be discouraged, or ultimately fail. To Mr. Wignell accordingly I determined to address myself. But he was at this time in Annapolis, to which he had been originally driven by peculiar circumstances, to which I may advert.

When Mr. Wignell first landed his company on the American soil, in Sept. 1793, they encountered at their very arrival intelligence of the prevalence of that dreadful malady known as the yellow fever, which prevailed so awfully in Philadelphia more than once at the close of the last century, and which for years had the effect of destroying the well laid plans and excellent arrangements of this judicious and indefatigable manager. So complete was his establishment on the arrival of his first company in 1793, that before the Philadelphia house could be opened a debt of 20,000 dollars nearly had been incurred. Of course this heavy burden was increased by these visitations of pestilence. The frightful state of the city in 1793 (the year when the fever raged with dreadful fury) compelled him to quarter his large force in different villages of Jersey, where a monstrous debt was hourly accumulating in salaries alone; nearly every performer having claims, by the terms of the contract made in England, for his pay from the moment of his arrival. For ten preceding years the organization and plans of each season had been either changed or defeated by the return of this destructive epi-

demic. In 1797 the company, exiled by the pestilence to New York, performed in that city, where the place of exhibition was a large building in Greenwich street, called the Pantheon, and recently altered and enlarged from a circus to a theatre, by Mr. Fennell, who held it for a very short term. The company was at this time of an extent and power never since equalled. It numbered, for comedy and tragedy, Fennell, Cooper, Moreton, Wignell, Fox, Mrs. Merry, Mrs. Oldmixon, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, Miss Broadhurst, Mr. and Mrs. Warrell, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Harding, Mr. Harwood, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard, Mr. Blissett, Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Mr. Warren, Mr. and Mrs. Byrne (dancers,) and many more. The dread of the returning pestilence drove the company, in 1798, to Annapolis, and thither I set off in this year to attempt the stage; my father's acquaintance with Mr. Wignell being, as I have said, a sufficient motive for my going so far

With three doubloons in my pocket, and a very doubtful heart, I turned my back on New York, where I had resided from the year 1784. It happened that on my journey from Baltimore to Annapolis, (which at this time occupied a long wearisome summer's day) my only fellow travellers were two gentlemen of Maryland, revolutionary officers, who, with true Southern politeness, engaged me in conversation; and interested, as they afterwards confessed, by my youth, feebleness of appearance, and anxious inquiries relative to the theatre, led me to state very frankly what was the object of my expedition, my knowledge of Mr. Wignell, and wishes as to the stage.

On our arrival at Annapolis we parted, after they

had directed me to the best hotel, and done me other civilities. But this was only the commencement of a series of kindnesses continued in that city through a long course of years. While waiting in anxiety and impatience at the hotel for the hour of opening the theatre doors, I was much surprised by a call from my friendly fellow passengers, and a request that I would meet them in the boxes after my interview with Mr. Wignell, and become known to their friends. In short, the evening ended in a most kind reception from the manager, and an introduction to the principal families of Annapolis, who composed the small but delightful audience at this time.

I must be excused for dwelling a moment on this circumstance, not that there was anything unusual in the matter, but as inducting me, at this interesting period of my life, into a circle of society well calculated to form my future habits of life and conduct. I was at this time little more than 19 years old, with rather an ardent temperament, and a moderate share of discretion. I have always reckoned among the greatest advantages of my youth, this opportunity of forming attachments with persons of so much worth, and of a firmness of regard which ceased but with their lives. The following extract of a letter, written at the time to a young friend, will perhaps be tolerated as a detail of my feelings, hopes, and fears.

“*Monday.*—You cannot imagine the embarrassment I felt in making known my wishes to my father’s old friend, Wignell; notwithstanding his intimacy in our family, and a complimentary allusion to my having received a prize or two at school for elocution, a matter it seems he remembered better than I did at the mo-

ment. He has appointed me an interview in the morning. After this visit to him, in his room behind the scenes, I hurried to the front. The play was 'Every One has his Fault,' and the cast, with one or two exceptions, good, but the ill-dressing of the old John street company never equalled the absurd variety exhibited on this occasion. Lord Norland was well enough in a court suit—Morris looked like the wearer of the first cut of coat and vest, when the earliest approach to modern dress was attempted. Mr. Placid walked about the streets in a black silk stockinet, full suit, trimmed and sparkling with black bugles. Captain Irwin looked like the latest edition of a modern disbanded officer, as he should. Warren as Harmony, was properly equipped, while the servants revelled in every age and variety of livery. The ladies were appropriately habited, as was the boy Edward, delightfully acted by Mrs. Marshall. Few who have witnessed her performance of this character, can have forgotten it. Bernard (the worst dresser on the stage,) was as usual in the rearward of fashion at least half a century, but acted Sir Robert so well that his dress was wholly overlooked, or pardoned."

"*Tuesday.*—The awful meeting is over. Mr. Wignell began with such a grave look, that my heart sunk within me. He requested me to recite some few passages he named, and was silent as to the execution. He doubtless perceived my extreme terror and embarrassment. So extreme indeed was it, that I feel entirely certain that no public effort can be more dreadful, than is this trial before a friend; after some occasional remarks, evidently made to give me time for rallying a little, he requested a further essay. I recited again and much better (at least not so execrably), as he said

and I felt. When I had finished, he took my hand in his, and with an expression of his fine face that baffled all my efforts to explain, said very calmly, 'My dear boy, I much fear your friends at home will not be pleased with this experiment of yours. However, I well know the impetuosity of young folks in regard to our profession, and am glad you applied to me rather than to a stranger. You shall have an opportunity of trying your ability here at once, in this place, although you will have to face as intelligent an audience for its number, as can be found in America. The best discrimination and judgment will doubtless be tempered with a proportionate indulgence and kindness; for I have ever remarked the most fastidious and severe judges to be the vulgar and uneducated. To one condition you must bind yourself, should I consider your attempt hopelessly bad—you must return to your friends, and give up all thoughts of the stage.' I made him this promise, and will keep it. He has given me a list of ten or twelve characters to choose from, not one of which I like, but dare not say so, for I am fully assured he is anxious for my success. After some pause, I decided on George Barnwell. One or two that I preferred, he discouraged at once, frankly giving as his reason, that Moreton had been very happy in them, and that a comparison could not fail to be injurious, if not fatal to me. I have seen Moreton often, and feel too painfully the truth and judgment of Mr. Wignell."

"*Friday.*—The rehearsals are over, and (shall I call it?) the performance is past. The first was perhaps as distressing nearly as the latter, although the performers all seemed kind and desirous to aid me. No

one among them, surely could be so humble as to fear any rivalry from me.

“Before I go to rest, let me endeavor to recall the events and feelings of this night, on which so much of the happiness or misery of future years may depend. A large and elegant assemblage greeted my appearance, and nearly deprived me of all power to proceed. I feel that my deportment must have been deplorable; and even the few speeches, on which, from my rehearsal, I had built some slight hopes, were given either with a pitiable feebleness, or a scarcely less pitiable attempt at character, which my agitation utterly deprived me of the power to execute. Mr. Wignell is affectionate, but alarms me by his silence. Mr. and Mrs. Merry have been kind and encouraging, pointing out some of my most prominent faults, while they promise me future counsel. This “*future*” seems to say they do not consider it quite a lost cause. I feel most sensibly the difficulties and dangers of my attempt. If the liberal forbearance and indulgent kindness of these generous Marylanders have scarcely enabled me to proceed through my first effort, what will be my terror and insufficiency when brought to face elsewhere a larger audience, wholly uninfluenced by the kind feelings which my youth and favorable private introduction have procured for me here ?”\*

\* On the evening previous to my appearance I found myself, probably as much from anxiety as from the unusual exercise of my voice, so miserably hoarse that I felt I must allay it, or give up the attempt. A good, wild fellow at the hotel, persuaded me to bury myself for the night under all the blankets we could procure, and this exhausting process, in midsummer, though certainly effecting a radical cure of the hoarseness, left me in a state of extreme debility.

The above thoughtless incident brings to my mind a trick played



“*Saturday, June 27th.*—While rehearsing Charles Stanley this morning, I was seized with a strange giddiness and violent pain in the head; fortunately Mr. Bernard was near, and prevented my falling into the orchestra. No chance of my playing to-night.”

“*July 16th.*—This is the first day for three long weeks that I have enjoyed the least consciousness of where I was, or how my days have passed. What hospitable, what charitable beings are these Annapolitans! I now learn for the first time, from my generous hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Kilty, that when Mr. Wignell prepared to commence his autumn season at Baltimore, he found himself compelled to leave me at Annapolis, suffering under a most dangerous attack of southern fever, perfectly delirious, and wholly unconscious of all around me; but not until he had provided an excellent nurse, fine airy apartments, and every possible comfort. But far more kindness was in store for me, of which I was

by Blissett, upon a silly young man named Hopkins, a novice on the stage, who was mad to act; and on the occasion of Bernard's sudden illness, once inconsiderately undertook to become his substitute, in a character of considerable length, and to prepare for which he had but the space of three or four hours. Having heard some one state the oft proved fact, that an intervening night's rest will stamp the hasty study of an author's words astonishingly on the memory, he questioned Blissett whether *forcing a sleep* might not bring the achievement within a shorter space. Blissett, amused at this absurdity, advised him by all means to read the part over carefully, take a powerful anodyne, and he would be answerable that he would, on waking, find the words very snug in his memory. Hopkins lost not a moment in speeding to the druggist's, and purchased a vial of laudanum equal to the destruction of a dozen men; swallowing a portion, he threw himself upon the bed, from which he was roused with much difficulty some hours after, not to win laurels on the stage, but to undergo some rather serious operations for the dislodgment of this panacea for sudden memory, and which had nearly proved his last effort on or off the boards.

doomed to remain unconscious for weeks. The recollections of this period of my life will never fail to revive emotions almost painfully intense. A stranger, a boy in appearance as well as in years, without a single reference as to character—my very helplessness seems to have been my recommendation. If I ever have a son, may neglect, or worse be on him, should he forget those friends and comforters! The very day succeeding Mr. Wignell's departure for Baltimore, my good hosts sent for Mrs. Lloyd's carriage,\* and removed me to their house, (insensible to all that passed,) where I have remained until this day."

"2d. My strength is so far recovered, that I feel I ought to delay no longer in joining Mr. Wignell at Baltimore. On announcing my intention, my hosts insist on a day or two longer stay to recruit, placing some money in my hand, &c., &c. I leave this spot with a heavy but truly grateful heart. The events of the last two months are like a strange wild dream."

"*Baltimore, 12th.*—Mr. Wignell suggests the Young Bramin, in the tragedy of the 'Widow of Malabar,' for my first appearance here. It is an interesting and easy part, with little passion, and safe declamation for a novice. Besides, what is still better, Mrs. Merry, for whom the play was written, does me the favor to act the Sister, and will aid me with her advice, as well as conceal some of my defects by her skill and care."

"*Thursday.*—The trial here is past, and nothing painful has attended the attempt, which Mr. and Mrs. Merry assure me was a great improvement on the first, while the audience, after an encouraging plaudit or two,

\*The husband of this excellent lady had been Governor of Maryland, as her son, the late venerable Edward Lloyd, also was at a later date.

endured me patiently through the part. This was quite as much as I expected, and I fear more than I merited. At rehearsal I began to feel tolerably easy, but at night my terror was far greater than at Annapolis. Indeed, every line I utter on the stage gives me new insight into the vast difficulties of an actor's profession, and each hour passed behind the scenes, shows me how little professional pride is to be found where vulgar vanity too often usurps its place.

“How different is a theatre from our preconceived notions of one! A few weeks have shown me the violence of envy, jealousy, and the pangs of disappointed hope and ambition. Am I then doomed to pass my life, short as it promises to be, in this strange mimic world? No one do I see of either sex, even moderately contented, much less happy. The greater proportion, particularly the comic department, are positively miserable. One or two professional disputes have occurred of so violent a character, that nothing less than the firm authority exercised by Mr. Wignell could have checked or prevented their becoming a public talk. I am sick at heart, but will still hope to find some calmer sphere of action.

“I like Harwood most of all the actors after Mr. Wignell, although I cannot say he seems much interested in my success. May he not wish me well, and feel that success on the stage is the worst fortune that can befall me? This thought gives me some concern. I remarked that on the news of John Palmer's sudden and awful death, while acting the Stranger, Harwood's conversation would incline any one to believe he thought it by no means an event to be regretted. He often hints at leaving the stage, complains of its la-

bors, uncertainties and mortifications. Yet at night, when dressed for his characters, he seems as much in love with his profession as the meere novice. He appears to me much better bred and educated than most of our friends of the stage. Indeed, at times there is a little display of mental cultivation that I can see is anything but pleasing to some of the persons about him. Francis, who seems a good fellow, and honestly pretends to no education, frequently complains of his Latin and classical quotations, and wishes that like Macklin he could pay him back in Irish or Welsh."

## CHAPTER II.

1798.

First appearance in Philadelphia—"A sorry sight"—Grief of a school-mate at the degradation—High notions from the truck market—1800—First theatre in Washington—Its liberal patronage and early difficulties—Strong company, and the National theatre established—Capt. Woolsoncraft—Limited real knowledge the world has of actors—Plan and terms of the summer season—Alexandria in 1804—Our first attempt there—unexpected opposition—Sudden resource—returning toleration—Success of the company—Southern hospitality—A manager's error—Visit to Birmingham—Mrs. Marshall—Merry's death and character.

IN December, 1798, Mr. Wignell ventured to present me before a Philadelphia audience, a step requiring all his skill and experience. My late illness at Annapolis had reduced me to a mere skeleton, and I have serious doubts whether any other instance of such extreme bareness can be remembered by the public, until the advent of Calvin Edson (of whom I shall have a word to say hereafter). It happened that at this time, Morton's charming comedy of "Secrets worth Knowing" was produced in London. Among the dramatic personages is a queer creature, an emaciated young profligate, described as a man of twenty with the constitution of one of eighty; a silly rattlebrain, dissipated in every way, but particularly devoted to horse farriery, and such other pursuits. It occurred to Wignell that the present was a favorable opportunity to smuggle me before the public, in a character altogether original, and safe from comparisons; a most important matter

on the introduction of a novice. The experiment was a judicious one, and in part succeeded. The spareness and debility, which could scarcely appear wholly counterfeited, although ill calculated to amuse, certainly had the advantage of exciting no small degree of sympathy in numbers, who left the house wholly uncertain whether to applaud a clever but painful delineation, or regret the necessity which occasioned the exposure of so pitiable an object. The character, badly acted, failed of all the comic effect designed by the author, who received ample justice at the hands of the other actors. A trifling incident will prove the mournful effect of this comic effort. On the morning succeeding the play, an old New York schoolmate called upon me to express his regret at seeing me on the stage, under any circumstances, but especially in the condition my last night's attempt had so painfully exhibited me. It was shame enough, he thought, to be degraded to the stage, but in such a plight it was too humiliating. These friendly and encouraging hints were received with the simple assurance that necessity and not choice had compelled this course, so mortifying to my friends—a course which I would gladly relinquish could any other means of support be suggested. This hint, however, was not noticed by my sympathizing friend, who, after shedding a profusion of tears, and offering advice, left me to my fate. The degradation so bitterly felt by this man, who had risen to more than competence by *the aid of others*, did not, I confess, strike me so forcibly when I recollected that but a few years previously his own parents, honest and respected in their situation, had occupied a vegetable stand in the market, supplied from a garden industriously worked by their own hands.

In the spring of the year 1800, Mr. Wignell received a pressing request to establish a theatre at the new city of Washington; and to facilitate this purpose, fortunately, a building was offered every way suitable, situated nearly in the centre of the new metropolis. A company of gentlemen had erected, but not completed, (for the purpose of a large hotel originally,) the extensive building, subsequently known for many years as the post-office and patent office, unfortunately afterwards destroyed by fire. It consisted of a large, spacious centre building, with two extensive wings. The former was offered by the proprietors as an eligible structure for our purpose; and its capacious size afforded ample space for such accommodation as would be required in furnishing dramatic entertainments to the citizens of Washington, Georgetown and Alexandria, as well as of the extended neighborhood around. In the size and loftiness of this central edifice Mr. Lenthall found full scope for the completion of his purpose, while the manager prepared, at Philadelphia, scenery, an artificial dome, and the embellishments of the audience part, so as to have them in readiness to be put up without delay upon their arrival at Washington.

But poor Wignell's ill-fortune, constant to him on all occasions, did not fail to check his plan, so well contrived and at a large cost. On the way to Washington a furious storm of rain invaded the wagons, and drenched the tasteful labors of the painters so seriously as to make it necessary to repaint nearly the whole, besides occasioning a considerable delay in opening the house. Not a jot discouraged, however, this

excellent man persevered in his exertions; and after innumerable difficulties incident to the unprovided state of the place, and at great expense, he at length opened

#### THE FIRST THEATRE IN WASHINGTON,

With an appropriate address, written by the late Thomas Law, Esq., who continued to aid the enterprise, not only with his pen and his influence, but with his purse; he was ably seconded by several other gentlemen of liberality and taste. The opening play of "Venice Preserved" was well acted by Messrs. Wignell, Cooper and Mrs. Merry, as Jaffier, Prince and Belvidera, and warmly received and applauded by an audience, more numerous, as well as splendid, than can be conceived from a population so slender and so scattered. The encouragement continued to exceed his expectations, yet fell very far below his expenditure, as his company consisted of every one of the persons who composed the Philadelphia establishment. Mr. Wignell's main object was to obtain a footing in Washington, where he might keep together his company during the summer, in the event of a recurrence of the pestilence, which was regarded as but too probable. It may be justice to add, that he ever expressed a degree of pride at having established a theatre at the metropolis of our country, and acted on the first night of any performance at the foundation of what was properly entitled *The National Theatre*. From the citizens of Washington the principal performers received the most gratifying attention and hospitality. Many of us commenced at this period acquaintances and



friendships which have continued with unabated kindness through a long course of succeeding years. Of the large company presented by Mr. Wignell, there remained forty-three years afterwards only Mrs. Darley, (then Miss E. Westray,) Cooper, and Blissett.

At this time Cooper and Mrs. Merry encountered a valued English friend in the person of Captain Woolstoncraft (brother to the celebrated Mary, afterwards wife of Godwin, Cooper's guardian). Captain Woolstoncraft was a large, heavy looking, ill-formed man, promising little at first sight. He had been for some time serving in the U. S. Infantry, but was now employed at or near Washington. His lively and intelligent manner and conversation was strangely contrasted with his awkward, unprepossessing appearance. He remained some years in the service, and with credit; when he married a young lady of fortune, as was said, and retired from the army. During the many cheerful hours he passed with us I never heard a single disloyal or unkind remark, either from him, Cooper, or Mr. Merry, in regard to English politics. This struck me the more, as all these persons had suffered more or less from their reputed ultra opinions. So little is generally known of actors! The partial success of Mr. Wignell's experiment encouraged some friends of the drama, a few years afterwards, to erect a more durable dramatic temple on the Pennsylvania Avenue. This building, now used as Mr. Carusi's dancing saloon, was leased and occupied by the Philadelphia company for several years, when it was rendered useless by a conflagration, in 1820, which left nothing but the walls. This accident was occasioned by the neglect of some wandering exhibitor, to whom the building was granted

for a night's performance. The site of the house was always much complained of, and the manager declined any steps towards rebuilding it.

An excellent and prudent feature in Mr. Wignell's management, was his system of employing the company in the summer, during the regular recess. Besides the reasons formerly given, (to employ them at a distance from the cities during the season of fever,) it enabled him to avoid the annoyance and uncertainty of collecting so numerous a body together (frequently numbering seventy or eighty persons) for the autumn season at Baltimore, and also gave to the junior portion of the performers the means of uninterrupted practice and study.

The management was on the sharing plan, graduated by the winter salaries; and was continued by his successors for a long series of years with great advantage, indeed until the starrng system was introduced, to the speedy ruin of these comfortable safe companies, and finally to the utter prostration of the larger establishments. It must also be remarked here, that the *first failing* season in Washington was that in which the star system was introduced, and no succeeding one has ever equalled the success of earlier years.\*

Finding it unwise to overstrain the limited audience of Annapolis, the manager accepted an invitation to

\* The audience of Washington never desired the introduction of stars, which was solely the folly of some performers, who forgot the important fact that we were already favored by the presence of all playgoers, as was proved on the engagement of Booth, Cooper, &c. I felt that the new plan promised nothing but evil, and at once withdrew, though very regretfully, as the summer seasons of Washington included some of the most agreeable scenes of my life.

visit Alexandria, where a very large and convenient theatre had been erected some years before, for the accommodation of the Virginia company, which properly included Alexandria within its circuit. From general poverty of talent, (with one or two exceptions,) added to want of proper system in its arrangements, the theatre had been for a year or two neglected, and finally was obliged to close. The citizens, generally, were very desirous of offering their building to the Philadelphia company, but it was soon discovered that the public authorities, from disgust at the conduct of former tenants, were unwilling to allow the opening of the house. This determination, so wholly unexpected to the managers, by no means expressed the wishes of the citizens; who, after great but unavailing efforts to remove the prohibition, by liberal and well sustained offers of support, encouraged the managers to put up a temporary theatre without the limits of the city or its enactments. The building was speedily erected, at the distance of more than half a mile from the city; yet the public pledge of support was most honorably and amply redeemed, and a season of pleasure and of profit well repaid the previous mortification. Large nightly audiences of fashion, beauty, and judgment convinced the Philadelphia party that the ill management of their predecessors could have no effect towards lessening their reception, in public or private, or towards checking the good feelings of the audience who had invited them thither. Every favor that hospitality or respect could offer, was lavished on the strangers, who evinced their gratitude by several successive seasons of earnest and well requited exertion. To these, and subsequent summer parties at Washington, the performers, in after years, always

looked back with peculiar satisfaction. As the pieces acted were always those produced previously at the north, little preparation was necessary; while the sports of the field and of the stream filled up the vacant hours most agreeably. Our friends numbered amongst them many excellent and generous sportsmen, who took pleasure in affording every facility and information necessary to our full enjoyment.

In 1805 the Washington theatre was opened for the purpose of presenting several pieces, supported by Hodgkinson, Harwood, Mrs. Marshall, and others of professional eminence. The theatre, however, was at this time so unfinished and comfortless, that the audience, after a few nights, fell off, and a speedy close seemed inevitable. While in this drooping state, a circumstance occurred which abruptly terminated the campaign. Hodgkinson, who had been engaged as a star at a very high rate, and was relied on as the chief attraction, was seized on his arrival with an attack of yellow fever then prevailing in Baltimore, through which he passed, and died after an illness of only a few hours.

On the production of the charming comedy of "The Heir at Law," Mr. Wignell was unfortunate enough to commit one of those mistakes in cast, not uncommon, except among the best and most experienced managers, and as this case showed, sometimes committed even by them. Desiring to retain the important aid of both these favorite actresses, he allotted Cicely to Mrs. Merry; and Caroline, a very insipid young lady, to Mrs. Marshall. This lady properly considered such an allotment an affront to her acknowledged talent, and stoutly refused to accept it. She acted the part, how-

ever, for a few nights in a very careless manner, determining to secede from the company, with Mr. Marshall, at the first opportunity. On arriving at Philadelphia this determination was carried out, and the Marshalls privately took shipping for Charleston. On this fact becoming known, Wignell obtained a legal process, with which an officer was dispatched in search of the fugitives, but failed to overtake them. The loss of Mrs. Marshall was deeply felt and regretted by the public for many succeeding seasons. Wignell, who seldom committed mistakes of any sort, and especially this, the worst error of management—wasting, I mean, the best talent of his company on insignificant parts, which no possible ability or exertion could raise to notice—often feelingly regretted the circumstance of this false cast.

It is painful, indeed, to recollect the great number of actors driven in disgust from their situations by thoughtless degradations of this kind; persons, too, who would have been content with an humble but equal grade in the rank and file of the theatre. To similar errors and abuses may be attributed the vast increase of minor stars, often of positive merit, and having therefore a professional pride which revolted at the indignity of being sacrificed to the support of impudent pretenders, whose only recommendation were their presumption and their novelty. How long the Marshalls continued at Charleston is not recollected, but our next meeting was rather unexpected. On my way to London I stopped at Birmingham to present a letter to Mr. McCready, the respected manager, from Bernard, his old Covent Garden friend and associate. My letter insured me a hearty welcome, and every act of the kindest hos-

pitality. At his friendly table I was presented to a most interesting son of the manager, of some twelve years of age, and very attractive manners; this youth was the present Mr. William C. McCready, many years afterwards well known to the American as well as to the British public. My stay at Birmingham was protracted considerably by the charm of Mrs. Billington's singing, and Mrs. Jordan's acting—those eminent performers being employed in fulfilling an engagement each of a few nights, at a cost to the manager of fifty guineas for each performance. Few manufacturing places suffered so severely by the war as Birmingham; many of the factories were closed, and the theatre, as might be expected, dragged heavily. Mr. McCready assured me that the gross receipts of these nights rarely reached the amount paid to the stars, leaving the manager minus to the whole amount of his expenses. In the midst of these persons, when I was little thinking of my old fellow actors, whom should I find but Mrs. Marshall. Having formerly been a distinguished favorite with the Birmingham public, she had returned to try its favor. Unfortunately, however, in her absence of several years, her place had become occupied by younger performers, and she found herself scarcely remembered. Mrs. Jordan had just completed a round of Mrs. Marshall's strongest characters, and the result of a short engagement was such as to render her no object to the manager. She soon afterwards took passage for America.\*

\* "Chief Justice Gibson, being at our house last evening, remarked that the finest actress he had ever seen was Mrs. Merry, and next to her that Mrs. Marshall, afterwards Mrs. Wilmot, had the most genius. Mrs. Marshall, he said, was a great favorite with General Washington. Jan. 22, 1850."—*Extract from the note book of a friend.*

On the 24th of January, 1798, an event took place of a most distressing kind to me. This was the sudden death of my friend, Mr. Merry, a gentleman of the most unexceptionable personal character, and with his accomplished wife, well remembered in the elegant society of the American towns to which I have alluded. I find that my diary of that date records the event.

“*January 24, 1798.*—This has been a wretched day. On coming down to breakfast a scream startled me, and a moment more brought me to a little entry leading from Merry’s apartment in the house where we lodged, and there lay my poor friend speechless, and without the power to move. He had been struck by apoplexy, and his speech became almost inarticulate. The ablest medical skill was instantly procured and applied, but in vain. He lingered in a state equally without pain or any return of recognition until 1 o’clock, when a second and more severe attack ended the life of a kind, uncourted friend, a true wit and accomplished gentleman.” Merry had passed his early years in the gay world of Europe. Inheriting a handsome income, he travelled much, passed a considerable time in Italy, and on his return purchased a Lieutenant’s Commission in the Guards, where he was well remembered for his noble person and elegant manners. He frequently amused his friends with sketches of these fashionable years of his life, and confessed with shame and regret the enormous expenditure of £17,000 during three years of his military service. A large part of this was lost at play. He had still, however, well founded large expectations from a kinswoman strongly attached to him ; but all these prospects were blighted by his forming an attachment to an actress.

This crime the old lady never could forgive, and he made the choice of his affection, sadly to the cost of his interest. The sacrifice he never for a moment regretted, and frequently contrasted his present quiet happy life, with the dissipation and bustle of his earlier years. Happy in his domestic state, his acquaintances were few and select. With them, his conversation was as attractive as his information was extensive. He frequently adverted to the poems which he had written as *Della Crusca*, of which it was clear he was far from thinking meanly. And I shall not easily forget the surprise with which we received the assurance that he had never by any chance seen his *Anna Matilda*, *Mrs. Cowley*, at the time these ardent epistles were exchanged. He possessed uncommon powers of conversation, yet avoided large parties as far as good breeding would allow. His manner of telling a story was quite unique. Upon his marriage, he withdrew his wife from the stage of *Covent Garden*, which she quitted with little regret, as a serious difficulty had occurred with the manager, *Mr. Harris*, relative to a piece composed by *Merry*, called a "Picture of *Paris*." In this drama a ridiculous scene, intended to be pathetic, was introduced, of two revolutionary characters. The parts were cast to *Holman* and *Mrs. Merry*. She played a night or two, and then very properly threw it up. Forfeitures were rigidly exacted, and war was declared between the parties. *Fennell* also refused to act some part in the same drama, and soon withdrew from the theatre. Some strictures appeared at this time on the lady's performance, accompanied by very offensive and inflammatory allusions to *Mr. Merry's* political opinions. He well knew the source of these at-



tacks, and hastened his wife's retirement from the stage. To many peculiarities he added the most extraordinary passion for puns, many of which have been adopted as their own by less able professors of that small species of wit.

Among the last things which he related to me was the fact, that during a residence in France, when visiting the races at Fontainebleau, he was seated in one of the high phætons then in use, between two unfortunate persons, Doctor Dodd and Fitzgerald; both of whom it will be remembered met their death at the hands of the executioner. "Had it been predicted," said Merry, "that of the triumvirate thus seated, two were doomed to the scaffold, I believe I should have been a little disturbed by the augury."

## CHAPTER III.

1799—1801.

A busy season—Cain—Hopkins—Washington's death—Bernard in tragedy—Trip to Jamaica—Theatre at Spanish Town—Amateur acting—A useful building—Professional resentment—Miss E. Westray—Weston—Pizarro—Strange cast—Castle Spectre—Speed the Plough—Point of Honor—Follies of a Day—Spanish Barber—Joseph and Charles Surface—Unlucky change of cast—Wignell's excellence—Delicate compliment—Overhearing a criticism—Sensible advice—Cooper—His extreme carelessness at times—Reading a part—New readings of Othello—Review of a singer—Stage blunders—Dull memory of good actors—A wonderful performer, or a modern Rosignal—Major André—Drop curtain—Alexander the Great—Jamaica—Unexpected meeting—Byrne—Mrs. Byrne—Ladies' taste—Ancient ballet costume—Unpleasant stage occurrence—Manly conduct of an actor.

THIS season opened with an imperfect company. Cooper had returned to New York, leaving us without a tragedian, for Cain, who was with us, was limited to the more junior heroes. To conceal our deficiency Wignell determined on producing the greatest possible novelties, and from December to May the following large list was presented: £500 a year; *Jew and Doctor*; *Horse and the Widow*; *Constellation*; *The Secret*, a comedy; *Duplicity*; *Reconciliation*; *Lie of the day*; *Count of Burgundy*; *Gustavus Vasa*; *He is much to blame*; *Zorinske*; *Positive Man*: (and on Cooper's return in March,) *Castle Spectre*, (five successive nights;) *False Shame*; *Laugh when you Can*; *Double*

*Disguise; King John; Naval Pillar; Wild Goose Chase.* Pizarro occupied the remaining nights of the season. These varieties in a short time offered fair evidence of the manager's untiring industry.

A young man, named Hopkins, made a very successful debut as Tony Lumpkin, and became a popular comedian at the south. During the season the whole nation became clouded by the death of General Washington. The theatre, of course, shared in the general gloom, and a night was devoted to the performance of the "Roman Father," a well written monody, with other appropriate pieces. During the early part of this season, from the want of a leading tragedian, Bernard appeared as *Shylock, Falconbridge, Hotspur,* and others.

Owing to bad health up to this date, my success, which though perhaps not unreasonable, fell far below the measure of my desire; the newness and strangeness of a life in the theatre, and a general depression of spirits in view of my new career, made me determine about this time to abandon the pursuit entirely, and I resolved to take a voyage to Jamaica, with a view of establishing myself in my original design of commerce. When about to embark, Wignell, who had passed some years there with the old American company, when driven abroad by the revolution, desired me to ascertain whether a short season at Kingston might not be profitable, and give a rest to the audience here. He mentioned a theatre at Spanish Town, used for several years, and yet standing. This edifice was well remembered by Mr. A. J. Dallas and Mr. John Vaughan, who were both residents of the island for some time, when theatricals were eagerly patronized by the military and naval

officers, as well as the merchants, planters, and strangers. It was very common for the principal military officers to take parts in the performance, and, as Wignell informed me, with well deserved approbation. Others occasionally volunteered, and the single essay of Mr. Dallas in the character of Belcour, in the "West Indian," was considered a very successful effort of an amateur.

The theatre was something out of the common order; a large building, the ground floor was occupied as a market house, the theatre next above, while the third story was used on the Sabbath as a place of worship by a religious congregation. When the actors removed, the second floor was occupied by the former tenants of the first.

I remained about six months in the West Indies; but the season was one of uncommon sickliness and mortality, and I could not carry out my projects of commerce. While in Jamaica an incident occurred one day, at once sad and comical. Passing down the main street of Kingston, I suddenly approached a figure which seemed familiar; it was Byrne the dancer, whose engagement at Philadelphia had been concluded abruptly about the time when I embarked for Jamaica. We expressed mutual surprise at this meeting, as it was understood that he had returned to England. On inquiring how and why we met thus unexpectedly, Byrne stated that he had arrived from England the *night previous* to our meeting, in consequence of a pressing request of many leading officials and officers who had long wished for a competent teacher of Byrne's particular art. He came on shore a few hours before we met, and he assured me, with great terror and emo-

tion, that the frightful number of funerals, as well as gloomy representations which he encountered during this short period, had determined him to return at once, and abandon the flattering prospects of business. A vessel he said was to sail the next morning, in which he had taken passage for London, where he re-established his school, with most remarkable success. His son Oscar evinced extraordinary ability, and soon became one of the first English dancers, retaining his popularity for many years.

While speaking of Byrne, I may here mention the treatment Mrs. Byrne had received at Philadelphia; a treatment which contrasts strongly with the receptions given to other dancers in later days. An unaccountable severity on the score of dress *in dancing* prevailed, while an exact as well as ungraceful imitation of men in the performance of male characters by women, was tolerated to an extent which it would be dangerous now to follow, even in a minor theatre. What will our ladies think of Mrs. Whitlock's dress, as the peasant boy Fidele in *Cymbeline*? It consisted of a tight vest, and pantaloons of a sky blue satin, fitting closely, and scarcely the apology for a very short cloak. This was the dress of one of the largest female performers ever seen on our stage, and excited no disapprobation or remark. Mrs. Marshall too degraded the stage on her benefit night, by the performance of *Marplot*, in a fashionable male habit of the day, but little calculated for a character which was to undergo numerous shakings, beatings, tumblings, and other personal assaults. Mrs. Byrne, whose profession was that of a dancer, appeared on the other hand at the Chestnut Street theatre in a dress so ample, that it would

now appear unwieldy. The length of her dress was so great that it would scarcely be now approved, the style of dancing being as delicate as that branch of art can well permit. Yet she was met by a degree of disapprobation rarely witnessed in a theatre. After a withdrawal of a few nights, she re-appeared, with the addition of a pair of pantalettes, tied at the ankle. But this effort to remove the difficulty failed, and the heavy engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Byrne was added to the poor manager's other misfortunes. Wignell complained bitterly, as he had engaged these performers at the urgent request of many constant supporters of the theatre. Mr. Byrne was coldly permitted to go through dances, for which he was afterwards honored by the applause and approbation of a London audience. I can well remember the mortification and distress of Mrs. Byrne under the cruel insults she suffered.

The mortality of the climate to which I have alluded in connection with my meeting Byrne in the West Indies, made me determine to leave it; and I set off again for the United States. The voyage improved my health. With improved health cheerfulness came. My friends encouraged me. The manager made me liberal offers. And on my return I found myself once more on the boards of the theatre. The state of the theatre itself, too, was more encouraging than it had been, and began to show symptoms of a probable revival. Cooper was restored, and some other important accessions to the company effected. Misses E. and Juliana Westray, two promising young actresses (afterwards known as Mrs. J. Darley and Mrs. Wood) from the New York theatre, proved valuable acquisitions. Cooper's return enabled the manager to revive many of the

plays in which Mrs. Merry excelled, and long unrepresented from want of anything like a suitable male tragedian. The young Westrays were received with the usual kindness extended to strangers, the former appearing as Amelia in "Lovers' Vows," the elder sister as Albina Manderville in the "Will." The younger Darley's return, after an absence of several years, employed in service as an officer in the U. S. marine corps, was met by an unpleasant reception. Some of his brother officers, conceiving his re-adoption of theatrical pursuits an ill compliment to the honorable vocation he had quitted, resolved, on his appearance, to express their discontent; and on his entrance considerable opposition was evinced. The audience, as usual, wholly ignorant of the cause, resisted the interruption, which after a short struggle ceased, and the offender was restored to the quiet possession of a creditable position on the stage. It would be useless to record all the *first* appearances and failures, from which must be excepted an extraordinary first effort of a young gentleman, named Western. This novice, by a most promising debut in the difficult part of Castalio, gave earnest of future excellence. Other views, however, soon after withdrew him from the profession. Pizarro, produced on the previous season, was strengthened by the Cora of Miss E. Westray, who relieved its first representative, Mrs. Oldmixon, of a part which the necessities alone of the company induced her to undertake. Reynold's comedy of "Management" was produced with moderate success. The "Castle Spectre's" popularity continued unabated, when fortunately its growing favor was secured by the appearance of "Speed the Plough." To the performance of this de-

lightful comedy the state of the company was happily adapted, and the play at once took a position in public favor which succeeding seasons scarcely abated. Mr. Holman's "Votary of Wealth" was well received, and proved profitable, as did also Kotzbue's merry farce of "The Horse and the Widow," Jephson's "Law of Lombardy," "St. David's Day," "Trip to Fontainebleau," M. G. Lewis' "East Indian," "Fortune's Frolic," "Columbus," "Liberal Opinions," "Blacksmith of Antwerp," "Siege of Belgrade," "Point of Honor," "Alzuma," "Man of Ten Thousand," "Follies of a Day," (comedy,) Kotzbue's "Couriant," Mr. C. J. Ingersoll's "Edwy and Elvira," and the "Virgin of the Sun." The "Follies of a Day" was acted as originally written by Beaumarchais, and for many years continued a favorite of the audience. The "Spanish Barber," also produced originally as a comedy, with music, became a stock piece, until superseded by the well known splendid operas. Bernard and Wignell, the admirable Charles and Joseph Surface, began to feel that time had somewhat disqualified them, personally, for these parts, and it was determined to substitute younger representatives. Cooper and Wood were cast for the brothers, and in the face of serious comparison ventured on the task. These characters were so completely identified with Wignell and Bernard that their successors felt themselves somewhat in the state of men going to execution. Under such feelings it must be confessed the performances were very far from satisfactory, although graciously received by the public. Curiosity, however, filled the house for a couple of nights, and the young actors betook themselves to the careful study of the characters. Time gradually wore away



earlier impressions, and rendered their efforts more satisfactory to the public.

I must here relate a delicate instance of generosity. The continued success of "Speed the Plough," had rendered it a desirable attraction for benefits. Among others Miss Westray selected it for her night; the box-book presented a flattering prospect, but on the play day a snow storm occurred, of such violence as to render the streets nearly impassable, and the theatre a dreary waste. It was mentioned casually that Miss Westray had sustained a loss of ninety dollars, the receipts falling thus much below the expenses, at that time four hundred dollars per night. A day or two after, Miss Westray received a kind anonymous note, regretting the circumstances which had blighted her prospects, civilly noticing her talent and worth, and enclosing the sum of one hundred dollars from "a few unknown friends." Some of these unknown friends however were shrewdly guessed at.

Little disposed as Cooper and I were to consider our late efforts anything better than tolerated, we were soon satisfied of opinions ill calculated to flatter a future hope. While enjoying supper in a box at Hardy's Hotel, our attention was arrested by the loud conversation of persons in the adjoining box, only separated, as in coffee house fashion, by a thin partition. The talk was at first confined to the usual topics of weather and news, but gradually fell upon the theatre. It appeared that both had been present at this unfortunate night of the "School for Scandal," and both united in opinion as to the failure of a part of the play. One observed, that "although Cooper passed for an able tragedian, it was an insult to the audience when he was

thrust before them in the first high comedy part of the whole drama, and requiring the most varied requisites; instead of these the audience was treated "with an unwieldy awkward person in a scarlet coat, laboring heavily to appear light, and struggling incessantly to seem at ease, giving the dialogue with verbal propriety, but as to character—O Lord! O Lord! He sometimes seemed ashamed of the imposition he was practising. The excellence of his Richard on the previous night probably saved him from the severity of his auditors." To this, and much more, in the same spirit, his friend eagerly assented, charitably adding, "it was truly a melancholy failure, but was saved from general execration by the superior badness of the wretched young person, whom the manager thought proper to substitute in his most perfect character; that if he designed the professional ruin of the actor," it was observed, "he could not have hit upon a surer course." The remarks continued in the same strain for some time, when at length, to our great relief, our censors took their departure, leaving us, like poor Calista, to "*think of what was past and sigh alone.*" After some pause Cooper turned, and with a serious air remarked, "Wood, you have here had a slight taste of what you must prepare to endure in the future struggles of our strange profession. I think no want of modesty can be charged, if we venture to believe the general severity we heard somewhat uncharitable. We must endeavor to win a better estimation, and I feel that we can." Wignell was greatly amused at a description of this scene, and kindly assured us that he was in possession of certain opinions, which, if not flattering, were at least of sufficient value to convince us that the public

were not so hard to please as our late critics. He maintained that the whole play had been so favorably received as to warrant an immediate repetition. He argued with great force against the folly of actors suffering themselves to be over-influenced by individual judgments, however well meant. He instanced Garrick's theory, that *every sensible actor should receive with deference the suggestions offered by friends and foes, but avoid the error of the Old Man, Boy and Ass. You cannot please every one, he said: the public, and the public alone is your master. By their verdict you must stand or fall.* Above all, consider individual strictures or praises as only expressive of one opinion. He ridiculed the folly of some thin-skinned actors, who wasted the precious time due to their studies in idle search of criticisms and eulogy, often written with no other reason than to flatter some weak-minded person, or perhaps still more frequently of strictures to gratify a personal dislike. He advised young actors to maintain an obstinate ignorance of anonymous notices, whether friendly or otherwise. This safe advice was not lost on either Cooper or myself. We both, I believe, felt its value, and we both remained for years wholly ignorant of the opinions expressed by many worthy but over-weening writers, who idly conceived their judgments of sufficient value to influence and guide that of the public. My slight remarks must not be understood to imply that these occasional essays were not frequently the productions of liberal and educated men, and generally marked by a decided courtesy of manner. It has been an entertaining employment of later days to turn back to the public journals of earlier dates, and compare the different views of wri-

ters who little dreamed that their lucubrations would now be first known to those for whom they were especially furnished. I shall recur again to this subject.

Up to this time Cooper had laid himself open to much censure, for an imperfect and careless rendering of the author's text. Some instances were ridiculous enough. On one occasion he was cast Mr. Ford, ("Merry Wives of Windsor,") a remarkably difficult and unprofitable part. In the second act, scene with Falstaff, he knew himself so wholly unprepared, that he resorted to the artifice of slyly placing his written part on the table at which they were seated, and actually read his whole portion of the dialogue. This proceeding was not unobserved by a portion of the audience nearest the stage, but passed without notice. The next day, however, it was stated to him, that in some slight notice of the play the writer good humoredly suggested to Mr. C. whether, on any future *reading* of his part, it might not be proper to announce his intention in the bills, as the novelty of the circumstance could not fail to add to the night's attraction. A few night after, he announced "Othello" (first time,) and "Children in the Wood," for his benefit, Othello and Walter by Mr. Cooper. In the full face of Fennell's well deserved popularity in the Moor, Cooper exhibited himself so miserably imperfect as to make his performance wholly ineffective, and not unfrequently ridiculous. So bewildered and confused did he become that in the last scene, where he should have exclaimed—

"I will not scar that whiter skin than snow, and smooth as monumental alabaster." He substituted,

"I will not scar that beauteous form, as white as snow and hard as monumental alabaster."

This was rather too much for the audience, who testified their dissent from his new reading by a general titter.

More ingenuity than Cooper showed at the table was practised by a little lady singer, long attached to our theatre. Either from bad memory or carelessness, or both, she never, by any chance, learned the words of her songs; but it was a secret she carefully concealed from the audience by writing on the palm of her kid glove the first words or more of each line. This was her invariable practice. This glove manœuvre, however, was not always available, and her ignorance of the text frequently led her into the most ludicrous blunders. In Laura, (in the "Agreeable Surprise,") instead of saying, "Eugene's virtues have made me a proselyte," she actually substituted, unconsciously, "Eugene's virtues have made me a prostitute." A hundred similar absurdities might be related of this lady, whose husband, an inferior person, fully equalled his dame in these new readings.

Mr. Cooper's performance of Alexander, on the evening following Othello, completely obliterated the recollection of his careless performance of that part, which was probably his last careless performance at all. It is but just to state, that with many splendid mental and personal requisites for the stage, Mr. Cooper still labored under the disadvantage of a bad theatrical memory. With great labor he acquired words slowly, and failed to retain them—with him learning the mere words of a part was dull drudgery. In this particular he resembled a large number of distinguished performers of both sexes. Indeed, I scarcely recollect half a dozen of our most distinguished actors, stars, or regulars, who

did not labor under this disadvantage. Moreton, Warren, Blissett, Francis, Bernard, and Mrs. Merry, were striking instances.

During the summer of 1801, while the company were acting a short season at the old American theatre of Southwark, we had a person who certainly deserved to be called an extraordinary performer. He was a man named Robertson, who had arrived here, and on whose account a few nights were added to the performances, in order that he might exhibit his really astonishing powers. He was announced as follows:—

ON FRIDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1801,

Will be presented for the first time, a new comedy by O'Keefe, called

THE LONDON HERMIT.

After which Mr. Robertson will introduce his most admired  
IMITATION OF BIRDS.

The ENGLISH ROBIN, THRUSH, SKY-LARK, and NIGHTINGALE; also whistle a grand overture, accompanied by the band.

Mr. Robertson will display his manly feats of  
GROUND AND LOFTY TUMBLING.

He will throw a back somerset from three tables and a chair and ten somersets forward without stopping.

He will this evening introduce to the public, for the first time,

A CHILD OF PROMISE,

who will perform many laughable tricks and feats, truly astonishing for one of his years. This part will conclude with the laughable scene of ROLY BOLY between Messrs. Robertson and McDonald. Mr. Lynch will, by desire, sing the comic song of "*The Old Woman of Eighty.*" For the last time in this city Mr. Robertson will perform the wonderful leaps over the heads of twenty soldiers, with guns and fixed bayonets. Mr Robertson will leap through a balloon of fire, fourteen feet high from

the stage. A song by Mr. McDonald—a song by Miss Arnold. Mr. Robertson will then perform the phenomenon called

#### THE ANTIPODEAN WHIRLIGIG.

In which he will whirl round on his head at the rate of 250 times in a minute, without the assistance of his hands—and fireworks attached to different parts of his body. To which will be added Mr. Robertson's comic pantomime (got up and performed at New York with universal applause, on last Fourth of July,) called

#### HARLEQUIN RECRUIT.

On the next night the bill set forth the following, in addition to the former feats. "As a stranger in Philadelphia, he feels himself under the necessity of appealing to a generous public for support, chiefly on the score of ability—his power to please and astonish. His principal dependence, and prior exertions, and his pledge for the evening's entertainments, the profits accruing from which will be his only emolument from his first appearance."

The most pleasing part of this performance was his astonishing imitation of birds, an effort since frequently attempted, but without an approach to the excellence of Robertson. This unique performer soon after died at the South, from the dislocation of his neck, in the course of his exhibitions.

A scenic curiosity still remained from the private theatricals of the English officers, who had occupied this building during the war. It was a drop curtain, painted by Major Andre, and carefully preserved until the conflagration of the theatre. This scene was probably considered a creditable amateur effort, as it bore the name of the artist.

The season closed with great eclat from the brilliant

success of "Alexander," produced at a large expenditure and extraordinary care. The pageantry received great assistance from the aid of a company of U. S. soldiers stationed here, who were used to great advantage in the warlike scenes requiring numbers and discipline. The assault of the walls by Alexander, by means of bridges formed with the shields of the soldiers, produced a grandeur of effect unattempted on the American stage. Some particulars relative to this piece will be found in a short memoir of Cooper hereafter introduced.

The prospects of Wignell now brightened into a hope that fortune had become tired of persecuting him.

An unpleasant circumstance occurred about this time, during a performance of "The Fair Penitents." Some ladies near the stage thoughtlessly engaged in conversation, so loud in tone as completely to disconcert Mrs. Merry, who appeared as Calista. This interruption was the more annoying, as coming from persons with whom intimate and friendly relations had long subsisted. At length she paused for some moments, and fixed her eyes steadily upon the box. This marked circumstance was readily noticed by the audience, and loud plaudits vindicated the silent reproof of such unbred conduct in a public theatre. The redeeming part of the story is, that the returning good sense of the ladies never suffered the circumstance to lessen, in the least degree, the friendly connection of both parties. A notice of a similar instance of proper spirit exhibited by Dwyer, who was acting at one of the prominent theatres abroad may here be added. A large division of a regiment was quartered at this place; the officers as usual forming no small part of the regular visitors. On



one occasion a large party of these gentlemen, occupying as was usual the stage box, either from thoughtlessness or excitement, so far forgot their habitual propriety as to indulge themselves in very audible conversation, loud laughter, and other acts of indecorum. One in particular turned his back to the stage, misconducting himself in a manner equally disrespectful to the public and the actors. Dwyer, who had greatly suffered from these interruptions, which continued unchecked by the audience, finding it impossible to proceed in his part, advanced to the box, and with great seeming deference to the party, begged their permission to address the audience, and obtain leave to suspend the performance until the amusements of the box should be concluded. This odd proposal was received with a shout of applause, continuing until Dwyer had bowed himself off the stage, in the most respectful manner; public attention then turned towards the box with an unmistakable expression of its opinion of the case. The young officer who had particularly distinguished himself expressed the utmost indignation, indulging publicly in some severe remarks about Dwyer, on whom he bestowed the title of an impudent stroller. It was not long before a knowledge of this further outrage reached Dwyer. After short reflection he determined on his course, and addressed a note to the officer, alluding to the treatment he had received the previous night; and proceeded to urge the still greater aggravation of the first offence. He modestly confessed to the charge of being "a strolling player," but stoutly denied having forfeited the character of a man of honor. In this capacity he addressed the note, and requested immediate redress, by apology or otherwise. This se-

rious mission was placed in the hands of a gentleman of high character in the place, who readily undertook the embassy. The officer received the note with cold civility, remarking, with a sneer, that their difference of position forbade any serious reply, and requesting that he might hear no more on the subject. This reception was ill suited to the high character and feelings of the bearer, who coolly observed, that it was not the custom of gentlemen to accept a verbal answer to a written communication of such importance. Had it been unworthy of notice, he was not likely to become intrusted with its delivery. He had undertaken his charge in the full knowledge of Mr. Dwyer's respectability and ill treatment. As that gentleman's just claims had been refused, on unsatisfactory grounds, he felt himself forced into the necessity of exchanging places with Mr. Dwyer, and becoming principal instead of second. This was somewhat of a poser to the officer, who, nevertheless, made a ready acceptance of the challenge, and the necessary preparations were commenced for a meeting. Some rumors of what was passing reached the ears of the Colonel, a brave veteran of the old school, and nervously sensitive on the subject of military decorum. This he conceived to have been wantonly violated, and gave orders for the officer's immediate arrest. An inquiry of some sort was instituted, and resulted in a severe public reprimand. A graceful atonement was afterwards made by a full attendance of the officers (including the delinquent) on Dwyer's benefit night.

## CHAPTER IV.

1802-1803.

Mrs. Whitlock and Mrs. Merry—Fullerton—His persecution and unfortunate death—Mr. and Mrs. Jones—Hercules and Omphale—Obi—Three fingered Jack—Amateur excellence—Indian Chiefs—Almost an exposure—Wedding in Wales—Falstaff's Wedding—Joanna—W. Green—Ill advice—Imposture—The consequences—Abelino—Bernard—Cooper's farewell—Appears in England—Fennell and Hodgkinson—Wignell's death—His merits, misfortunes and mistakes in connection with the Opera—Jefferson and Twaits—Mrs. Barrett—John Bull—Odd mistake—Breach of trust—Voyage to England—Play at Liverpool—The author better known than he thought he was—A month in London—Charles Dibdin—Strange blunder—The author's marriage—Count Benyowsky—His strange life—His lady—Kotzbue's exile to Siberia and recall—Danger of jesting with absolute monarchs—His death—Was some time a resident of Philadelphia.

THIS season commenced with great spirit. Our losses were Cooper and the Darleys; our accessions Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Green, Fullerton and others. Mrs. Whitlock (sister of Mrs. Siddons, and the first distinguished tragic actress introduced to our stage,) was warmly welcomed back by the Philadelphia public. Her first appearance as Elvira, in Miss Hannah More's "Percy," attracted a large audience, and excited much curiosity to witness the rival efforts of this lady and her popular successor, Mrs. Merry. No small party feeling prevailed; and crowded audiences attested their merits, when opposed to each other in the "Earl of Essex," "Jane Shore," "Mourning Bride," "Joanna," "Pizarro," "Alexan-

der," "Distressed Mother," and such other pieces as allowed them to be seen together. Mrs. Whitlock also appeared with attraction as Lady Randolph, Imogen, Mrs. Oakley, Portia, Queen Margaret, Millwood, Fanny Sterling, Mrs. Page, Lady Eleanor, Irwin, with other favorite characters. The want of a principal tragedian was severely felt, notwithstanding the kind toleration extended to Mr. Fullerton in such parts as Macbeth, Iachimo, Glenalvon, Pizarro, Gondibert, Hotspur, and many leading parts of comedy. Disqualified by personal defects from appearing to advantage in heroes, Mr. Fullerton was, nevertheless, a more than respectable representative of Lord Norland, Poor Gentleman, Sir Philip Blandford, and the long list of *serious fathers*, a line of all others the most difficult and unprofitable to the actor. Mr. Jones from a careless and discontented manner, failed to gain favor, notwithstanding the advantage of several fine original parts. Mrs. Jones (a sister of James Wallack) possessed a full share of the family talent, and soon became a received substitute for Mrs. Marshall in such parts as the Country Girl, Moggy M'Gilpin, Romp, and characters in that line. She possessed an exquisite voice, and much cultivation. After a season at Philadelphia, she accepted an offer from New York, where she became one of the greatest favorites, when an insidious and lingering disease closed a career which promised high fame and fortune. Fullerton, though by no means a general favorite, was, for want of another person, not unacceptable during the early part of the season. As it advanced, however, occasional solitary marks of disapprobation were shown, but readily put down by the audience. The

disaffected, however, increased nightly in numbers and violence, until at length some eight or ten different disturbers, distributed through the house, contrived to confuse and distract the performer who happened to appear in the same scenes with Fullerton. Every effort possible was made to ascertain the cause of this continued persecution, but in vain. A nervous man at all times, poor Fullerton became nearly incapable of all effort. His terror and agony on entering the stage was truly pitiable. At length his little courage gave way, and repeated shocks brought him to the very edge of insanity. He became melancholy and morose, frequently hinting that the death either of his enemies or himself should end his sufferings. After an attempt at suicide, which Francis' sudden appearance prevented, he effected a calmness which could ill conceal his misery. On the evening of 29th January, after acting the Abbe del Epée, with less exhibition than usual of outrage from his persecutors, he left the theatre in apparently good spirits, for his lodgings as he stated; not having arrived there, search was made after some hours, but no tidings could be heard. On the following morning his body was found floating near one of the wharves on the Delaware. Much sympathy was expressed for his unhappy fate, and general execrations on his cowardly murderers. How could men fail to feel the baseness of attacking in numbers a helpless individual, against whom no one ventured to advance a charge or accusation! My old and valued friend, Mr. Mathew Carey, published a feeling and well written pamphlet on this subject, placing the conduct of these ruffians (who by this time had become well known) in a proper point of view.

“Speed the Plough” and “Poor Gentleman” continued their successful run, aided by the splendid show piece of “Hercules and Omphale.” Mrs. Oldmixon and Mrs. Jones gave great effect to the minor operas. The new pantomime of “Obi, or Three Fingered Jack,” also brought large receipts to the treasury. Much interest attached to the savage exploits of Jack, as remarkably well acted by Fullerton, whose efforts, however, were afterwards eclipsed by a young French refugee from St. Domingo. In his prosperous days this gentleman had amused himself in amateur theatricals, and on the production of this piece requested permission to appear as the sable hero, in which he exhibited a perfection of pantomime never excelled on the American stage. Among the stars of the season, white and colored, I may mention “a party of *Shawnee and Delaware Chiefs*, who will exhibit the *Corn Piece*, many *war dances*, &c. *The principal chief will speak an address.*” These dancers were (as was said of them) so terribly in earnest, that in their furor piece after piece of their scanty drapery became so unfixed and disarranged, as to occasion the flight of several ladies from the boxes. A villainous punster, hearing some doubts expressed whether these were real Indians, declared it his conviction, at least as far as the show knees (Shawnees) were concerned. Among the novelties, Dr. Stock’s comedy of the “Wedding in Wales,” “Obi,” “Life,” “Deaf and Dumb,” “Folly as it Flies,” “Hercules and Omphale,” were the most successful. “Falstaff’s Wedding,” the best imitation of Shakspeare, pleased his admirers. “Joanna of Montfuçon,” by Cumberland, said to have been written in rivalry of “Pizarro,” was an entire failure. Mr. Green, one

of the old company which came in 1793, returned from a protracted tour in Virginia, and was kindly received, but excited no sensation, if we except the single character of Abæliano. Francis announced for his benefit, among other matters, "a representation of that grand spectacle 'The procession in honor of the ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America, July 4th, 1788.' The stage displays a view of Market street. *Order of the Procession*—No. 1. Twelve axemen; 2. City troop of dragoons; 3. French alliance; 4. Corps of Infantry, and so on to No. 87. The scenery and machinery by Holland, Milborne & Co." From this the public naturally looked for (what was intended) a procession by machinery and miniature figures, as in "Blue Beard," and other pieces of show and pageantry. Unluckily for Francis, some thoughtless friends determined upon increasing his receipts by a silly and unjustifiable trick upon the audience. In the evening papers of the day preceding the benefit, a conspicuous card appeared, "calling upon all persons concerned in the grand procession to attend a full rehearsal, after this evening's performance shall be concluded." This notice at once changed the expectations of the public, who now confidently looked for a pageant, not of paint and pasteboard, but real men of flesh and blood. It was suggested in the theatre that a counter notice should be issued, explaining the case; but this sensible counsel was overruled. On the night of the benefit a crowded audience attended, full of expectation. When the scene was drawn, and the procession commenced, of beautifully painted figures, six inches in height, the surprise of the people for a

moment arrested their indignation, which at length burst forth in severe expressions of disgust and contempt. At one time it was feared that something more than disapprobation would be shown. Numbers hurried from the house, mortified and indignant against Francis, who was doomed to pay dearly for his friends' folly. From this time forward the announcement of Francis' name for a benefit, was the never failing pledge of an empty house.

Cooper, still divided between New York and Philadelphia, closed an unusually fortunate season; and, I ought here to add, that after enjoying an enviable degree of favoritism for six years, Bernard seceded from the company, to the general regret.

The improvement in support during the past year promised to continue, and Wignell resumed his year's labor with renewed vigor. Chief among the novelties was "Abelino, the Great Bandit," a romantic drama of deep interest, from the Protean changes of the hero's appearance, transformations so perfect and so magically sudden as to be without a parallel, unless in Duff's "Three and Deuce," or Matthews' ever changing exhibitions. This part was originally acted by Hodgkinson at New York, and proved one of the many attractions for a season. But though not performed as well with us, it satisfied an audience who had seen no other.

Early in the winter, Cooper played a farewell engagement of four nights, previous to embarking for England, to try his strength with a London audience. After he got to England, it may be interesting to add, his new audiences complimented him with crowded houses, and the most flattering evidences that his im-



provement while in America was fully appreciated by them. His experiment could not be called successful, nor was it by any means a failure. Opening as "Hamlet," he at once proved that he came determined to be Cæsar or nothing. Some few nights were passed without enthusiasm—and coldness, every actor knows, is far more dangerous than partial opposition. Not feeling secure as to the results of his benefit, he be-thought him of a plan to make all safe, and obtained assurance from Cooke that, if consent could be obtained from the Covent Garden manager, he would be glad to give his friend, Cooper, the advantage of his first appearance at Drury Lane, the great rival theatre. Mr. Harris, who always cherished a kindly feeling for Cooper, in consequence of his hard usage on a former occasion, after some little hesitation gave the required permission, and the tragedian of Covent Garden appeared as Iago. During the performance, Mrs. Pope, the Desdamaona, was seized with a violent illness, which in a few days terminated her existence. A part of the character was acted by another. Mrs. Pope never appeared again. This benefit of Cooper's was thus marked by two interesting theatrical events. Convinced that the London public was not prepared to receive him as a rival to Kemble, he commenced a successful tour through the provinces, and at length reached Liverpool, where we met soon after.

In spite of this loss we suffered little by Cooper's absence. Our theatre continued a profitable course, when Fennell and Hodgkinson, happening to visit Philadelphia, an engagement was effected, to give these favorites an opportunity of acting together, after each appearing

singly. Fennell, in his favorite, Othello, Hodgkinson as Macbeth and Vapid, to excellent houses, which were greatly increased by their union as Pierre and Jaffier, Zanga and Alonzo, Belcour and Stockwell.

At this stage of success, the drama was suddenly doomed to meet with the loss of a devoted servant, and the theatre of a friend and invaluable director. Before leaving town, Fennell and Hodgkinson were dining at Mr. Wignell's hospitable table, when he felt threatenings of blood determining to the brain—a danger from which he had occasionally suffered for many years. The lancet was resorted to, with immediate relief, and he was enabled to resume his seat after a short absence. During the evening, however, sharp pains in the arm awakened a fear that some injury had been received in bleeding. The best medical aid was summoned, when an examination resulted in the conviction that the punctured vein was inflamed, which I believe is considered by medical men a dangerous indication. A few hours confirmed our worst fears, and after two days of excruciating suffering, death released my valued and early friend from a life of care and struggle.

For several years previous to his death Mr. Wignell appeared rarely on the stage. The labors and cares of management absorbed his whole attention. In earlier days, however, he was a general favorite. His *Darby* was held in such estimation, that Bernard, Harwood, Twaits, and others declined appearing in it. Blisset alone ventured the experiment, with but moderate success. As *Faulkland*, *Joseph Surface*, and *Lord Norland*, Wignell was justly ranked far beyond any of his successors.

This gentleman, whose name so often occurs in this

book, and who is yet recalled by many elder persons with very agreeable recollections, was the son of an actor in Garrick's company. He had been apprenticed to the business of seal cutting, which he abandoned for the stage. It is not improbable that this new destination was brought about by his having been frequently present at the masterly performance of the manager. He retained a perfect recollection of Garrick to his latest years, but never made the sweeping disparagement of other actors, so frequently heard from auditors of these days. Indeed, I have been amused at the fanaticism of some elderly London persons, (and persons well educated too,) who deemed it a sort of treason to allow more than a secondary ability to any other actor, past, present, or to come. By consent of his friends, Wignell was preparing to make a dramatic effort in America; but the American Revolution, which then commenced, changed his plans to an experiment at Jamaica, where he remained nearly ten years. Some time after the peace he came to New York, and continued a citizen of the U. S. About 1795 difficulties occurred among the members of "The Old American Company," as it was called, when Wignell turned his attention towards the South. In Philadelphia, he was fortunate in the friendship of an old Jamaica acquaintance, Mr. Dallas; as also Mr. H. Hill, Mr. Meade, Mr. Biddle, and many other persons of considerable estimation. The old South street theatre, of which the remains may still be seen in a distillery, in South near Fifth street, was wholly unworthy of the wealth and taste of Philadelphia, and in addition to its inconvenient character, it was located in a quarter remote and disagreeable. It was therefore resolved that a splen-

did edifice should be erected in a more eligible situation, and an entirely new company provided. The necessary means were readily furnished, and Wignell dispatched to England. The disastrous commencement of this enterprise, his continued misfortunes and struggles up to his untimely death, are frequently spoken of in the course of these rambling sketches. He was a most amiable, well-mannered man. It was a favorite maxim with him, that "good manners were more nearly allied to good morals than people generally conceived;" certainly he furnished in his own character an admirable illustration of the fine combination. I hope to be pardoned for dwelling thus fondly on the attributes of a man in whom I found an invaluable friend and father, when circumstances had deprived me of the care and guardianship of my natural parent.

With all his skill and judgment Mr. Wignell, it must be confessed, committed an error of management at his outset, to which he himself attributed nearly as deep an injury as that which he sustained by the recurrence of the pestilence for many years, a matter I have already spoken of. The error of management was this: the founders and patrons of the new house were chiefly of a class familiar with *music*, and were desirous of placing it on an *equal* rank with the drama. As a *subordinate part* of the establishment it had always been favored; but Wignell, who, at the instance of these persons, had associated himself with Reinagle, a professional musician and composer, was unfortunately induced to rely chiefly on this *portion* of his attractions for the support of the *whole*. The musical part of the entertainment being now made so prominent, greatly swelled the expenditures. These included the enormous charge of a perfect orchestra of instrumental

performers of undoubted abilities, carefully selected from the great theatres abroad. The musical instruments of all kinds, (then the property of the manager,) including two grand pianos and a noble organ, swelled this sum yet more. Then again the skeleton of a chorus, to be constantly kept and filled up as wanted, formed another item. The orchestra *music*, (afterwards destroyed by fire,) was obtained at an expense of nearly two thousand dollars. The Darleys, Marshall, Mrs. Oldmixon, Miss Broadhurst, Mrs. Marshall, and Mrs. Worrall, with many others, were engaged as principals from the London theatres, and at the highest salaries. The dramatic, with this department, so very complete in itself and so very expensive, was united. It too was carefully attended to, as is proved by the names of Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, Chalmers, Bates, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, Fennell, Moreton, Harwood, Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Blissett, Green and others. A full ballet corps under the direction of Byrne added largely to the salary list. Such was Wignell's reliance on his musical force, that the first performance given by his new theatre in America was an opera, "The Castle of Andalusia." Hitherto the public had been satisfied with as much music as could be heard from an operatic farce—enriched by the compositions of Shield, Arnold, and other popular composers. A few days clearly proved where the superiority in management lay.

It is needless to state that the *discords* among the singers proved a great addition to the poor manager's cares. As most of the operas had been composed with a view to the peculiar powers and voices of some original representative, it frequently happened that these pieces

were not suited to the ability of later singers, and it became necessary to omit much of the composer's music, substituting such popular and approved airs as were most certain of obtaining applause. As a natural consequence, each artist insisted on a share of this privilege, until the merciless introduction of songs, enforced by admirers of the several singers, protracted the entertainment to so late an hour, as to leave the contending songsters to a show of empty benches, and a handful of tired-out hearers; the audience preferring to retire at a reasonable hour. I state these particulars chiefly as annals. The advantages and disadvantages of music to a theatre hereafter form a subject of my remarks. Wignell's latest conviction (and time since his death has confirmed its truth) was, that no theatre can properly do justice to opera, comedy, and tragedy, in our limited audiences. One theatre, he believed, should be expressly devoted to music and dancing. I am not certain, however, whether in a pecuniary point of view these departments are ever profitable to the manager under any circumstances. Few persons *with means* have been found bold enough to venture on this plan; Dupont's, Garcia's, and Montessor's failures are still fresh in every recollection. Even the attempts of English opera at the Lyceum, and Braham's theatre in London, seem to confirm former experience. In its connection with the regular drama, it is useless to say that opera, occasionally, increases the receipts of the house. It does, undoubtedly, often increase *gross* receipts, and these are all the public judge from. But this is a matter of balance of receipts and expenditures; and our books have constantly proved that the extra expenditure for a large

chorus force, additional performers, and band, added to the enormous demands of the principal singers, render a profit scarcely within probability. The great sacrifice of time necessary to produce an opera with any effect, and its limited run, is also matter of serious disadvantage. Besides, during a musical preparation, the stage is so daily occupied as to utterly prevent any successful attempt to furnish other novelties. Late instances, since the *price* of singing has been so enormously advanced, give lamentable proof of the truth of this assertion, in the fact that more than one theatre has been abruptly closed in consequence of the failure of some ill-judged operatic experiment. To show how badly the union of the two entertainments affected the manager, Mr. Wignell used to refer in later times the advocates of the junction to his book of receipts, which presented such contrasts as "Love in a Village," "Robin Hood," or "Artaxerxes," (all musical dramas,) performed to an audience of one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars; while the "Revenge," "Romeo and Juliet," "Alexander," or almost any other tragedy, seldom fell below a receipt of from five hundred to seven hundred dollars. My own management confirms his views. I myself remember listening to one of the best operas, and well sung, which yielded a receipt of only forty dollars. On a more successful occasion it reached sixty dollars; and it is a fact, which the book of my treasurer *proves*, that "Speed the Plough," "Poor Gentleman," "John Bull," and "Foundling of the Forest," realized more real profit to our theatre than all the operas produced during twenty-five years.

Up to this time our theatre relied for the support of

first tragic characters, on the occasional but frequent visits of Fennell and Cooper. In their absence some droll personations took place. The play-bills record Marshall (the singer, and an actor of the feeblest powers,) as the first Charles de Moor ; Warren as Richard, King Lear, Iago, Horatio, Polydore, and other famous parts. Hardinge, (the Irishman of the company,) from necessity, figured as Alexander, Prince of Wales, &c. The comic genius, Bernard, was at times the Shylock, Hotspur, Captain Absolute, &c. Mrs. Oldmixon was the original Cora, (probably because of the song in the fifth act, since properly omitted.) Bernard, among other juvenile characters, at sixty was the young Cheverel, (that day supposed by the play of age,) while Lennox (a fair gentleman about forty,) was represented by a lean, awkward chap of about nineteen. Fennell, six and a half feet high, was the Tancred, and Romeo to the Juliet of Mrs. Marshall, one of the most diminutive full grown actresses of the day. These odd casts were the consequence of difficulties in obtaining actors, not from ignorance or inattention of the managers. Bernard was far from thinking humbly of his own Shylock, which, I may add, acted originally as a comic part, (perhaps for the purpose of depreciating the poor, persecuted Jew,) was frequently found in the cast of professed comedians, as King, Dowton, and many others. The usage long prevailed of exhibiting Shylock with a shaggy red beard, and enormous hooked nose. In obedience to this custom, Bernard fabricated by means of wax an artificial nose, which gave him a strong resemblance to the prints of Macklin, whose matchless performance in this play he



dilated upon with vast pleasure. He enjoyed every advantage of studying Macklin, having in London, as well as in the Irish theatres, invariably appeared as the Gratiano. His performance of this part detracted nothing from his popularity.

I have already mentioned some distance back the retirement of Bernard from our theatre. To repair the loss of so general a favorite now became an important object. A visit which I had been projecting to England, was hastened by this circumstance. Before I had taken my passage, the management at Philadelphia was desirous to secure the service of a gentleman in New York, who became afterwards well known to the audience here. I allude to Mr. Jefferson. But Jefferson felt some reluctance to leave New York, and a public which much admired him there, for the chance of success in a situation which had been but lately so satisfactorily filled by his old friend and manager, Bernard. Some of his happiest days had been passed under the management of Bernard, with whose talents and worth, as well as with the estimation in which he had been held in Philadelphia, he was fully acquainted. After a short delay, however, Jefferson plucked up a manly spirit, and resolved upon a change, but not until I had sailed. This delay, however, led to the advantage of our audience becoming possessed at once of two eminent comedians; and by the engagement of Twaits, with Blissett and Warren, a comic force was capable of being presented in a way rarely within a manager's reach. Mrs. Barrett, (the mother of George,) an actress of much provincial celebrity, was engaged; also Mrs. Green, a very lovely woman, formerly the Miss Williams of Mr. Wignell's first com-

pany. The early part of the season produced the opera of the "Blind Girl," "Tale of Mystery," "House to be Sold," "Hear both Sides," "Hero of the North," "Blue-Devils," "John Bull," and many other lesser pieces. The success of this last play was extraordinary, notwithstanding its local character and title. Such was the doubt of liberality in the American public, that our agent in England, from whom we received it, apologized for sending this manuscript, "fearing that it would prove a useless expense, as the character and title of the piece would present an insurmountable objection to it." The play was acted with universal applause under its proper name of "John Bull, or an *Englishman's* Fireside;" not with the timid alteration to "An *Honest Man's* Fireside," adopted in some theatres. This admirable comedy continues to this day one of the first favorites on the list. It is known that Colman received the large sum of one thousand pounds for this piece, retaining at the same time certain reserved privileges as to the publication of it, though these did not fall in until some time after. Wignell's friendly relations with the London managers and authors, gave him the advantage of an early manuscript of each new piece, on the condition of its use being confined to his own theatre. Being yet unpublished, such was the public curiosity to read the piece of which I have spoken, that a person of less delicacy than enterprise obtained a loan of our manuscripts from a careless prompter, and took an unworthy opportunity to copy the play and publish it, *with a copyright announcement*. Some of the copies found their way to England, where a deep indignation was expressed, both by the manager and author. Every effort was made to

prove the fraudulent manner in which the copy had been obtained. The case, however, operated unfavorably on other new pieces, and nearly destroyed a monopoly so important to our house. The faithless prompter suffered the penalty of dismissal for his fault.

On arriving at Liverpool in the evening after my voyage already referred to, I hurried to the theatre, leaving my fellow passenger to provide lodgings and join me. The play has ever been to me a memorable one: "Rule a wife, and Have a wife," with the following perfect cast, Michael Perez, *Lewis*; Leon, *Young*; Eltifama, *Mrs. Glover*; Cacafoge, *Emery*; Old Woman, *Simmons*; and the remaining parts very efficiently sustained. My delight at such a performance may well be imagined. Here was a cast made up of eminent performers from the two great theatres of London. The after-piece was "A Tale of Mystery," the first-melo drama ever produced, and of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Young, was Rimaldi; Emery, the Dumb Man. During the performance I was surprised at meeting Cooper, having reason to suppose him on his voyage home, as he considered America. My stay of some days was rendered delightful by the hospitable attentions of many gentlemen of the city. Cooper, I found, had appeared as Macbeth, Pierre and Leon with much seeming satisfaction to the audience. He also acted with much favor at Manchester on alternate nights with Young.

During my voyage I had indulged a wish to ascertain whether the favor attained by the kindness of the public, and unceasing industry on my part, had any

foundation in real professional merit. With this view I resolved to offer myself to some provincial manager as a novice, wholly unpractised, where from some audience strange to me, I might make some reasonable guess as to my true value. At Liverpool this plan was hopeless, as every hotel furnished some one from home, or some stranger who had visited us. To pass wholly unknown was my object. At Birmingham I had better hopes; until, on the morning after my arrival, on coming down to breakfast four of the persons present were no other than leading merchants of Philadelphia, engaged in furnishing their orders and supplies. At the theatre in the evening one of my nearest fellow spectators was Mrs. Marshall, my unexpected meeting with whom at Birmingham I have already mentioned in my account of this lady. The same disappointment occurred at Manchester, Bath, and every other place I visited. At each I was sure to stumble on some one who would probably have defeated my project of acting *incog*. I was somewhat repaid, however, for these disappointments by reading in one of our American papers a long and flattering account of "Mr. W. B. Wood's favorable reception as Vapid at the Haymarket theatre, London," !!! the inside of which I had as yet never so much as seen.

The duties of the commission which sent me to England took me almost directly from Liverpool to the Metropolis—a world of wonders in itself! Its thousand objects of interest obtained from me such passing attention as with great desire to see them, and great effort to do so, I could give them in my short stay. An eager solicitude of finding some future opportunity

of studying them more fully was one of the strongest effects which they produced on me, as I suppose they do on most visitors who see them for the first time, and are then obliged to leave them.

Among the public exhibitions of the time, not the least pleasing was the entertainment given by Charles Dibdin, the well-known author and composer of innumerable popular songs. His theatre in Leicester Square was a little box of a place, filled nightly to witness his extraordinary entertainment, which consisted simply of a series of songs, tied together as it were by numerous musical and amusing anecdotes, given in the most easy and graceful style. Dibdin, the sole performer, accompanied himself on the piano, and thus without other assistance was enabled to furnish an evening's entertainment, scarcely excelled in after days by Mathew's wonderful dramatic feats.

On my return to America the company was strengthened by recruits from England. Jefferson, as I have stated, had come from New York, and with others either recently arrived or formerly here, the company presented a strong force. Among other new announcements the following appeared:—

“January 30, 1804. Married, by the Rev. Dr. Abercrombie, Mr. W. B. WOOD to Miss Juliana WESTRAY, both of this theatre.”

Jefferson appeared as Don Manuel, at Baltimore and Philadelphia, at once establishing a reputation which neither time nor age could impair. Twait's success as Dr. Pangloss was no less decisive; but the popularity of Kotzebue's plays induced the managers to bestow much labor and expense on the production of “Count Benyowsky, or The Conspiracy of Kam-

schatka," a drama of intense interest, connected with some romantic passages in the life of the ill-fated author. It was made a principal feature of the season.

Recalling a scene in this play, in connection with the interest which the new State of California has since excited in the world, I may be permitted to hope that this alluring country may not prove as unfortunate to some of our adventurous people as did once an allusion to it to poor Kotzebue. The general reader must recollect that many years ago Russia, then under the government of the mad emperor Paul, was suspected of some aggressive designs upon the region which has since become ours. A scene is accordingly introduced into this play in which the commander of the Cossacks, a drunken visionary fellow, while in his cups, proposes to the count the following plan: "To settle a colony upon the Aleutian islands; you," he says, "shall assist me in bringing this scheme to perfection. You shall persuade the Governor to propose it to the Empress—I will make you all free and happy. The governor shall be promoted from this place to Ochotz; you made Governor of Kamschatka; I regent of the Aleutian Islands, and before you are aware of it, CONQUEROR OF CALIFORNIA." For this neat piece of characteristic waggery poor Kotzebue was seized at midnight, by the orders of the Emperor, and hurried off to Siberia; from which place he was recalled only, as has been since supposed, through the influence of some powerful Germans at Petersburg. Kotzebue, in some of his writings, alludes delicately to this affair. It is interesting, and but just to the Emperor to add, that on his return his fright was rewarded by several lucrative ap-

pointments ; a matter which, at the time, seemed good fortune, but which proved in the end the cause of his untimely death.\*

The wanderings and exploits of the Count Benyowski, the hero of Kotzebue's play, are recorded by himself, and are probably familiar to many readers. They may not, however, be aware of the fact, which I learned myself only by accident, that this city was for some time the place of his residence, and that of his second wife. On the morning succeeding the first production of the play, meeting Mr. Charles Biddle, one of the principal proprietors of our theatre, he stopped me to congratulate me upon the scenery and performance, remarking that the Count was an acquaintance of his, and resided at the house in Chestnut street adjoining his residence, (the building in Chestnut street below Fifth, lately torn down, and long occupied as the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank.) He was as remarkable in manner as in character, full of life and daring. His wife (not the Athanasia of the play) was a lady of beauty and accomplishments, not the least of which was an extraordinary proficiency on the harp, at that time an instrument in little use here. The performance of the play deserved perhaps some of Mr. Biddle's eulogy, for it was acted with much ability and care, and I am happy to add that it well repaid the labor which it cost.

\* It is well known, I believe, that after some considerable absence he visited his native country, and wrote incessantly on politics, and so unguardedly that the suspicions of his countrymen soon viewed him in the light of a Russian emissary, and one of the students, (named Sand,) who was proverbially patriotic, determined on his destruction. Calling at the house of the unfortunate man, he decoyed him to the door, where he stabbed him to the heart. At his trial, and on the scaffold, he exulted in having rid his country of what he deemed her worst and most dangerous enemy. The whole affair of his death and previous policy is yet involved in much mystery.

## CHAPTER V.

1804—1807.

New management—Mrs. Wignell declines *Lady Macbeth*—Red Cross Knights—Fox the original singer of *Hail Columbia*—His indiscreet habits—A singer's danger—Confidence on the stage—Stage blunders—Warren in England, recruiting for Philadelphia and Baltimore—His new engagements—Mr. and Mrs. Woodham—Mr. and Mrs. Mills—Bray—Cross—Cone's first appearance—Byrno's *Cinderella*—The first dramatic version of this story—Mrs. Woodham's excellence as a pantomimist and dancer—Her great popularity—Mills' success as *Pike*—Bray well received—Harwood's return after three years absence—Fennell's great engagement for twelve nights—Benefit for the children of Hodgkinson—Circus rivalry and failure—An active season—Author while acting ruptures a blood vessel, and McKenzie takes the residue of his part—Failure of benefits—Mrs. Melmoth, her powers, great merits, and extreme professional sensibility—A sudden check to enthusiasm—Webster—His singing—Troubles and rash discharge—Sues the manager, who pays one thousand dollars—A queer fellow and a great rogue, appears as *Beverly*, and disappears as a debtor—Turns up again at Baltimore, where he narrowly escaped being "ducked" under a pump in the stable yard.

By the death of Wignell, of which I have already spoken, the management devolved upon his widow and Reinagle, the original joint proprietor with Wignell. The musical department fell of course to the charge of Reinagle, whose compositions and adaptations were deserved favorites with the public. After closing the theatre for a few nights as a tribute of respect to Mr. Wignell's memory, we opened under the stage management professedly of Warren, though the labors of the office fell to my share; for though Warren could



plan a season admirably, he found the labor of carrying out his design an insupportable toil. On the performance of "Macbeth" during this season, Mrs. Wignell still declined playing the Lady, on the plea that Mrs. Siddon's representation of the part had left an impression on her mind, dispiriting to any effort at competition or success; a resolution I do not recollect her ever abandoning. This appeared a strange diffidence, when we recollect that Mrs. Wignell's estimation in London was by no means confined to the gentler characters, but was extended even to the most powerful, as Calista, Hermione, Roxana, Horatia and others. Alfonso, by M. G. Lewis, was given with extraordinary success, and continued highly attractive for several seasons. The second part of "Henry IV.," was got up for the first time in America, and Warren at once acquired the high reputation which he afterwards possessed as Falstaff. The play, however, never became a favorite, chiefly from the want of a prominent female character; an objection to lady audiences, who rarely do either of the three Falstaff plays the favor of their patronage. The same cause prevents the "Revenge" and the "Robbers" from becoming in the stage phrase, "Woman's plays." And even in "Julius Cæsar," attractive as it is, the great disproportion of ladies to men in the audience is a subject of frequent remark.

A feeble alteration by Holman of Schiller's play of "The Robbers," under the title of the "Red Cross Knights," was most indifferently acted and coldly received. Schiller's original play had been offered to the English licenser, and utterly refused a permission on an avowed objection to the story. Many were disposed to believe that in the liberal opinions of the au-

thor was found a far greater fault, than in the false or doubtful moral of the play. During this season Fox, who had never been a good actor, and whose voice was very bad, returned to us, unimproved in voice or acting, after a few years' absence. It was the misfortune of this actor, (thoughtless at all times,) to have been the original singer of "Hail Columbia." The popularity of the ode led him, nothing unwilling, into convivial company, and habits of such excess as finally to destroy his health. The coarse and disgraceful habit of those days, when with song and wine dinner parties were made scenes of wild conviviality, proved the ruin of many fine young men, whose company was courted merely for their power of entertaining others less amusingly gifted. The prevalence of this destructive habit, now fortunately passed away among all but very sensual men, must be familiar to such as can look back to the commencement of the last century; and to them many painful instances will recur of talents thus prematurely and unworthily lost.\* Fox was the only instance of exception I can recollect among the actors. Hodgkinson, indeed, indulged freely in gay society, but wisely avoided convivial excess. The duties of a prominent actor also left no continued leisure for these habits, which proved so frequently fatal to men of less employment. Speaking of Fox, a strange peculiarity in him may be noticed. Although in colloquial intercourse off the stage he stuttered and stammered to the most distressing degree, yet in speaking and singing it is remarkable that

\* In this sad list figures prominently Jarvis the painter, a man of inexhaustible powers, and rare amusing qualities. The increasing waste of spirits, with the excess of excitement necessary to their support, brought this excellent artist to a state of utter childishness before even middle age.

this infirmity never appeared. He used to account for this phenomenon by attributing it to fright and nervousness. It may create a smile to speak of nervous timidity in actors, so frequently supposed to require little else than a good share of confidence. In reply it might be allowed that two causes exist for this drawback to excellence in young persons. It is frequently produced by doubt of power, to give effect to well imagined exertions. Among practised professional men it is received as a favorable evidence of that sensibility so necessary to the perfection of our difficult art. To persons who only see actors on the stage it could not fail to be a matter of surprise to learn that nervous terror is a feeling which never wholly leaves a true actor. It is frequently suspended by long continued approbation from one audience, but keenly revived by a removal to the decision of another. The most striking instances I can recollect were Cooke, Kean, and Mathews. The two former on their first nights at Philadelphia exhibited a nervous anxiety wholly inexplicable to one who did not reflect what high expectations were to be gratified in an audience unacquainted with their strong personal peculiarities.

The stories of actors' verbal blunders have become somewhat stale, I am aware, yet one or two of the new readings of a man named Seymour, who was with us at this time, may not be out of place. In some tragedy he was sent forward as a guard, whose business it was to cut off some unfortunate's head, and conceal it. Instead of saying, as he should have said, "I severed his head from his body, and in an obscure corner I disposed it," he thus announced his feat, "I severe-'d his head from his body, and in a nobscure corner I dis-

closed it." In "Henry IV.," when the impatient Hotspur is anxiously inquiring why his confederates so long delayed joining him, exclaims, "Oh, that Glendower were come!" Seymour replied,

"There is more news;  
I learned in Worcester as I rode along,  
He cannot draw his power these fourteen *years*."\*

Douglas remarks very naturally, in reply—

"That's the worst tidings I hear of yet."

And Worcester adds,

"Aye, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound."

It will readily be credited that the audience were convulsed with laughter, which was resumed at each appearance of such a discouraging messenger. I must remark here, that these outrageous blunders occurred during what has been complacently called "the palmy days of old Drury," when, from the scarcity of actors, the inferior parts in tragedies were almost uniformly butchered.

In the course of the summer of 1805, Warren was employed in England on the recruiting service, and the result was the engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Woodham, Bray, Cross, Mr. and Mrs. Mills, and Rutherford. Mr. Spencer Cone also made his first attempt this year. Of the new engagements, Mrs. Woodham and her brother, Mills, were the most valuable. The lady possessed great personal attractions, and much varied ability. Byrne's splendid pantomime of "Cinderella" afforded her an opportunity of displaying her powers as a dancer, and added greatly to her reputation. Widow Cheerly, Volante, and other parts in high comedy, contributed to render her a universal favorite. Her husband was a sweet singer, and proved useful in the musical after-pieces. Mills, whom I had seen at Man-

\* Instead of *days*.

chester in the same character, made a great impression as Tyke, as well as in some Scotch parts. Mrs. Melmoth also proved a valuable acquisition. Bray, afterwards a great favorite, made a happy hit in Frank Oatland. Harwood again returned, (after an engagement at New York,) but with lessened spirit and eclat. Cone was well received by his townsmen. With this addition to his regular force, Warren commenced a profitable season. The combination of Mrs. Melmoth and Mrs. Wignell, attracted large audiences to the "Distrest Mother," "Mary Queen of Scots," "Essex," "Pizarro," and other tragedies, while our comic strength was successfully employed upon the best comedies. Fennell also performed an engagement of twelve nights, with unusual success, appearing for the first time here as Osmond, Penruddock, Hotspur, and Essex, in none of which, however, he added much to his fame. His large receipts were to "Othello," "Zanga," and "Macbeth." He also volunteered as King Alfonso in "The Voice of Nature," for the benefit of Hodgkinson's children, left destitute by the sudden death of their father at Washington.

During this and several preceding seasons, the circus proved a far more serious rival than the theatre in after years, and inflicted much injury on us, while at the same time it never failed to ruin itself. This was particularly the case with Ricketts, Lailson, Pepin and Breschard. Had these persons timed their visits with more judgment, and chosen the summer months for their season, the partiality of our public for this species of entertainment must have proved greatly profitable to them. So far from doing this, however, one of these equestrian managers had the modesty to apply

to us for the relinquishment of three nights in a winter's week to them.

This proved an active season, as will be seen by the following list of pieces performed, "Delinquent," "Fox Chase," (by a gentleman of Philadelphia,) "Tears and Smiles," by Major Barker, "To Marry or not to Marry," "Cabinet," "Battle of Derne." "The Man of the World" was acted (first time here) for Mr. McKenzie's Sir Petinax, in which he gained much credit. Mrs. Woodham was charming in Lady Rodolpha. Mrs. Melmoth also succeeded greatly in Lady St. Valori. The second part of "Henry IV," which was frequently repeated, exhibited an unusual comic force—Warren, Jefferson, Blisset, Mills, Webster, Bray, and others. "Town and Country" at once reached a high degree of favoritism, and enriched our treasury for several years. "Love makes a Man" was revived, and the "Travellers," (a poor sort of musical Chinese spectacle,) was as fortunate as it deserved to be. During a performance of Charles de Moor, the rupture of a blood vessel, while I was acting Charles, in the fourth act, put a stop to the play for awhile, and it was thought a final one to the actor. A month's care and retirement, however, fully restored me, and no return ever occurred. The remainder of the part was cleverly got through by Mr. McKenzie, whose frequent performance of Switzer had made him familiar with the text. This same person also acted Lord Townly very creditably this season. Mr. Lewis Hallam, announced as "a veteran of the stage," received a benefit, and appeared as Lord Ogilby—being the fifty-sixth year since his first appearance in Philadelphia. He also acted Shylock; but at this time he was very feeble, indeed, much a wreck.

Notwithstanding the fair success of the manager's season, some of the actors' benefits failed miserably. The bills stated that "Messrs. McKenzie and Robbins (scene painters) having failed in their late benefits, inform their friends and the patrons of the drama, that the managers have granted them the next Friday evening, that they may again have an opportunity of soliciting public support." A similar card appeared for Mr. and Mrs. Wood, and I am sorry to add with no better success than attended the former efforts. A short after-season of eight nights served to restore Mrs. Wilmot (formerly Mrs. Marshall) to our theatre. These seasons of 1805-6-7 varied little in character or success, and present little for detail. They, however, serve to show the advantage of regular exertion, and a strict adherence to the principles and discipline by which the first manager was enabled to combat so many difficulties.

Mrs. Melmoth has been frequently mentioned, and deserves more than a passing notice. She was truly a remarkable woman, as well as actress. In size she greatly exceeded any performer I have seen, although her height in some respects qualified the disadvantage of her breadth. To a fine face and powerful voice, she added an exquisite feeling of the pathetic, which in Lady Randolph, Lady St. Valori, and other parts of tenderness, left an impression which years fail to efface. It might naturally be supposed, that such an overwhelming figure would occasionally excite laughter or ridicule. So far from it, a judicious limit of her performance to characters not wholly unsuited to her size, secured general attention and respect. This lady was married early in life, and unhappily, to Mr. Pratt, the well known author of "Gleanings," who assumed

the name of Melmoth during an unsuccessful attempt as a tragedian. After several years' residence in New York, she retired from the stage in the possession of a handsome competence, the fruits of a well regulated economy and industry. By the counsel of some judicious friends, she was induced to purchase a small house and some land at or near Brooklyn, which soon after increased greatly in value, and is, at this time, the site of one or more portions of this enterprising city. At this place she died, at an advanced age, much respected by a large circle of friends. As an actress of matrons she fairly ranked with Mrs. Whitlock and Mrs. Wignell. Her poetical *enthusiasm* sometimes led her to the very edge of danger, for at a certain point in acting her feeling and judgment lost their distinctness. While acting Mrs. Bland, in a piece of Dunlap's, called "The Glory of Columbia," and founded on the melancholy fate of Major André, she had worked up her enthusiasm to an unusual pitch, in a scene of great anxiety for the fate of her son. At this interesting moment, and in full enjoyment of a sympathizing audience, she should have received a letter decisive of his fate. But instead of this, by a mistake of the prompter, a letter was handed to her with this address, "To the beautiful maid at the foot of the hill." Absorbed by the scene, she snatched it eagerly and read the superscription with fervid emphasis. The absurdity of such a document at such a moment, could not fail to excite a little movement of mirth, quickly suppressed, however, by respect for the actress. Suddenly awakened to a sense of her situation, with a readiness peculiar to her sex, she recalled her imagined situation, and satisfied with the *superscription*, proceeded to extem-



porise the contents of the letter, and to connect it with the character so cleverly as to take off attention to the mysterious address. The explanation was thus: The prompter, in the hurry of a new piece, had substituted a letter to be used in the farce for the one intended for the play; and thus poor Mrs. Bland, instead of her son's anxiously expected letter, received a silly romantic note from Jeremy Diddler to his lady love, in "Raising the Wind"—the after-piece of the night. The worthy Jeremy was so well known to the audience by Jefferson's admirable acting, that it was not strange that in so unexpected a situation, the name of this old favorite should produce at least partial mirth.

Webster continued a general favorite during the first and a portion of the second season. His voice was pronounced by musical people to exceed in power, as well as sweetness, any tenor heard on our stage. This man was by no means an indifferent actor in some Irish characters. As the representative of opera heroes, as Young Medows and Lord William, the singing captains in farces, he had no superior. His deportment and dress were marked and marred by a very disagreeable effeminacy, which the audience endured for the pleasure of his singing. About the middle of this season a sudden expression of dislike was seen to attend each of his songs, but seemed limited to a very few persons. Still it never failed nightly to occur, until the interruption became a serious evil to the audience, as well as to the manager. What the cause of this offence was, was never explained. Warren, well known as an easy mild tempered man, became impatient at this state of things, and during a warm altercation with Webster on the subject, so far forgot his equanimity as

to dismiss him abruptly from the theatre ; not reflecting that a partial disapprobation, from a handful of persons, by no means released the manager from his contract. Indeed, if it did, any unprincipled manager who wished to be rid of an unprofitable bargain would find in a small party an excuse for want of faith. Webster saw at once the advantage which Warren's rashness gave him, and commenced suit for damages—salary to the end of the season, as well as the profits of a benefit, rated at the result of the last season. Warren, by advice of counsel, determined to avoid large law expenses, as well as to save his time, and by a compromise agreed to pay Webster one thousand dollars in full of all claims.

A very queer fellow and a great rogue of the name of Huntington fell in my way soon after Mr. Wignell's death. He introduced himself to us as an intimate of Messrs. Kemble, Lewis, &c., and as a young gentleman who had fallen in love with acting, from seeing and associating with this class of London actors. All he wished was an opportunity to try whether a strange audience would ratify the partial decision of his friends at *home*. Of course remuneration was out of the question, as his means were ample, and his visit to America was solely to see the country. Meeting him one morning, while on my way to order an article of dress, he took occasion to accompany me to the tailors, and while there boldly ordered a suit for Mr. Beverly, the character he proposed to appear in. The dress was carefully directed to represent the fashion of some 50 years before, with large cuffs, full flaps, and a low collar. I modestly ventured a suggestion that this style of dress would sit awkwardly on a person of his youthful figure and deportment, but was tartly an-

swered that such was the dress Kemble wore: and an insinuation that Beverly could not be well exhibited without a fac simile coat of the great tragedian's, silenced me. If the aspirant imitated the dress so closely, it will naturally be inferred that a copy of the manner was intended also, but no description can give an adequate idea of the ludicrous effect produced by an effort to ape the peculiarities which Kemble would have given half his fortune to have got rid of. The high tone of Kemble's voice, often resorted to by necessity in order to conceal his sufferings from asthma, even his halt, as when half lamed by rheumatic gout, were accurately recollected, and most faithfully given throughout the whole part. The audience were greatly puzzled what to think of it, and frequently when on the point of bursting out into a laugh, were evidently restrained by the respect felt for the other performers, or an unexceptionable and even sensible mode of *reading* the part. Of course it was never repeated, and Beverly departed with a full contempt for the judgment of an American audience. This aspirant suddenly vanished from the city, leaving to the theatre the coat, with the privilege of paying for it. The next time I encountered this worthy was at Baltimore, where I called on a friend resident at the Indian Queen Hotel. As I entered, a strange bustle and scampering of servants attracted my attention, and a moment after a person flew through the hall at high speed, followed by three or four of the black servants, as he passed. The well remembered features of Beverly glanced a half imploring look towards me. Reaching the street his pursuers followed until he fairly distanced them. On inquiry it appeared that he had somehow obtained

admission to the billiard room. In the course of a few days he contrived to accumulate a large debt to the players in bets of various kinds, as well as a long score to the table keeper. It was observed that his habit was to receive all debts won, but to pay none lost. Consulting on the question, it was determined that on his next visit, should he fail to redeem his credit, or at least disgorge his winnings, he should be taken to the stable yard and soundly ducked at the pump. An attempt to execute this sentence led to the scene I witnessed, which was probably the last appearance of Beverly.

## CHAPTER VI.

1808—1810.

Adrian and Orilla—Cause of its great success—Barker's Indian Princess—Cooper—Benefit to Martin's children—Henry V—Unlucky application of a passage—National partialities—Bagatelle long a proscribed character—Cause of its unpopularity—Marshall and Blissett's excellence—Jefferson's versatility—Hon. Mrs. Twistleton—Bernard's re-appearance—Mr. Hallam—Mrs. Warren's death—A voyage in search of health—Singular interview with Gen. Turreau—French courtesy and respect for the fine arts—Second voyage to England—Glimpse of the London actors—Return—Master Payne first at Baltimore—A boy's value of Master Payne—Amazing success—Geo. Barrett (a late Roscius) commenced regularly—Substantial friendship and material aid—Making me a manager—An actor's struggles—Fair prospects—Our company in 1810—A few pleasant nights at the Park, New York—Opening at Philadelphia under joint management—Mrs. Beaumont very popular—Extraordinary run of actors—Benefits—Cooke's first appearance at Philadelphia, and amount of the benefits—His first appearance at Baltimore—An apology—Death of the veteran Morris—An episode by way of Benefit to Life Insurance Companies—Ages of actors—Strange misconceptions on this subject—Record of aged performers.

“ADRIAN and Orilla” was acted for the first time in 1808 with a success that established it at once as one of the most admired and productive plays on the list. It was greatly indebted to the acting of Mrs. Wignell and Mrs. Wilmot, as Madame Clermont and the page. “The School for Arrogance,” “The Haunted Tower,” and “False and True,” were also brought out. The latter piece was afterwards altered for Power, under

the title of "Born to Good Luck." "The Indian Princess," by Major J. N. Barker, then of Philadelphia, and since connected with the public affairs in some of the offices at Washington, D. C., was acted for Mrs. Woodham's benefit, and with applause. Cooper also gave six nights of his characters, and was allowed to have greatly improved. Beverly and Leon now ranked in attraction with his most successful parts. A benefit was given to the children of Martin, an actor of New York, and who married a Philadelphia lady, but it proved unproductive. "The Sailor's Daughter," by Cumberland, which we tried at this time, suffered by comparison with his earlier plays, and soon disappeared from the stage. Shakspeare's Henry V. was acted with some care and cost, and would, probably, have become popular, but for a sudden exception taken by a large and violent part of the audience to a particular passage. Where Henry replies to Mountjoy's demand of unconditional surrender, he says,

My people are with sickness much enfeebled,  
 My numbers lessened, and those few I have  
 Almost no better than so many *French* ;  
 Who, when they were in health, I tell thee Herald,  
 I thought upon one pair of English legs,  
 Did march *three Frenchmen*."

England, it will be remembered, was at this time at war with France, and the dominant party of our own country favored a good deal the cause of the latter nation. We were, in fact, ourselves at this time in very delicate relations with England; so delicate, indeed, that they soon after ended in open war. This unlucky piece of English patriotism was accordingly met by a strong dissent from many of the audience, and of

such continuance as threatened an abrupt conclusion of the play. After some minutes peace was reluctantly permitted, and the actors allowed to proceed with little notice. The delightful courtship scene, with the French princess, partly restored good humor; but it was not thought advisable to repeat the play. At an earlier period of our national history this sensitiveness to the character of our former allies would have surprised no one. The insignificant character of Bagatelle, in the "Poor Soldier," was, I remember, in my younger days, while the memory of the Revolutionary war was yet fresh, the sure signal of merciless insult and outrage on the miserable actor who was compelled to play it. Even Marshall, the original in London, who played it excellently, was always in fear of giving offence. It was only at a later time that Blissett's excellence elevated this part to a high position in the piece.

As a proof of Jefferson's versatility, I may mention that I find his name announced during this season for Sir Oliver, Charles Surface, and Crabtree, (all in one play,) not less than ten different times within as many months; an unusual variety for a professed low comedian. His Sir Peter Teazle, also, in the same piece, was highly approved, although it did not well bear comparison with Warren's.

Mrs. Stanley, (the Hon. Mrs. Twistleton,) an English actress of some celebrity, (and formerly wife of the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Twistleton,) now appeared for a few nights with no marked success; and the old favorite Bernard made a farewell engagement of six nights, acting the Miser, the Jew, and Lord Ogleby with a spirit and power equal to his best days. Mr. Hallam

also made another "Last and Only Performance." "Bunker Hill" and the "Glory of Columbia" were produced on celebration nights, and holidays. During the summer of this year, Mrs. Warren, formerly Mrs. Wignell, and married to Warren in 1806, died suddenly at Alexandria, as did also Mr. Hallam at Philadelphia, in November, 1808, not a great while after his appearance just mentioned. This gentleman was long at the head of the old profession, but my own recollections of him are not favorable. His manner was of that peculiar kind, that in my youth I always heard called "the Old School," and which Garrick effectually exploded. In tragedy he "spouted," by which I mean declaimed without passion. Fennell was somewhat, in my judgment, guilty of this fault; but his declamation was of a very high class. In comedy, such parts for example, as Mercutio, Goldfinch, &c., Mr. Hallam always struck me as extravagant; and a constant habit of interlarding the text with small oaths was charged against his good taste from an early period. I should hesitate thus to present my opinions in regard to an actor whose name is in some degree historical, did I not know that they were invariably sustained by persons of acknowledged judgment. On the other hand, nothing could be more purely natural than the acting of his sister, Mrs. Mattocks, whom I saw with delight and surprise some years after; delight at her excellence, and surprise that while resembling her brother in many respects, she should be so unlike him in her style of acting. Although far advanced in life when I first had the pleasure to see her, no deterioration had yet taken place, and her Fiametta, Lucetta, Betty Hint, Miss McTab, and Widow War-



ren, with a long list of mischievous chamber-maids and waiting-women, always appeared to me of the first class of talents. It must be remembered that the London stage, at the time of which I speak, was filled to overflowing with talent of every description, in most of which it has since been feebly provided, or lamentably deficient. One thing particularly struck me in Mrs. Mattock's acting, an occasional burst of feeling (as in *Fiametta*) satisfying every auditor of her former merits as a positive tragedian, the duties of which situation, though abandoned long before I saw her, she had formerly sustained with honor for a series of years.

The winter season of 1808 closed successfully, and a spring season in Baltimore was in full progress, when the extreme exertion incident to my acting position proved too severe for my health. It had gradually sunk into an alarming state of nervous debility. Medical advisers ordered an immediate suspension of labor, and a sea voyage, as the only chance of recovery.

A second visit to England was accordingly resolved on. When about to embark, some one suggested the necessity of a passport, in case of being intercepted by some of the French privateers, which at this time swarmed in the channels, and captured many vessels bound to English ports.

This state of things being mentioned to some of my friends, Commodore Barney proposed asking a passport from the French Minister, observing that artists of every kind were made exceptions to the general restrictive system pursued against travellers of every other class. The worthy gallant Commodore, who was not a

man to do things by halves, followed up his proposal by calling on the Minister, General Turreau, from whom he obtained a very ready and immediate compliance with his wish—accompanied by a request that he might see the person for whom it was required, in order to afford some additional instructions, useful in the event of capture. The evening was appointed for this interview with a person of whom strange stories had been told, and from whose severe personal appearance little of the agreeable could be expected.

It will be recollected by many now living, that General Turreau, whether justly or not, labored under the imputation of adding to great courage and military talent a degree of harshness and severity, little short of what had been attributed to Suwarrow. These tales were not without firm believers, and the good natured world kindly furnished some interesting details of shocking cruelty to the mother of his boy—close confinement, and finally desertion or repudiation. These fables, for no proof was ever offered, passed very current for truth, while the reserved, austere manner of the subject of them, added to a most unprepossessing exterior, led him to be looked upon by the crowd as a kind of Bluebeard. With a large, powerful martial figure, he was distinguished by a point of costume, at that time rare, but whose frequency since has rendered it anything but terrible. He wore his whiskers completely meeting under his chin, and the hair of most extraordinary length, so excessively powdered as on every rapid motion of the head to produce a dusty shower, not less striking than those expectorating storms so pathetically complained of by Mr. Dickens. This military appendage, beneath his enormous black

overhanging brows, gave to the General a most martial, if not ferocious appearance, and when coupled with his unamiable reputation, rendered him more an object of dread, particularly to the ladies, than he would have been had he lived somewhat later; for the ferocious beards and whiskers now sported in Chestnut street on a Sunday morning, by many youths of the most pacific callings and harmless dispositions, have divested this once military distinction of all awe-inspiring power.

General Turreau was residing at this time chiefly at Baltimore, as was said, for the purpose of superintending the accomplishments of his son, a beautiful boy, on whom his affections seemed to rest in an eminent degree. *Accomplishments* were mentioned, from the circumstance of the Minister's invariable attendance on his son to his dancing master, and taking the utmost interest in his lessons. It is not doubted that he was equally anxious for his advancement in more important studies, pursued with more privacy, but it was particularly remarked that this branch was under the immediate and severe inspection of the General himself. On the evening appointed, with a friend, I waited on him at his seat, a short distance from the city, where we were received most graciously by Mr. Riviere, an elegant and well-bred young gentleman, then Secretary of Legation. After some conversation we were summoned to the chamber of audience, and a most interesting and curious apartment we found it. Upon entering, it appeared to be and really was a complete armory, the walls being tastefully decorated and covered with swords, pistols, rifles, and warlike weapons of every description, as well as variety of beauty and finish. Many of these, as I afterwards

learnt, were trophies of victory, or rewards of merit, during long years of arduous military service. Several of these specimens of arms were of extraordinary beauty and value. Nor do I now recollect, in long after years of wandering, having met with, in either public or private collections, more rare or perfect weapons. Their variety and extent too were really astonishing. He received me with a gentleness of manner, so oddly contrasted with his appearance and received character, as absolutely to astonish and embarrass me. On the subject of the arts generally he spoke with enthusiasm, and appeared as well skilled as if his life had been passed at a college, instead of in the laborious duties of a military servitude, unaided by interest or favoritism. With the eminent French authors he evinced a surprising familiarity, and no less with the drama and music. It was apparent that he had enjoyed a free intimacy with distinguished authors and artists, of whom he related many interesting anecdotes, concluding by drawing a parallel between French and English tragedy, that plainly proved the subject was one on which he had thought long and deeply. Every moment increased my delight and surprise. Such opinions, given in so attractive a manner, by a person who had been considered a mere military butcher, might well have made a young man regard him with respect, not unmingled with pain, for the strange misconception which so generally prevailed in regard to him. Having delivered his thoughts very much at large upon these matters, he mildly remarked that he had always felt the warmest interest for the arts and *worthy* professors, almost insinuating a slight regret that his life had been so exclusively devoted to other studies. He

expressed much pleasure that Commodore Barney had recollected the respect and protection always extended by his government to persons connected with these pursuits, a proof of which he begged he might be allowed to offer in the shape of a *special* passport. This document was really a curiosity. It was addressed to all officers, military, naval or civil, committing the bearer to their particular care and attention, as an *artist*, travelling for health and professional improvement. In case of capture, he was to be subjected to no delays or restrictions whatever, but was to be allowed to travel in France as long as agreeable to him, or to leave the country without let or hindrance. The invalid character of the bearer was again alluded to, with additional charge to all officers to afford the necessary relief and supply. The etiquette was, on return, if unused, to restore this document to the giver, and this necessity has often since been a matter of regret, as it was desirable to keep so honorable an evidence of respect and regard for the gentler arts, in the stormy and tumultuous period of its occurrence. That it was not an unmeaning, hollow form, is well proved by several Englishmen, whose assurance we have, that the bitter animosity existing between the two countries was always greatly lessened, and in some instances wholly cancelled, in favor of prisoners whose pursuits were in any way dependent on the circle of fine arts.

The pacific duties of the General in this country, blunted neither his military skill nor his power, as he most gallantly proved some time after, by his distinguished defence of Dantzic. His conduct during his command of this place, stands recorded as one of the ablest defences of that active period.

On our return, my companion, in alluding to the singular apartment we had just quitted, observed that he felt all the time of the interview, as if he had reached the superb den of some "imperial bandit."

The agreeable disappointment experienced in the deportment of this distinguished officer, was often a source of very pleasant reflection, and probably inspired on after occasions a less rapid decision on character, than young persons usually indulge. On reading Lord Byron's amusing assertion, while on the subject of deceptive exteriors, that "Ali Pacha was the mildest old gentleman he ever met," the kind, polished conduct of the revolutionary General, contrasted with an outside so unprepossessing, has often recurred to me. Not that any parallel of character was ever dreamed of between these old warriors.\*

Being thus fortified by my special passport against captures or distress, I at once sat out for England. A few days of repose from exertion, with the free

\* It has often been remarked that no persons are so intolerant, or unforgiving of error, as the purely vicious, and few can fail to recall instances of this "*immoral morality*;"—it was strongly illustrated in the case of the General. I well remember, on an occasion where his character and supposed history were very freely discussed, strong charges were laid, and a general disposition prevailed to credit the harsh and severe imputations preferred. But, of all the party, two gentlemen in particular indulged in anathemas, which seemed only possible to proceed from the purest feelings and conduct; and yet, it is a most solemn truth, that both of these persons were at the very time actively engaged in the foreign as well as domestic slave trade. Nor is this all—the one followed up this nefarious traffic with so little respect to the existing laws here, as to occasion his perpetual absence from his native country: while the other, beggared by repeated suits instituted for the punishment of violated laws, died almost a mendicant. These men fully realized the satirical truth of Mr. Moore's sentiment, "*The world is full of slander, and every wretch, who knows himself unjust, charges his neighbor with like passions, and in the general frailty hides his own.*"

ocean air, produced a magical effect, and on arriving at London, after a delightful summer voyage, I found myself, for the first time, in a state of perfect health and strength. The new Covent Garden had not yet opened, and Drury Lane, then recently burned down, was still in ruins, leaving the Haymarket alone as the scene of legitimate drama. Here was congregated Young, who had recently made a splendid appearance as Hamlet; Liston, Jones, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Davenport, Miss Grimani, Mrs. Liston (Miss Tyrer), with many other persons of acknowledged reputation. Chief among the novelties of this season, Dimond's "Foundling of the Forest" was the most successful. Young made a deep impression also as Sir Edward Mortimer, a part I had seen some years before very ably given by Elliston. Several of the sterling old comedies were powerfully acted during my stay; and the Critic was revived for Mathews as Sir Fretful, Jones as Puff, Liston as Don Ferolo Wiskerandos. This piece, thus strangely cast, had a run of nearly thirty nights. A delightful range through the provinces brought my leave of absence to its limit, and forced me reluctantly to embark for home the week previous to the opening of Covent Garden, a matter I regretted more particularly as Miss Louisa Brunton, afterwards Countess of Craven, and sister of Mrs. Merry, was announced to appear as Lady Townly.

On my return to the United States, in October 1809, I found Master Payne in the full tide of popular favor at Baltimore, where the enthusiasm for his acting was perhaps more intense than in any other city. I speak particularly of his first engagement, for such a furor could not be expected to last. He appeared as Young

Norval, Hamlet, Romeo, Tancred, Octavian, Frederic, Rolla, Achmet, and Zaphna, to large and brilliant audiences. His benefit proved a crowning triumph. On this memorable night, the receipts touched the extraordinary amount of \$1160. It must here be remarked, that the house when filled at other times to its utmost capacity, had never yet produced \$800. Where then, it may be asked, did we contrive to stow away \$1160? This is the answer. Great numbers of tickets were paid for at high prices, and without the intention of being used. One gentleman I know gave his check of \$50 for a single ticket, besides paying liberally for the box occupied by his family. Many others paid sums varying from five to twenty dollars for single tickets, and the large gallery was filled with box tickets, failing to obtain seats below. Some very ridiculous circumstances attended Master Payne's performances, where, from his child-like figure, a physical absurdity could not fail to strike an unsophisticated auditor. A learned judge who, when crowded out of the boxes by the ladies, sought refuge in the gallery, related the following:—Master Payne was enacting Rolla while a knot of youngsters were sitting together, some of whom were not particularly interested in what was going on before them. When they were coming to the scene in which Rolla seizes the child of Cora—who in Master Payne's instance happened to be nearly as large as Payne himself—and runs across the bridge with him, (a very effective scene where the Rolla is a large and powerful man,) one of these youngsters called his companions to order, and as an inducement to them to leave their talking, urges; "Now, boys! look out, and presently you will see one of those little fel-



lows shoulder the other, and run away with him over that plank," pointing to the bridge.

I ought not to conclude this part of my narrative without mentioning that George Barret, since so agreeably known for many years in genteel parts of the drama, now commenced as a "Regular," having previously made a young Roscius effort.

In the autumn of the year 1809, Mr. Benjamin C. Wilcocks, of Philadelphia, and some other friends, proposed to me the plan of a purchase from Warren of a share in his property and management, the heaviest burden of which I had borne for some years with much care and small remuneration. The means of payment were generously provided, terms adjusted, and an equal partnership formed. The purchase included one-half of Warren's interest in the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington theatres. One express stipulation proposed by him was, that the entire active management should be assumed and executed by me. I have already intimated that Warren, although an industrious actor, felt always an extreme dislike to the fatiguing details of the director, which his difficulty with Webster and others had rather increased. The new plan, as carried out, succeeded perfectly, and in a way which it could not have possibly done under a double and equal rule. Hitherto my services as aid to the management had been silent and unannounced.

Notwithstanding the increasing prosperity of the drama for several years past, and many hopeful prospects for the future, which now began to show themselves, I could not enter upon my charge of manager without feelings of the deepest anxiety. A long and hard service of ten years in the acting line, aided by

the generous approbation of the public, had elevated me to a respectable rank in that department, notwithstanding it was pursued with the disadvantages of ill-health, and among successful rivalry, and I had held at the same time the invidious and half responsible situation of assistant or sub-director. Many of the difficulties, incident to my course, had driven me to the verge of abandoning so thorny a path. A gleam of hope would urge me on, and a feeling of honest pride forbade me to withdraw under any circumstance, which might give to my retirement the least aspect, either to myself or the public, of my having withdrawn in any way *defeated*. I hoped that a point of *respectable mediocrity* might be *confessedly* attained, when a graceful retirement from the profession could be effected. So gradual was the progress to this point, that I actually reached my humble wish before I myself perceived it. When I did, a new, delightful feeling of the possibility of fame, in addition to pecuniary advantages, combined to detain me in a pursuit for which I never felt any romantic partiality. I now entered on the CAREER of MANAGEMENT, and surely no aspirant ever entered upon his duty with fairer prospects, public or private. The company consisted, at this time, of the following persons, and it was one of my first steps to enlarge and strengthen it :

Warren, Wood, Jefferson, Barrett, Cone, Francis, M'Kenzie, Blissett, Wilmot, Hardinge, Robins, Mrs. Wilmot, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Seymour, Mrs. Twaits, the Misses White and others, and Mrs. M'Kenzie.

It was decided that my management should open in Baltimore in the autumn of the year 1810. Previously

however, to going South, I was invited by Mr. Price, the manager at New York, to visit that city, where some expected reinforcements had failed to arrive. The audience received me kindly, and the trip proved sufficiently profitable.

Our first effort in Baltimore in the autumn of 1810, offered Fennell for nine nights as the chief inducement. It was his first appearance in that city for fourteen years, and he played Othello, Lear, Orestes, Lord Hastings, Zanga, Macbeth, Richard III., Hamlet, Hotspur, and Beverly to very large audiences. These successes are given as evidence of constancy in the audience, and proving satisfactorily that an abandonment of the wild projects by which Mr. Fennell's speculative fancy was allured and betrayed, and any attention to his proper profession, might have saved that actor from most, if not from all, of his subsequent distresses. Although, as said above, this season was the fourteenth since his first effort in Baltimore, no abatement of regard or applause testified the least change in the public esteem for him. It was remarked by the actors that he had never appeared in better condition, or to more advantage. Mrs. Twaits appeared as Hermione and Lady Macbeth with general approbation. Dwyer followed Fennell, and was much admired; but his comedies immediately following the tragedies of that recently so successful performer were not fairly remunerated. Mrs. Beaumont, after appearing with some favor in London, visited us, and proved an important feature in the variety we promised. In Madame Clermont she was pronounced by critics as quite equal to the original representative. A Mr. Galbraith, an amateur, made a very successful debut as Shylock.

Blissett added greatly to his reputation by an excellent performance of "Dennis Brulgruddery."

It will be seen by these records that the starring system, now so greatly reprobated, was in full effect, and daily gaining ground. It had been established in England as early as the time of Mrs. Oldfield, and with us at Baltimore in 1795, when Fennell received thirty dollars per night for two weeks. The best reason to be given for the progress of a system so destructive to the real interests of the drama is, that possessed as we were of a virtual monopoly, (for all opposition to us had failed,) we were bound to offer to the supporters of our highly favored theatre the best talent which it was possible to procure.

In the winter season of 1810-11 the "Foundling of the Forest," which we produced at Philadelphia, met with a success deserving especial notice. Although not brought out until late in the season, the receipts averaged \$700 for eleven nights, with the regular stock company. Of the succeeding Philadelphia season, unexampled to this day, the following sketch will give some idea.

Opened with "Way to get Married,".....	\$ 782
Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Twait's first appearance, Macbeth (first time)	
Wood,.....	1334
Foundling of the Forest, 12th time,.....	814
Mrs. Beaumont acted 14 nights to an average of.....	750
Fennell commenced with Lear,.....	1348
and completed 13 nights to \$730 per night,.....	
Our Christmas night was.....	1412
New Year's night was.....	1419
Mr. Galbraith (already spoken of as an amateur,) made a very	
successful first appearance as Zanga, to.....	1226
and in Charles de Moor, to.....	846

"The Robbers," "Foundling of the Forest," and

“Adrian and Orilla,” continued to draw large houses throughout the winter. Mr. De Jersey Beaumont, husband to the lady of that name, also appeared for a few nights as Rolla, Octavius, Stranger, &c. He was a showy person, of little talent or experience, and soon after became for a short season temporary manager of the Walnut Street house.

Arrangements were now completed for Cooke’s appearance at Philadelphia in March, and in order that the performers might not suffer by their benefits following immediately his attraction, it was determined they should precede him. The result was as follows:

Warren,.....	\$1294	Mrs. Wilmot,.....	\$785
Wood,.....	1406	“ Francis,.....	651
Jefferson,.....	1403	Master Whale,.....	764
Cone,.....	826	Miss White,.....	647
Blissett,.....	959		

Other performers also received large amounts.

Cooke began March 25th. His receipts were

1st night, March 25th, as <i>Richard III.</i> ,.....	\$1345
2d “ “ 27th, “ “ .....	1104
3d “ “ 29th, <i>Man of the World</i> , Sir Pertinax,.....	1475
4th “ “ 30th, <i>Merchant of Venice</i> , Shylock,.....	1160
5th “ April 1st, <i>Richard III.</i> ,.....	1189
6th “ “ 3d, <i>Man of the World</i> , Sir Pertinax,.....	1262
7th “ “ 5th, <i>King Lear</i> ,.....	997
8th “ “ 6th, <i>New Way to Pay Old Debts</i> , Sir Giles,..	1030
9th “ “ 8th, <i>Henry IV.</i> , Falstaff,.....	1020
10th “ “ 10th, <i>Merchant of Venice</i> , Shylock,.....	880
11th “ “ 11th, <i>Macbeth</i> ,.....	780
12th “ “ 13th, <i>Douglas and Love a la mode</i> , Sir Archy,.	1196
13th “ “ 15th, <i>Every Man in his Humor</i> , Kiteley,.....	1356
14th “ “ 17th, <i>Lear</i> ,.....	648
15th “ “ 19th, <i>Man of the World</i> , Sir Pertinax,.....	948
16th “ “ 20th, <i>Richard III.</i> ,.....	1000

Mr. Cooper having now arrived from England, played a few nights along with Cooke to receipts as follows:

<i>Othello</i> , (Cooper,) <i>Iago</i> , (Cooke),.....	\$1304
Gamester, <i>Beverly</i> , (Cooper,) <i>Stukely</i> , (Cooke),.....	1189
Venice Preserved, <i>Jaffier</i> , (Cooper,) <i>Piere</i> , (Cooke),.....	1312
<i>Othello</i> , (Cooper,) <i>Iago</i> , (Cooke),.....	1292
Ending a season of eighty-eight nights averaging \$860 per night.	

The Baltimore season gave Mrs. Beaumont six nights to moderate receipts, and closed with Cooke and Cooper thus:

Richard III., Cooke,.....	\$825	75
<i>Othello</i> , Cooke and Cooper,.....	773	50
Man of the World, Cooke,.....	801	72
Hamlet, Cooper,.....	*326	00
Venice Preserved, Cooke and Cooper,.....	938	00
Merchant of Venice, <i>Shylock</i> , (Cooke,) <i>Antonio</i> , (Cooper,).....	858	00
Man of the World, <i>Sir Pertinax</i> , (Cooke,).....	474	00
Henry IV., <i>Falstaff</i> (Cooke,) <i>Hotspur</i> (Cooper,).....	901	00

It is hoped that so minute a record of the receipts may not be considered superfluous. The great variations in the receipts for different plays prove satisfactorily the state of public taste on the one hand, and the capabilities and resources of the managers and actor on the other. For, after all, "the house is the index of an actor's merits;" of his capacity in one piece, and of his imbecility in another. I mean no dis-

\* This falling off was caused by a change of the play. Cooke had been invited to dine in the country, by a company of persons who, knowing the falling to which he was subject, so far forgot what was due to themselves, Mr. Cooke, and the public, as to play upon it by a discreditable and scandalous effort. The consequence was that the next day the person whom they had thus indecently and cruelly made their victim was hoarse, and could not act. We had to change the play; Cooper, to save the house being closed, consented to play Hamlet. The result of this default of Cooke was obvious four nights afterward, when he did appear. The audience, having been disappointed once, naturally would not come again, when he was announced, and a part which many persons reckoned one of his best, and which he had played in Philadelphia to \$1475, and before in Baltimore to \$801 72 he now played to \$474. This disreputable dinner-party cost the managers of the theatre \$500.

respect to judicious individual criticism. Far from it. But the "*semper ubique per orrmnes*," in a matter which refers itself to taste and feelings, is a more certain evidence with any man whose observation has been so extended as mine has, than any comments, or criticisms, or arguments; which, however brilliant, however apparently sound, however well written, or however unanswered and perhaps unanswerable are, after all, the opinion of but one man, and that man perhaps the least good judge in the whole house. Mr. Burke somewhere speaks of the grasshoppers jumping everywhere, whose voices ring across the field, while the sturdy oxen that lie reposing under the shade of the oaks are chewing the cud in silence and repose. I revert to this matter of attempting to influence public opinion by forestalling, leading, or driving it, in what I shall say of Mr. Holman, and of some conversation between us.

I have mentioned the death, in November 1808, of Hallam, at an advanced age. The year 1809 records the death of one of his contemporaries, Morris, of whom I have already given considerable account in mentioning the actors whom I remember as a youth. Mr. Morris died in Philadelphia, and having been so long and well known, his remains were followed by a respectful body of attendants to the burial-ground of St. Peter's church, at the south-west corner of Third and Pine streets, in the shady and tranquil grounds of whose extensive cemetery, near its south-western part, a monument may still be seen, erected by his widow to his memory.

For years and years before Morris and Hallam died, they had become known as "*old Mr. Morris* and *old*

Mr. Hallam." Undoubtedly they both had reached very advanced years when they died, but they were thus styled "*old*" long before either of them were properly so entitled; and when they died, I believe most persons believed them to be both over a century, adding probably twenty years to the truth. I have often observed this habit of *overrating* the age of actors. It was often exhibited in regard to Francis, Faulkener and others. It arises, perhaps, from the early and very distinct way in which actors come before the public. Many persons know an actor only by seeing him on the stage, and they will often remember that in their childhood he was an *old man*, i. e., that he was an old man on the stage. However the fact may be explained, those persons conversant with players will, I believe, generally recognize its existence.

Another fact in connection with this matter, and caused perhaps by the same circumstance, has probably presented itself to the observations of most actors. I mean the idea many persons entertain, that, as a general thing, an actor's career induces *short life*. The impression is caused, I think it most probable by the same circumstance. Nothing is so soon forgotten as a public man of any sort, when he disappears from the public eye. Actors, like most men who have labored many years in their profession, are glad to retire from it when they can, and before they must. From the time that they cease to be seen every night by a thousand or two people, and to be "petted" or "pelted," they disappear as much as the Congressman who has had leave to come home, the judge whose ten years' tenure is expired, the alderman not re-elected, or any other public functionary, whose services being



dispensed with by his grateful constituents, have allowed him to "retire to the shades of private life." In the case of the actor there is this further reason for his obscurity, that after *he* has withdrawn from one scene of public exhibition, he seldom attempts to appear in any other. But whether or not the true cause be what I have suggested, the fact is one to which I sometimes could bear witness several times in a week. I am frequently congratulated on my *green* old age, and seldom without some allusion to its exceptional character to "the *proverbial shortness of actors' lives.*" I have more than once been induced to inquire of persons to what they attribute this fact, which they assume as one well known, and I have generally found it referred to habits of personal exposure, of *idleness*, of free-living, induced by convivial temptation, or by their peculiar situation, &c. My memory suggesting to me *many instances of uncommon age* among actors, I was induced not long since to make a record of them, which, as I was penning these pages, I happened to turn up. It may perhaps entertain some readers. I hope it certainly will any who frequent the offices of Life Insurance; though I am not aware that those companies have ever introduced actors, along with theatres, among "hazardous or excepted risks, or those requiring special premiums."

The truth is, that the facts assumed in regard to the causes of actors' short lives are unfounded, and the conclusion deduced from them is as little true. The exposure on the stage, though often severe at the time, probably tends in its constancy to harden the constitution of the actor; and the charge of "idleness" and dissipation can be made only by those who have no

more knowledge of an actor's daily habits, than they have of those followed by the Circassians or Esquimaux.

Let it, for example, be remembered, that an actor passes his hours for months together in the following routine, and it will require some ingenuity to find *time* for either idleness or dissipation. His rehearsal begins at 10 o'clock, and usually occupies till 1, or more frequently till 2 o'clock. Between this hour is his time for *study*, which in long or new parts is often most severe, and which must be constant even with short or old parts. Costume, and mechanical or personal arrangements for the stage, require much attention always; and by 7 o'clock in the evening he must be at the theatre, for the important labors of the night, frequently protracted to the very hour of morning. The hours, therefore, devoted to study are limited to a short term after rehearsal, and what can be snatched after midnight, or after rising early in the morning. I say nothing of course of those cares of a family, or of interests not professional but yet common to an actor, along with other men, nor of those which, though not connected with the *immediate* and daily or nightly duties of his profession, yet spring more or less directly from that source. How absurd then to talk of the idle life of an actor! There is hardly a more laborious professional life in the whole range of professional careers. I am speaking of course of those who unite a praiseworthy ambition with an honorable feeling of duty to the public, and their employers.

So far as concerns the *causes* of short life, as found

in idleness and dissipation, and as respects the *result* of such causes, the following table shows exactly what might be expected. I place after the names of several actors their age at their death, as follows :

Smith, of Drury Lane.....	83	Beard.....	75
Moodey.....	85	Yates.....	95
Dibdin.....	76	Munden.....	74
Johnstone.....	72	Fawcett.....	70
Bannister .....	71	Bonsley.....	71
Wroughton.....	70	Hull.....	76
King.....	75	Mrs. Pitt.....	70
Murphy.....	75	Reinhold .....	72
Miss Pope.....	76	Knight.....	70
Quick.....	83	Whitlock .....	70
Inledon.....	68	Mrs. Davenport.....	70
Mrs. Mattocks .....	68		

Talma and Madame Mars died at 65 or upwards. Lafond lived to 80. Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Glover were 76 and 77. Lady Craven near 70. Catalani was well at 66. Mara reached 75. All these were eminent actors or singers. Byrne, the dancer, who is well remembered here, is a fine healthy man of 85. These persons, it must be observed, embrace chiefly the names of eminent London actors ; while in the provinces many instances have occurred of actors attaining a great age in earlier times, as of Macklin, who reached 97. Quin reached 73, Garrick 64, and Betterton 74.

John Kemble, and his sisters Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Whitlock, were nearer 70 than 60. Charles Kemble, a late London paper states, is now in his 81st year. Braham at 77 still survives, a musical wonder. In America we have deaths as follows :

L'Estrange.....	80	Wood survives at.....	75
Hallam.....	73	Mr. Morris .....	84
Mrs. Morris.....	73	Francis .....	69

Jefferson.....	62	Cooke with careless habits*....	62
Mrs. Francis.....	63	Blissett .....	76
Warren .....	62	Mrs. Wood.....	58
Bernard.....	74	Mrs. Oldmixon.....	62
Mrs. Darley .....	71	Mr. Darley.....	78

The following list has been copied with care from a late newspaper, where it is said that it is believed to be *very* accurate. It is of the ages of actors yet living.

George F. Andrews.....	56	George Barrett.....	60
James T. Brown .....	63	Charles Kean .....	43
Fanny Kemble Butler.....	43	Mrs. Keeley .....	48
McCready.....	61	Mrs. Pelby.....	61
Mrs. W. R. Blake.....	56	H. Placide.....	55
Miss C. Kean.....	49	Anna Thillon .....	41
Vestries.....	57	T. M. Weston .....	37
W. H. Smith.....	55	Thomas Comer.....	56
H. Hackett.....	54	Lola Montez .....	29
Mrs. Sinclair .....	41	Peter Richings.....	59
Mrs. Fitzwilliam.....	45	Helen Faucit.....	37
T. P. Cooke .....	75	Charles Mathews.....	49
Fanny Ellsler.....	51	John Vandenhoff.....	64
Phelps.....	50	Lemaitre .....	69
Gabriel Ravel .....	71	Rachel .....	36
Joe Cowell.....	63	Benjamin Webster.....	49

I am satisfied that some of the figures in the last list must be slightly incorrect, but I prefer to give them without variation. It is possible too, that some of the preceding ones may be so in some particulars. I vouch only for truth to "a common intent," and not for it "to a certain intent in every particular." The former of course is all that such a subject as *age* admits of. It is abundant for my purpose. I may say, however, that I collected these ages from time to time, and recorded them with great accuracy, as given by authorities I had.

This much I may safely say, that while I know not how it may be in other professions, my observations

\* Although called 56.

prove that *artists* generally, and actors particularly, live too long for their comfort, or enjoyment of existence. Instead of idly believing in antiquated errors, as to the ages and fortunes of those of whom we have little knowledge, it is far more rational to conclude that age in any situation is seldom found productive of happiness; and the aged actor, like his fellow sufferers in other labors, is often found to realize the beautiful lines in the "Merchant of Venice," where Antonio sensibly prefers an early death to protracted years of want.

"Herein fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom: for it is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow  
An age of poverty. From which lingering penance  
Of such misery doth she cut *me* off."

## CHAPTER VII.

1811-1812.

Depression of the season—Prospect of War with England—Burning of the Richmond Theatre—McKenzie Riots—Particulars at large—G. F. Cooke—The Company in 1811—Mr. Cleary's uncommon promise—Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Darley and Simpson at Philadelphia—Jefferson and Wood at New York—Melancholy record of receipts—Lady of the Lake still productive—James Fennell, Jr., as Young Norval—General depression—Duff's appearance and entire success—Cone—His appeal and results—Death of Cooke—Monody—His habits—Anecdotes about him—Carpenter and the Mirror of Taste.

MY historical narrative left off with the close of Cooke and Cooper's performance at Baltimore. Notwithstanding the fact, that from a special and incidental cause the last two or three nights had not remunerated us, our season, on the whole, had been a splendid one; and thus far we had sailed before the wind. But a storm was not far behind us.

There were various causes which combined to render the season of 1811, which now followed, particularly disastrous and unproductive. An extreme commercial depression at this time prevailed, chiefly occasioned by the threatening aspect of our relations with England, which in a few months resulted in a declaration of war, and in an excited state of public feeling, always unfavorable to the success of theatrical representations. Then came the destruction of the Richmond Theatre, with its dreadful consequences. This awful event would alone have arrested for a season the cur-

rent of the best fortune. It seemed to create a perfect panic, which deterred the largest portion of the audience for a long time from venturing into a crowd, either theatrical or other. But the striking incident of the season at *Philadelphia* arose from the McKenzie Riots, of which a more particular account is due.

In my early days I had been struck with the natural performance of a novice at the John Street Theatre, New York, in a trifling character. The part was a sort of subordinate villain in the well known musical drama of the "Adopted Child." The character is called Flint, and was represented by a young man named McKenzie, with so much truth as to leave a deeper impression on my mind than did more important personages of the piece. This novice was quite young, and a strong Scotch accent perhaps tended to strengthen the effect. Several years after, during a summer season at Annapolis, a man rather shabbily attired offered himself one morning to Warren, the manager, as a candidate for employment. There was something in his voice and accent, which seemed like what I had heard before, and the mention of his name at once brought Flint to memory. Warren appearing to receive his application rather coldly, I mentioned with some warmth the effect he had left with me of his peculiar talent, and requested that he might be allowed a trial. To our surprise he requested to be heard in a rehearsal of *Sir Pertinax McSycophant*, a play at that time unfamiliar to our stage, and so satisfactory was the effort that Warren at once consented to a trial appearance as *Sir Archy McSarcasm*, a less difficult character. Crude and unfinished, yet marked by strong intelligence and vigor, it secured

him at once a situation at a small salary. Regularly attached to the company, he gradually overcame the impression which his strong accent occasionally made, and he became in the course of five years a decided favorite in parts of severity or harshness. I may be allowed to state that my interest in his success continued unabated, and frequent advancements of his salary were owing to my personal exertions in his favor. Useful on the stage, and not uncivil, his manner was yet of that character which can be better understood by the terms dogged and sulky. Scarcely known to the performers, his deportment was little marked; and he pursued a silent, unobtrusive course, without giving offence, or inspiring much regard of any kind. On no one occasion, up to the time to which we allude, did a single complaint from him of any kind interrupt the even current of our relations. Once, indeed, his ill disposition evinced itself, although he afterwards stoutly denied any bad intention. On the first night of Tobin's "Curfew," he surprised the audience and the actors by delivering his character, one of force and passion, in a tone scarcely audible beyond the orchestra, and nearly causing a failure of the piece. This "playing booty" was so palpable as to excite considerable disapprobation in the audience, who attributed his conduct to inebriety. This, however, was an error, no instance in his career having justified such a suspicion. On the second representation he acquitted himself very satisfactorily, and his offence was forgiven and forgotten.

In the summer of this year, 1811, to which we have now come, a contract was concluded with Mr. and Mrs. Duff for three years, with the stipulation that Duff



should play a short star engagement at the close of this season, before entering on a regular course. I shall speak of Mr. Duff's success more particularly hereafter. The Philadelphia House opened on the 9th of September, with but moderate success. Cooper acted for ten nights to an average of only \$500. Dwyer followed as Cheverel, in the "Deserted Daughter;" when, as we were going on in our regular list, an unexpected series of riot and outrage ensued, unparalleled in the annals of our theatre. On the day previous to a performance fixed, when our bills announced Mr. McKenzie as *Mordent*, and Mr. Dwyer as *Cheverel*, a counter announcement was circulated of Mr. McKenzie's first appearance at the Walnut Street House, to be opened on that night. This announcement was not known, however, until noon, McKenzie having attended our rehearsal. The circumstance was wholly inexplicable, as not the slightest complaint or difficulty had occurred; the rest of the day was employed in vain attempts to find the absentee, and learn the cause of this strange conduct, but in vain. On the play-day the following bill was issued:—

TO THE PUBLIC.

The Managers of the

NEW THEATRE

Regret the necessity which obliges them to announce the sudden  
departure of

MR. MCKENZIE

From their establishment.

Among the efforts they made for the gratification of the audience, was the engagement of this gentleman for the present season, and it was not possible to foresee an event that could interfere with a faithful observance of his contract. At a period, however, when his services were peculiarly desirable, Mr. McKenzie has thought proper to withdraw him-

self, and thus expose the company to considerable embarrassment. He has at the same time assigned no cause that would enable the managers to offer a suitable apology for so extraordinary a measure. They trust that the indulgence and liberality they have so often experienced, will accept of such a substitute as the situation of the company may afford.

The character of Mr. Mordent by Mr. Wood.

*Philadelphia, October 12th, 1811.*

No message or information was received from McKenzie, and the theatre opened as usual. At the rising of the curtain a stormy scene soon commenced. With the appearance of Mordent, a brutal effusion of hisses, howlings, imprecations, and all other expressions most offensive, were heard from different parts of the house. The audience, unconscious of the cause, as were the actors, endeavored to suppress the interruption by applause, but were soon overpowered by the organized disturbers. The first scene passed with the usual word and action of the performers, but without being heard by the audience. A scene, *without* Mordent, passed off with attention and applause, but on his next appearance the savage clamors increased to a degree so alarming, as to cause the hurried departure of the largest portion of the lady audience. Numerous respectful efforts were made to attain a hearing, but without effect. Whenever Mordent approached the stage-boxes in his scenes, the most indecent and blasphemous imputations were poured upon him. The cries "Kill him! Drive him from his stage! Kill him!" were repeated in the hearing of numbers. My direction to the performers was, "Play your parts exactly as you would if the house were quiet:" and this was faithfully obeyed by every one of them. Dwyer, who was playing with me, was excessively mortified, and pronounced it a more ferocious riot than he had

ever witnessed in the rudest Irish theatres. The managers, actors, and audience remained equally ignorant of the cause of these fearful doings, and the play concluded, as it began, in noise and confusion, without the slightest intimation of what the disturbance arose from. The announcement of "Romeo and Juliet" for the next night being published, it was not considered prudent to withdraw it; and in due time the curtain rose to an audience double in numbers that of the previous night. Few ladies however were present. Perfect quiet prevailed until the appearance of Romeo, which I was performing, when the former disgusting scenes were repeated, and continued without intermission. In the last act, where Romeo brought forward the awakened Juliet from her tomb, the lady (my wife acting this part) received a violent blow on the arm from a musket ball, thrown from an upper box, near the stage. A slight exclamation of pain, with the rolling of the ball down to the lamps, occasioned a stir and slight pause among the rioters. I took advantage of this, and advancing to the front, under extreme excitement, "demanded to be heard." This change of deportment from the submissive respect exhibited up to this time, had a momentary effect, and was followed by a respectful appeal to the humanity of the audience, and an offer of a large reward for the discovery of the miscreant who had disgraced manhood and decency by such a murderous outrage. A universal cry from the audience to "put down the curtain" concluded the scene within doors, except by a select band, who lingered in the lobbies.

After exhausting every opprobrious epithet and brutal threat, the rioters seemed disposed to pause from

their exertions and retire, when I resolved to call on our legal counsel. I proceeded alone by the stage-door to the corner of Sixth and Chestnut streets, when at once it was evident that the mob had got sight of me. They recommenced the brutal yells and hootings which I had just experienced in the theatre. At this moment I was joined by a gentleman, Mr. Edward Tilghman, Jr., who had been at the play, and was induced by the noise outside to leave the theatre, suspecting that something wrong was going forward out of doors. Reproaching me in the kindest manner for having left the house alone, he put his arm through mine, and coolly remarked that we were in for it, and that going back was out of the question. Handing him one of the pistols with which I had prepared myself on leaving the theatre, and retaining the other as well as my sword cane, which I usually carried at night, we proceeded on our way, through a dense crowd, which increased every moment by parties from the theatre door. By the time we reached the front of the State House building, in Chestnut street below Sixth, many attempts were made to press upon us, for the obvious object of personal attack. At each attempt Mr. Tilghman, with the most rash but dauntless defiance, warned them of their danger, assuring them that a single touch from any of their party would be returned by an immediate resistance from the means we exhibited. These valiant numbers bore with perfect patience Mr. Tilghman's accurate estimate of their character and conduct, which he expressed in the most bold and provoking terms, daring any one or more of the mob to advance beyond the distance he prescribed. The crowd, although individually, as ever is the case, reluctant to encounter

peril, yet seemed half ashamed of their dastardly conduct towards only two slightly formed men, and were endeavoring to press forward the first rank upon us, shouting like savages, when Tilghman, in a loud voice, again reiterated defiance. At this important moment two gentlemen rushed down the steps of the Hall, and forced their way in silence, until they reached us. They anxiously inquired in a very firm, foreign accent how it happened that two men should thus be surrounded and threatened by so fierce a crowd. Tilghman replied at once in the following sentence: "Why, gentlemen, here are a parcel of cowardly rascals, who, without cause or provocation, would murder my friend and myself, provided they could only find one of their party with spirit enough to receive our fire, when of course their numbers could easily do the rest. We are aware of our position, and they have had ample notice of our determination." This strange speech was received with a loud shout, and the most blasphemous threats and imprecations. The two strangers, whom I always supposed to be French officers, paid no sort of attention to the mob, but placed themselves at our side, and in the calmest manner assured us that they should accompany us wherever we were going, and if needful share in our fate. No circumstance probably ever occurred to show more forcibly the power of calm courage and gentlemanly bearing upon brutal force and cowardly ruffianism. We four actually proceeded to Walnut street below Fifth, where my legal counsel then lived, unmolested, except by their harmless howlings. An hour afterwards I returned alone to the theatre, when I was complimented by another parting yell from some ten or a dozen of these ruffians, who

still lingered about the door. At 12 o'clock I was about to leave for home, when two or three of my stout carpenters joined me at the door, where they had loitered for the friendly purpose of seeing me safe home. Of such instances of attachment and regard from persons in humble offices, and habitually about me in the theatre, I am happy to say that I recall many noble and cheering instances.

The morning brought a solution of the mystery. Numberless friends called in rapid succession, with offers of aid in the suppression of these outrages, by an effective civil, and if necessary a military force. It was ascertained that the pretext for these acts was that "*the manager habitually indulged publicly and privately in most insulting attacks upon the Scotch portion of our citizens, as well as upon mechanics in masses.*" It would not have been possible, I suppose, to have invented any charge whatever, not only with less foundation in fact, but with less possibility for foundation in my habits of thought, feeling, or conduct. No body could conjecture from what act or expression a charge so entirely baseless and absurd had at any time arisen. The truth is that it must have been a sheer invention. The general results, however, of a slander secretly spread, seldom afforded a stronger illustration. The conference with our legal counsel, to which I have already alluded as having taken place the evening previous, resulted in a determination to arrest and prosecute the most known and *reputable* of the mob, whom we possessed the means of readily identifying. A suit was commenced against McKenzie for breach of contract. Cooper was engaged to alternate nights with Dwyer, and the performances suffered

no further interruption. The persecuted victim of the former nights was received with unusual kindness from the public, as the representative of Sydenham and Jaffier. The greatly diminished number of ladies clearly evinced the injurious effects of the late events. The number of actual rioters could not have exceeded forty or fifty at most, within or without the theatre. A dozen soldiers, or an equal number of efficient policemen, would have suppressed all the mischief in ten minutes; but the aid of the first was not yet invoked, and the whole of the other were most unaccountably absent from a riot occurring within one hundred and twenty-five yards of the Mayor's Office. The mass of the mob was composed of idle spectators, noisy boys, pickpockets, &c. Many anxious inquiries on the day subsequent to the riot, as to the whereabouts of certain purses, pocket-books, breastpins, rings, handkerchiefs, and other personal trifles, proved that in a crowd matters may very mysteriously change owners for possessors. Several indirect communications from the confederates of McKenzie revealed the fact, that this man had artfully circulated the slanders, *for the purpose of intimidating the managers from legal redress against him for his departure from the theatre, in breach of his contract, his plan being to raise a counter excitement, under which he might himself escape.* His own after confessions confirmed this statement. Much affected regret was expressed by the confederates, and duly referred to legal consideration. The main suit being commenced against McKenzie for his violation of contract, it was necessary for him to find surety for his appearance, and he had the art to prevail upon a fellow countryman, a master mechanic,

to assume this responsible office. It is scarcely necessary to state that the security was soon after extremely alarmed by his being left to mourn his imprudence. Our case was of course a clear one; but our mercy being appealed to, the penalty was never exacted. A short and unproductive season closed this opposition attempt, and McKenzie left the city without any explanation or apology, either to Warren or myself. Little was heard of him for some time, during which he was wandering through the country in search of employment, frequently rejected from the unfavorable reports of his breach of contract here, which had preceded him wherever he went. During this self-inflicted exile, the following letters with others were received from him:—

*Philadelphia, Oct. 7th, 1812.*

*Sir*:—It was not my intention to address you as it respects *right*, but merely to request an act of liberality. That my withdrawing from your theatre tended to injure you, may be very true; and I am sorry to say it ruined me. I have not consulted counsel upon the case, nor am I able, if so inclined. Should you wish anything more satisfactory from me, let me know the purport, and if reasonable, I will do all that justice requires. The bearer will receive your answer, or I will myself call at the front of the theatre this evening. I am sir,

Yours, &c.,

D. MCKENZIE.

Mr. WILLIAM B. WOOD.

*Philadelphia, Oct. 20th, 1812.*

MESSRS. WARREN & WOOD,

*Gentlemen*:—I have to return you my thanks for kindly withdrawing the suit you had instituted against me, which I ardently hoped was the only obstacle to my sailing for Europe. But I was deceived. Other suits for Mr. Dwyer have pressed so hard upon me that I am even incapable of paying the costs of the action which you were willing to discharge, still less to pay my passage to Liverpool in the *Cartel*, though exceeding low. Many of my friends have urged me to try if you would grant me your theatre, before I sail, by paying the regular expense, or any sum over which the present average of your receipts amount to.



Could my performance for one or two nights previous be of the least advantage, which I scarcely believe, I would do it with pleasure. If I can be of any service to you while I remain in England or Scotland, you may depend upon my returning the favor which I have requested, and which will ever oblige

Your obedient servant,

D. M'KENZIE.

*Philadelphia, June 28th, 1814.*

W. B. Wood, Esq.

*Sir*:—From the determination expressed in your last note to me, this present application may be deemed, perhaps, impertinent. However, I have risked a refusal from my strong desire to remain in Philadelphia. In leaving you in the manner I did, I certainly was highly culpable, and “grievous has the expiation been.” But should you be inclined to forgive my conduct upon that occasion, and give me a situation in your theatre, you may rest assured that I will strenuously exert every power to promote the interest of the theatre, and my own respectability, of which I have been rather unmindful. An immediate answer would much oblige me, as should you give me a negative I must apply to some other theatre, and the season is far advanced when those applications should be made.

Trusting that your answer will be favorable to me, I remain

Your obedient servant,

D. M'KENZIE.

It will be observed, that in these letters no allusion whatever is made to the riots or their consequences. The simple fact of desertion and its merited punishment alone are the subject of his attempt at a recall. These letters were of course unanswered. Of his latest year, I extract the following passage from a recent interesting history of the Boston stage by Mr. Clapp. “Mr. M'Kenzie, a Scotchman by birth, was a very good actor in heavy tragedy. Michael Ducas, in ‘Adelgitha,’ and similar characters, were suited to his talent. Like many others he was too fond of putting an enemy into his mouth, and was more than once discharged for indulging in this vice. Confined to his room, owing to his indulgence, he sent for a physician, who seeing his condition, wrote as a receipt, ‘Water—

use it freely.' M'Kenzie, glancing at the prescription, exclaimed, 'Why, doctor, water will be the death of me;' and sure enough it was, for the last that was seen of him alive was walking towards Back Bay, where his body was found after he had been missing several days. This was a sad end of an unworthy life."

The unusual interest of this season seems to justify further particulars. Cooper played nine nights, alternating with Dwyer. Cooper's average was \$509, Dwyers \$450. John Howard Payne played nine nights averaging \$442; Cooke twelve nights—

Richard,.....	\$ 917
Man of the World,.....	780
King Lear,.....	675
Macbeth,.....	729
Douglas and Love <i>a la mode</i> ,.....	724
Richard III.,.....	706
Henry IV.,.....	632
Merchant of Venice and Love <i>a la mode</i> ,.....	1177
Man of the World,.....	1115
New Way to Pay Old Debts,.....	646
King John,.....	546
Merchant of Venice and Love <i>a la mode</i> ,.....	1041
Richard III.,.....	1121
Man of the World, for Wood's Benefit,.....	571

The company during the disastrous season of 1811 was undoubtedly an efficient one. It had

Mr. Warren,	Mrs. Wood,
“ Jefferson,	“ Twaits,
“ Wood,	“ Wilmot,
“ McKenzie,	“ Jefferson,
“ Francis,	“ Francis,
“ Downie,	“ Bray,
“ Blissett,	And we added afterwards,
“ Barrett,	“ Mason, (after Mrs. Entwistle,)
“ Drummond,	“ Duff,
“ Jacobs (singer,)	“ Blissett, and others.
“ Hardinge,	
“ Galbraith,	

Mr. Cleary of South Carolina, (an amateur and a very clever actor indeed,) appeared several times, much to the satisfaction of the public. After J. H. Payne's engagement the season dragged on heavily until the 1st of January, when we produced, after much preparation and expense, the "Lady of the Lake." This excellent piece aroused the audience from their temporary languor, and was played to \$1201, \$446, \$487; sums considered large receipts for the time. An exchange was now effected with the New York theatre for two weeks, giving Jefferson and Wood, and receiving Cooper, Simpson and Mr. and Mrs. Darley. As a matter of curiosity the receipts are given.

Road to Ruin,.....	\$166 50
Rule a Wife, and Lady of the Lake,.....	549 75
Othello,.....	278 00
King Lear, .....	117 00
Revenge,.....	254 00
Wives as they Were,.....	319 00
Child of Nature,.....	186 00
Abællino,.....	295 00
Romeo and Juliet, and Lady of the Lake,.....	380 00
Honey Moon,.....	229 00
Hamlet,.....	144 00
Mountaineers and Lady of the Lake,.....	291 00
Cure for the Heartache,.....	305 50
School for Scandal—Simpson's Benefit,.....	269 75
Country Girls—Mrs. Darley's Benefit,.....	161 00

It will be observed that three of the most productive of these nights were those on which the "Lady of the Lake" were acted. James Fennell, Jr., made his appearance as young Norval to an empty house. He played but one night. Warren had prepared, as he conceived, a strong bill on the return from New York of Jefferson and myself, and announced the "Foundling of the Forest," with the "Budget of Blunders,"

as the two most attractive stock pieces on our list. We reappeared to a house of 70 dollars! Duff now first made his bow as Macbeth and Jeremy Diddler, to \$123. "Three and Deuce" brought \$624. "School of Reform and Critic" \$748. "Three and Deuce" \$539. These, however, after Duff's first appearance, were the benefit nights of the principal performers. His own night, Alexander, reached \$1101. Among the benefit failures Cone's was one, in consequence of which he issued the following card:—

TO THE PUBLIC.

First night in America of the  
PEASANT BOY.

Having sustained a *heavy* loss instead of receiving a *benefit*, and at the solicitation of several friends warmly interested in my welfare, I am induced *once again* to try the strength of that tenure by which I have hitherto held the patronage of my fellow-citizens. Whether the chilling neglect I have this season for the first time experienced, proceeded from lethargic indifference, or pointed contempt, time will speedily determine. I cannot refrain from thus publicly expressing my thanks to the managers for their liberality in granting me the first night of a *new Drama*, written by the favorite author of the day, and which I confidently trust the approbation of a Philadelphia audience will sanction as one of the most elegant and interesting productions of his pen.

SPENCER H. CONE.

The second attempt proved more successful, the receipts reaching \$735.

We gladly concluded a season productive of no small degree of loss as well as discomfort, Cone and some others seceding at the close of their engagements.

The greatest event at this time connected with the drama, but not immediately connected with our representations, was the death of *George Frederick Cooke*, who died in the city of New York. A special tribute to his extraordinary dramatic genius was considered

to be due him. The stage was arrayed in mourning ; the fine full length portrait of him, by Mr. Sully, was exhibited, and the following Monody, a tribute to his memory, written by a gentleman of Philadelphia, was excellently spoken by Duff.

## M O N O D Y .

Why wears the stage this unaccustomed gloom ?  
 Why rises on the view the distant tomb ?  
 What grief has taught Thalia's tears to flow,  
 And clothed the tragic muse in deeper woe ?  
 The mighty master of the scenic art,  
 The great portrayer of the human heart,  
 Cooke is no more ! The inmate of his breast,  
 His active spirit, seeks eternal rest ;  
 Seeks in a happier and holier sphere  
 Relief from trials, toils, and triumphs here.  
 His genius claimed crook'd Richard for its own ;  
 Resplendent through the dark Glenalvon shone ;  
 Joined Cawdor's treachery to Cawdor's fear,  
 And sparkled in the diadem of Lear.  
 With Pierre gave interest to a traitor's cause,  
 And gained for Cato more sublime applause.  
 Then, every tragic trophy nobly won,  
 He shone, the comic Muse's favorite son ;  
 Falstaff's conflicting qualities combined,  
 The grossest body and the liveliest mind.  
 Faultless appeared his Caledonian Knight,  
 Where sternest critics said that all was right.  
 Various his talents. If in that rich mind  
 Some human frailties scrutiny can find,  
 Such is the lot to every mortal given,  
 Error with man—forgiveness lies with heaven.  
 Peace to his ashes ! Distant realms combine,  
 Thou great tragedian, thus to honor thine !  
 Friends of the drama ! Be it yours to mourn,  
 And place fresh chaplets on the funeral urn ;  
 For your applause he ploughed the Atlantic wave,  
 And found a welcome where he found a grave.

So much has been published of Cooke's eccentricities that curiosity on that subject seems well nigh

satisfied. Those who may desire a faithful portrait of this strange genius may be safely referred to the *Life* published by Dunlap, a close observer and a truthful writer. During three engagements Cooke acted thirty-nine nights with only the failure of one, occasioned, it is true, by a partial indulgence, and consequent hoarseness. A very mistaken character of his faults and follies prevailed abroad. In manner, when himself, he was not strongly marked, except by a studied gentleness, through which a sneer would sometimes steal out. Courteous and obliging to the performers, he made himself as great a favorite in the green room as on the stage. In business he was somewhat impatient of anything like a comparison with living actors, John Kemble alone excepted. And on the prompter mentioning some minor stage arrangements, as "Mr. Fennell's way or Mr. Cooper's way," Cooke interrupted him in his sternest manner with, "*Sar!* I am not curious to know the ways of your Mr. Fennell nor Mr. Cooper, the wooden gods of you Americans."

Pointing to his written part he went on, "This is the way of John Kemble and George Frederick Cooke, and thus let it be." Yet Fennell states that he volunteered the offer to play a night for him. This, however, Cooke always denied. During his last engagement he sent me a queer message by Mrs. Wood, to the effect that, in acknowledgment of hospitalities extended to him, he begged permission, for her sake, to appear on my approaching night as Zanga in the "Revenge." Not over anxious to receive a courtesy under such odd conditions, I accepted it rather reluctantly. As soon as his appearance in this character was spoken of, an intense anxiety was expressed by

the public to witness his powers in a character rendered so popular by Fennell and Cooper. On the day previous to this performance, I received a pathetic note from Cooke, stating that to his great regret he had at the last hour discovered a painful fact, that the words of the author had wholly escaped from his memory. The note closed with a request to substitute the "Man of the World." As this play had been already acted two nights to crowded houses, the change completely destroyed my receipts. He acted also with less spirit than usual, evidently mortified at the sight of a house of \$571. On adjusting accounts with Mr. Price, the manager at New York, where Cooke was at that time playing, I was surprised to find that my volunteering friend had actually charged the night as one of his contract under the New York managers. The charge was silently admitted by Price, and returned to him by me.

I must relate an incident in strong contrast with the foregoing. On leaving a dinner-party given by an English gentleman of Frankford, in honor of the tragedian, the party separated to return to the city, and Cooke, on pretence of an engagement, left the friend who had introduced him, evincing no signs of excitement. Some doubts, however, occurring, his friend resolved on discovering, if possible, whether any engagement existed. After much fruitless search, his whereabouts was accidentally discovered by the sound of his voice, proceeding from a small tavern in Market street. Here he was in jovial conversation with a very common looking person, who proved to be a Manchester weaver, whom Cooke had accidentally met at this place, and to whom, under the influence of the

glass and reminiscences of his Manchester popularity, he had been induced either to give or lend all the money he had about him—three hundred dollars in notes, which he had drawn from the treasury in the morning. His friend soon perceiving how matters stood, insisted on the weaver returning the money, which the fellow did, but not without much reluctance. To this absurd freak Cooke never after made the slightest allusion, nor did he ever make any acknowledgment for the service thus rendered.

While acting with us he was beset by Pepin and Breschard, with large offers for his services for a few nights at their circus. Instead of promptly stating that his talents were the property of the New York managers for several months to come, he listened to tedious recapitulations of the vast advantages to result from this offer. At length, rearing himself up to his most dignified manner, he replied very seriously, "*Sar! I can't ride.*" "My dear Mr. Cooke," was the reply, "you are not expected to ride, but to appear in your incomparable delineation of Shakspeare." Cooke coolly repeated, "*I can't ride,*" until his visitors gave up their application in despair. He related this scene with the most malicious drollery, adding, "What would his majesty say on hearing that George Frederick Cooke had profaned Shakspeare, and dishonored himself by exhibiting *the Richard* among the saw-dust 'of a beggarly French circus.'"

Of Garrick and his compeers he used to speak in raptures, and received with respectful attention the suggestions and remarks of intelligent persons, who had had the good fortune to witness their performances. Among these was the late EDWARD TIGHLMAN, Sr., a



gentleman who for many years held the highest distinction as a lawyer at the Philadelphia bar, and was not more eminent for his professional learning and ability, than for the political, pecuniary and personal integrity which pervaded his character, and gave the highest influence to his name.\* As one of the few survivors of the Garrick days, his opinion could not but be of interest. On learning that Mr. Tilghman, who had been attracted by Cooke to the play, had expressed warm admiration of his acting, and a sort of half wish to know him personally, Cooke insisted on being introduced to him, by Mr. Tilghman's permission a meeting was arranged, and we received a most courteous reception. After some general discussions of the past and present drama, our host delicately alluded to the pleasure he had received from Sir Pertinax, and from Shylock especially; the characters in which he had in early life been a witness of Macklin's great excellence. After a slight apology for so frank a question, Cooke said, "Pray, Mr. Tilghman, in your candid opinion, what proportion of merit do I bear, when compared with Macklin in these parts." Mr. Tilghman replied with the utmost gentleness to this abrupt and not very delicate question, "Mr. Cooke, in my humble opinion you are as much his superior in Sir Pertinax, as you are his inferior in Shylock. I will explain why; although written by himself and for himself, the character of Sir Pertinax

\* A short but beautiful biographical sketch of this eminent lawyer and old fashioned gentleman may be found in Professor Vethake's supplement to Dr. Leiber's Encyclopædia Americana. The sketch, I have understood, I know not how correctly, is from an eminent professional pen. Edward Tilghman I believe, was a cousin of the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, so well and favorably known, William Tilghman, Esq.

always seemed to me wanting in relief. It was too uniformly harsh and severe. Now this relief you afford by the exercise of extraordinary comic powers, for you, sir, are a great comedian; Macklin had no fun in him. In Shylock he is yet without a rival, although not without an able competitor." Cooke offered his warmest thanks for the judgment he had invited, and which he declared to be the highest compliment he had ever received. He delighted to describe this interview on frequent occasions.

One of Cooke's peculiarities in dramatic costume may be of professional interest. In Richard III. he never resorted to the usual practice of wearing an artificial "mountain on my back," nor "legs of an unequal size," although these personal points are so strongly marked in the text. Whether he adopted the theory of those writers who maintain that Richard was not only undeformed, but a "marvellous proper man," or whether these additions encumbered his action in so busy a part, or whether he merely indulged a whim, must now be left to conjecture. What I have stated, however, was his uniform costume, while acting in our theatres, and is preserved in Sully's fine picture now in the Academy of Fine Arts at Philadelphia.

Cooke's impatience of small and verbal criticism is well known. During his first visit to this city, many of his admirers were desirous of ascertaining how far cultivation and study had contributed towards forming so consummate an artist, and various efforts were made, as the phrase is, to draw him out. On one occasion, a gentleman, desirous of evincing an extreme admiration of his tasteful reading, as well as of his admirable acting, was instancing some English critical notice, where

Cooke had been extravagantly lauded for a new reading, in the passage, "Many a time and oft, on the Rialto," &c. Cooke was said to have elucidated the passage wonderfully, by dividing the sentence thus: "Signior Antonio, many a time,——And oft *on the Rialto*," the most public place in Venice: thus rendering the insults inflicted by the merchant more conspicuously cruel, from the number of his mercantile friends being by to witness it. Cooke scarcely heard his panegyrist out, when, with the most passionate expression of voice and manner, he roared out—"Sar! sar! (his usual pronunciation when excited) there is not one word of truth in this statement, which, thank heaven, I never saw or heard of before. So far from having uttered this silly and unmeaning mutilation of the plain meaning of Shakspeare, had I met with the remark at the time, I think I should have been tempted to prosecute the author of it *for a libel!*"

It has been very generally supposed that Cooke's habits were of inveterate intemperance: in short, that he was a mere drunkard and sot. Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth. It was usual with him, it must be admitted, to transgress the bounds of sobriety at least three or four times a year, disgracing himself and disappointing the public. Yet during his engagement in Philadelphia, he frequently boasted, and truly, that he had fully complied with his public duties. In private, however, he greatly forgot himself on several occasions. In his ordinary course of life he might even be called rather a moderate liver, but in a moment, after passing a certain point of drinking, a thirsty mania seemed to seize and hurry him on to most strange and disgraceful consequences.

Previous to the frolic I am about to relate, he had passed six weeks without once committing an excess. Invited to meet at my house (I, being then the junior manager, whose duty it was to attend to such civilities,) a select party of gentlemen, whom he had particularly desired to know, he appeared at the hour in perfect costume, and the best possible humor. His New York manager, Mr. Price, and also Mr. Dunlap, (who was employed as guardian to him,) were of the party. The day was cheerfully passed in the discussion of various literary and dramatic topics. Cooke drank his Madeira in very proper quantity, and the hour of ten approaching, one or two of the party left for home, delighted with the gentlemanly propriety of Cooke, whose reputation for a different deportment appeared to them a cruel slander. The whole party were on the point of leaving, when the host, unfortunately, desired Price to return thanks to a New York lady who had favored him with a present of some old Port wine. "Port wine!" exclaimed Cooke: "and the present from a lady! Gallantry forbid that we should separate before each taking a glass to the health of the fair donor." A bottle was sent for, and while standing, hat in hand, the lady's health was duly honored. The party began to move, but Cooke declared for another glass, which was declined by all the rest of the party. Price and Dunlap were eager for an exit—not so Cooke, who took a chair and desired the rest of the party to be seated, as he intended to finish the bottle. This he achieved in a very short time, when the party made another effort to depart. Cooke allowed them to get near the door, when he first showed signs of excitement, and coolly told them he liked the Port so

well that he should beg the host to open another bottle, for the parting glass. Price and Dunlap returned very reluctantly, plainly foreseeing that to get him out of the house would prove a difficult matter. The second bottle brought, Cooke reseated himself, and seemed, as it proved, to prepare for an evening. No one could be prevailed to take any more, and by half-past eleven he had emptied the second bottle, and was far on the way with the third, which he *demandèd* in his most tragic and imperious tone. By this time he had become savage and rude to a disgusting degree. He abused the others for leaving a gentleman and a stranger to drink alone, and declared his determination to finish the bottle and all intercourse with *such people* at the same time. Nothing was now to be done but let him take his course. When the last glass was emptied, and he had pronounced a loud malediction on the host's inhospitality, he rose indignantly to leave the house; but suddenly recollecting that Mrs. Wood was an English woman, and, as he said, "*of a superior class to those he had condescended to associate with, (for the last time,)*" he declared his firm resolution not to leave the house without taking a respectful leave. In vain I urged that the lady had retired to rest some hours before—a statement of which Cooke declared his utter disbelief. Seating himself again, he repeated what he termed "his ultimatum."

After a moment's hesitation, a note was dispatched up stairs to Mrs. Wood, with his singular request, and was answered with all possible haste, and the utmost good humor. On her appearing as she had left the table, Cooke exultingly advanced, and changing from the loud drunken tone in which he had indulged for the past two hours, suddenly addressed her in his most

gentle and respectful manner, leading her with much ceremony to a chair and placing himself at her side. After thanking her courteously for this attention and trouble, he proceeded to chat for a full half hour on a variety of trifling subjects, when Mrs. Wood begged leave to retire, urging the necessity of her presence in the nursery, from whence the voice of a young person was very distinctly heard. With much deference he admitted the necessity of her retiring; and after various "good nights," led her to the foot of the stairs, repeating his acknowledgments. The gentlemen, who looked on in silence during this scene, now supposed that Cooke would consent to return home without offering any further annoyance. But he had yet another favor to ask, which he was sure my wife would not refuse him. He stated the ill-treatment he had received from the host and his friends, with whom he was resolved not to leave the house, unless the lady would honor him by her company in the carriage, with Price, the manager, and Dunlap. Mrs. Wood, as may well be imagined, was startled at this extravagant request, and urged the lateness of the hour, (one o'clock,) her necessity to attend to her infant, &c. He heard her with perfect composure, but insisted on her accompanying the party to the Mansion House, then the most select hotel in our city, in Third above Spruce street,\* at which place he was stopping.

\* This truly elegant establishment—quite unlike anything before or since known in the United States, had been, previous to its conversion to the purposes of a hotel, the residence of the Hon. William Bingham, Esq., by whose beautiful and accomplished wife, for many years the dictatress of fashion in this city, a daughter of the Hon. Thomas Willing, it had been planned, taking the Duke of Manchester's residence in London for a model. At the time we speak of, it was still in the most fashionable street in the city.

Seeing no other prospect of relief, she determined to get rid of him, even at the price of so great an annoyance; and on a clear moonlight morning, at near 2 o'clock, the party set off in the carriage, which had been in waiting several hours.

During the ride to Third street nothing could exceed the gentleness and deference of Cooke; and when, on arriving at the Mansion House, the coach stopped, and black Sam (Price's confidential servant) appeared with a light, the tragedian sprang lightly out first, and offering his hand to the lady, entreated the honor of her company, if only for five minutes, in his parlor, with that of the gentlemen. While waiting an answer to this *reasonable* request, at a signal from Price, Sam shut the door of the coach, and the coachman drove off with all speed, leaving Cooke at the hotel door, shouting forth all manner of vengeance on the vile Yankee authors of this insult, who distinctly heard his voice until they had turned some distance into Spruce street.

Sam was then ordered to light up the parlor, and place himself at the table, at the head of which this madman sat until four o'clock, drenching himself with brandy and water, when he was at length prevailed on to go to bed, and remained quiet until morning.

Mr. Warren and I, who were so deeply interested in Cooke's condition, dreaded to inquire in the morning what his state might be, and what the prospects were of his being able to act at night. Sam, however, soon relieved us by the intelligence that he was quite well, and preparing to take his breakfast.

It was usual with Cooke to call on Mrs. Wood, and walk for an hour after rehearsal; and on the morning

succeeding the debauch we have recorded, to her utter surprise he appeared at his usual hour, as perfectly fresh, healthy and cheerful as though he had retired in sobriety and at a proper hour ; nor did he, in the slightest degree, even allude to his ill conduct, or the adventures of the past night.

It was, indeed, a singular feature in Cooke's character that he never betrayed the least shame or remorse for his scandalous excesses ; if adverted to by others, he was silent, and affected perfect unconsciousness. It is scarcely possible that he lost all recollection. Was it perfect indifference to public opinion ? In this respect he presented an unfavorable contrast to his brilliant successor, Edmund Kean, who suffered the severest mortification and regret for the deviations from propriety in which he occasionally indulged, but never without a consequent severe punishment, inflicted by shame and self-reproach. In his health, too, Kean suffered greatly, while Cooke seemed wholly proof against the usual consequences of excess. After a debauch, it was impossible to view the sensitive being, Kean, bowed down with shame and regret, without pity ; while Cooke, in returning to reason, induced as little regret as he had done during his madness, from the strange want of feeling he ever evinced. To neither, however, of these gifted men can even candor itself extend a serious palliation. Their example has done much harm to the various imitators, who, not content with caricaturing their manners, have in some cases thought it necessary to copy their failings also.

It is now forty years since the above singular incident occurred, and—sad thought !—the *single* survivor of this strange party is the person who has now the honor to recount it !



During Cooke's engagement, the spirit of criticism was suddenly aroused in Philadelphia to an uncommon degree. Several persons, well skilled in this delicate branch of literature, made his performances the subject of constant critical eulogy; eulogy which had neither variation nor limit. First among these stood Mr. S. C. Carpenter, who acquired considerable celebrity by his well written notices, published in the "Mirror of Taste," now first established. He was a practised writer, with most violent prejudices in favor of Cooke and Hodgkinson, for whom he had no scruple in attempting the sacrifice of John Kemble, Cooper, Jefferson, and indeed of all actors who were of consequence sufficient to invite comparison with his idols. Personal dislike and blind partiality appeared so strongly as to create suspicion of the independence attributable to many of his remarks. Cooke, however, could not bear the man; nor did all the adulation poured at the great actor's feet assist in removing his dislike and contempt for the writer. He experienced no pride in being praised for rare excellence with Hodgkinson, whom he never saw, and knew only by report as a general actor of peculiar merit and versatility; and he had quite sense enough of what his own merit was, to feel that to praise him as the superior of John Kemble in the great tragic parts, as Carpenter praised him, indicated either great want of taste, or an absurd and blind partiality. Cooke felt unbounded admiration for his great rival, and ranked his own solitary triumph as Richard III. as the brightest feature of his dramatic life. The cool disparagement of Cooper, too, on every occasion, equally failed to gratify Cooke, to depress Cooper, or to elevate the

critic. Cooper's rooted aversion to cherish intimacy with professional notice-writers was as well known to Cooke as to others, and was the obvious cause of Carpenter's unusual animosity. It was obvious enough, too, that the same cause led to the coarse and unceasing attempts to depreciate Jefferson, with which Mr. Carpenter's criticisms were filled in defiance of an estimate perfectly settled by the best and most entire public opinion.

To effect his unworthy objects, Carpenter resorted to the poor artifice of lauding the obscure performers, who, of course, were surprised at finding themselves so suddenly elevated; but who, after all, generally understood their own merits too well, to be very long disappointed at discovering a dullness in the public to sanction their suddenly discovered greatness.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1812.

Fennell and Master Payne—Decline of Payne's popularity—Mr. H.—The season at Washington begun, but broken up by the declaration of war—No Baltimore season this autumn—Philadelphia season—"The Constitution"—Hull's naval victory celebrated—Also Decatur's capture of the Macedonian—Mr. Holman the author holds a dialogue with him about the manner in which reputation is made—Miss Holman—Sketches of both—Question whether people can be puffed into the house—The author's opinion thereon—Some curious features in theatrical criticisms.

THE theatre followed a downhill course throughout the Baltimore season, although strengthened by the engagement of Fennell and Payne, by the "Lady of the Lake," and other attractions. Fennell acted three nights to \$228, \$218, and (his benefit, Douglas, *with the aid of Payne*) to \$427. Payne performed six nights to sadly diminished houses, \$355, \$315, \$246, \$244, \$255, and benefit, \$656. This benefit, by the advice of some friends, he threw up as insufficient, taking in return another, which reached only \$587. The "Lady of the Lake" averaged \$419, the largest receipt being \$711, owing to the introduction of an *Elephant*. The good taste of Baltimore confirmed the Philadelphia judgment of Mrs. Mason's ability. Duff also appeared for the first time here to \$270, \$257, \$255, \$300, \$143; benefit, \$229. On this occasion he gave some excellent imitations of Kemble, Cooke, Elliston,

and Munden. With nightly expenses exceeding \$300, a large loss was sustained by the managers.

Charles Lamb's excellent farce of *Mr. H.*, met with extraordinary success, and was played an unusual number of nights.

The company now repaired to Washington for a summer campaign, which, after a few nights, was brought to an untimely end by the declaration of war against England. This important event following so closely on continued disasters, nearly destroyed all hope of the future. The well-timed care and liberality of Mr. Foster, the British minister, provided means for the return of some performers to their native country.

The Baltimore autumn season of 1812 was omitted, and we commenced at Philadelphia in September with the "*Soldier's Daughter*," and "*The Constitution*," a local piece in celebration of the first naval victory. Notwithstanding the anxious state of all classes, the season commenced with a degree of spirit not experienced for many months. Mrs. Duff now appeared as *Angela*, with faint success. The lady was at this time a mere novice. After a long absence, Mrs. Whitlock re-appeared for eight nights to saving houses. The benefit was \$721, and was followed by Mr. and Miss Holman, the former well known as a leading tragedian at Covent Garden during Mrs. Merry's career. Their engagement, not splendid, was yet respectable. Holman's night, \$726; Miss H., \$1252. The celebration of "*Decatur's capture of the Macedonian*," falling on one of Holman's nights, raised the receipts to \$1240, much to his advantage. Duff also attracted good houses in *Octavian*, *Rolla*, *Hamlet*, *Aranza*,

Leon, Douglas and others; his accession also enabled us to revive successfully the "Lady of the Lake," the original cast of which was imperfect, from the want of a powerful Roderic Dhu. Duff's excellent acting of this fierce chief added to his high reputation, as well as to the treasury. Early in December Cone made known his wish to retire once more from the drama. His request was complied with, and his benefit took place, contrary to usage, in the heart of the season; the receipts \$460. In the course of a parting address to the audience, Mr. C. glanced at a want of public patronage, and a "lack of advancement" in the theatre, as the causes of his secession. A useful actor, he maintained a highly respectable position; while in the theatre his cheerful disposition and correct deportment strongly recommended him to the respect and good wishes of his fellow actors. By this secession George Barrett, in due order of promotion, became the fortunate representative of youthful tragedy and comedy heroes.

In this season of 1812, Holman and daughter first visited Philadelphia, where he recognised many old London and Dublin admirers. In his early days he had been a school-fellow and brother boy-actor at a juvenile theatre with Mr. Westray, Mrs. Wood's father, and a warm friendship had long subsisted between them in after years. We received them, of course, with much pleasure, and as social inmates they were as welcome as agreeable. At the theatre, however, he was frequently an object of dislike. Naturally of an imperious disposition, and invested with large authority for many years, as director of the Dublin theatre, he had acquired a dictatorial manner

in business which did not fail to meet incessant checks, and could not but render his engagements far from pleasant.

Refined by education, and polished by the best associations, it was strange to find such a man indulging in a theory so repugnant to his haughty claims to independence, as one to which I am about to refer. I allude to his habit of transferring the right of judgment from public judgment to individual opinion; which last he conceived to be possessed of a power and right to control the former. A day or two, for example, previous to his appearance in our theatre, he called on me with an enormous mass of theatrical notices, selected from magazines, newspapers, and other sources, requesting of me, as manager, that an immediate insertion of these essays should be the subject of my attention. This unusual request was received by me with more than coldness, of course, as being the opposite of my professional principles and practice. Holman was quite indignant at a refusal to cause an insertion of these complimentary notices in our papers. In vain I represented to him that a manager who was known to be connected with professional writers on the performers, would necessarily become an object of suspicion to the actors, who, on the occurrence of any disagreeable criticism, might unjustly charge upon him the severity of the writer; that incredulous as I had become of the power to make or unmake an actor, yet I had too frequently witnessed the chagrin and depression occasioned to worthy artists, by persons who had not hesitated to submit their occasional strictures to the control and direction of the manager, and this too in spite of invariable rejections. I told Mr. Holman that,

while in particular cases, perhaps, animosity had been created against the theatre by this independent course, I was intimately convinced that in the long run it was the true one, and that it had contributed much to the confidence and harmony so indispensable to the welfare of a sensitive community, and which had prevailed in a most agreeable degree in ours. Holman was not able to perceive the force of these principles, maintaining that every audience must be *taught* a correct judgment, and that this was especially important in a young and inexperienced people like ours. He insisted that no actor here or elsewhere could possibly rise to eminence without these literary aids. Some instances occurring here as well as in Europe, were readily suggested by me of the reverse of this position. During the period of his stay in our city he received, however, convincing proof, I believe, of the truth and good sense of our principles; for he was extremely surprised to discover that even the managers were entirely ignorant of some well written theatrical criticisms, which to him seemed of the utmost importance.

It was, perhaps, owing to a departure from these principles of theatrical management that Holman had been involved in more than one theatrical dispute. His well known prominence in the rebellion at Covent Garden, by "the glorious eight," who put themselves in opposition to the manager, lost him his situation; and while some of the malcontents, whom he had incited, were apparently forgiven at the time, their services were dispensed with at the earliest moment the manager could replace them. Holman passed several years as manager of the Dublin theatre, holding also the post of master of ceremonies at the castle. Ele-

gant and accomplished, he could not fail to become a favorite in society; but in his profession he involved himself here too in occasional difficulties. His short management of the Walnut Street House proved a ruinous failure. At Charleston a serious controversy with his principal actor, relative to the character of Hamlet, in which public opinion decided against him, led to a relinquishment of that theatre there. Disappointed and unhappy, he remained almost wholly unemployed for some time, and died suddenly at Rockaway, near New York.

Miss Holman, his daughter, was a highly educated woman, as well as a delicate and finished actress. Her performance of Lady Townley was the theme of universal praise, and many have placed her acting of the last scene among the highest efforts ever witnessed. Of her pathetic scenes we were afterwards strongly reminded by Fanny Jarman, an actress of more physical power and equal tenderness. Miss Holman's engagement proved only a moderate one. Holman himself excited no enthusiasm, while the severest judgment could not retire unsatisfied from his performance of Hamlet, Othello, Horatio, and Essex. Unqualified praise from those who witnessed it, justly rewarded his portrait of Lord Townley. Mr. Oakley was scarcely inferior. His manner to his daughter was marked by an austerity, sometimes almost cruel, and it seemed a perpetual check upon a cheerfulness natural to her. A great drawback to their success here, was their too frequent appearance as lovers, and husband and wife, in characters where the relation as well as the text were unfavorable to effect, as "Romeo and Juliet," and "Jaffier and Belvidera" particularly.



Miss Holman, wearied out, as was supposed, by the severe treatment she received, hurried into an ill-judged marriage with Gilfert, a man of all others the least suited to her education, habits, and associations. After a life of sorrow, this excellent lady, at an early age, fell a victim to domestic misery, and a lingering, painful disease.

I remark with pleasure, that on opening the Walnut street theatre, in opposition to us, Mr. Holman made a visit for the purpose of explaining the fair and honorable principles on which he proposed to conduct his theatre, every particular of which he fulfilled to the utmost letter.

I have already, in speaking of Mr. Cooke's receipts, and above of Mr. Holman's ideas on the importance of securing theatrical eulogies, presented my own views to a considerable extent on the subject. They are given to the younger portion of my professional brethren with a profound conviction of their consonance, not less with honor, delicacy, and self-respect, than with true policy, both as respects the actor and the stage.\* My observation of this matter, running over a term of full sixty years, is in spite of myself rather a long one. I have

\* Bernard stated to me, as a serious but disgraceful fact, that two of the principal comedians of Covent Garden, frequently declared that for the first two years of their appearance in London, one half of their salaries had been expended in presents, loans, and entertainments to puff-writers of the papers. Antony Pasquin, (a man named Williams,) was the vilest and most insolent of this band. Taylor in his records says of him, "He was by no means destitute of talents or humor, but was vain, vulgar, insolent and overbearing. His works are marked by low malignity. He was the terror of the middling and lower order of actors and artists, and would call on them on a morning, ask them if they dined at home, and finding that they did, would impudently order them to get a particular dish, and sometimes bring an acquaintance with him at the appointed hour." And Bernard even showed the writer a card of

seen, of course, whole generations of actors come and go, and without any effort have been compelled to observe the effect of the two systems on those who respectively have practised them. I know of no case whatever, in which any bad actor has ever been made popular by eulogies, nor one where a good actor has been *long or seriously* injured by detraction. I might recall some cases where *good* actors, supposing this sort of aid necessary to assert or sustain themselves, have been greatly injured, both in character and outlay, by the resort to these false and worthless modes of winning popular regard.\*

One or two instances illustrating the occasional secrets, and so far the fairness of theatrical criticisms, this worthy's, quite a curiosity in its way, and probably the work of Pasquin himself, who, with considerable knowledge of the principles of art, possessed some little artistical ability. It represented an open hand : on the palm a guinea accurately drawn, with simply "A. Pasquin" below.

\* I hope this plain statement of my views will not subject me to the charge of ingratitude towards many writers, who, during the term of my more active professional career, evinced an estimation of my humble efforts, at times vastly beyond the value set upon them either by private friends or public opinion. In the retirement of my later years, I have often amused myself by turning over the pages of journals and works treating of these performances, and not without surprise to find the measure of praise so much outrun that of censure. Hundreds of these articles were wholly unknown to me during the busy life I led, and have come to me forty years after they were written with quite a charm of novelty. I hope also that the views I have expressed relative to the practice of forcing eulogy, or of writing down a good actor, will not be taken to imply an under-estimate of critical considerations. Many persons yet living, will bear witness of my invariable attention to, and respect for, even some unflattering suggestions, which have reached me through responsible sources. But of *anonymous* publications I invariably resolved to remain in all possible ignorance, and my constant adherence to this course, I have often been assured, was far more annoying to the writers of them, than my bad management or even my worse acting.

may amuse the reader. Mr. Henderson and Miss Brunton were announced at Bath to act Horatius and Horatio in the "Roman Father," the piece in which she made her first and very successful appearance. At a late hour of the day Henderson was suddenly prostrated by a severe disease of the heart, which soon after deprived the stage of one of its ornaments. A change of performance was unavoidable. The theatre at that period afforded no performer who could be deputed as a substitute for Henderson. In great haste the comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer" was announced, with a due apology. On the following morning there appeared in the leading newspaper a most violent attack upon the performance of the "Roman Father," in which Henderson and Miss Brunton received a bountiful share of abuse—the writer of course not having been apprised of the change of performance. So far from doing either person any harm, public indignation rose to a great height at this unprincipled outrage. It was traced to a worthless scribbler, who had disgraced himself by the publication of some grossly indecent rhymes, under the title of "Odes to Actors," in which he had been extremely coarse in his notice of Miss Farren. The detraction of Miss Brunton added considerably to the interest felt for a deserving young performer, and gave a death blow to theatrical notices at Bath.

The well known Elliston was also the principal object of a false and malignant attack, during the revival of Farquhar's "Constant Couple," a play restored to the stage for the purpose of showing him in Sir H. Wildair. On one of the intended nights of representation at Drury Lane, it so happened that having had permission to play a night or two in one of the provinces,

he failed to reach London in time, and singularly enough the same play of "She Stoops to Conquer," kept as a stop-gap in most theatres, was performed instead of the "Constant Couple." The notice of change being late, the theatrical reporter of a Sunday paper came out the next day with a notice of the performance of the *intended* play, in which he criticised with unsparing severity the chief performers, Downton, Bannister, Barrymore, and Mrs. Powell, but above all poor Elliston, who was not within a hundred miles of the theatre at the time. As the performers thought they had full reason to consider the theatrical articles of this Sunday paper, on several previous occasions, unquestionably severe, and apparently malicious, they did not fail on the present occasion to exhibit plainly to the public the character and principles of some of the writers in this department. An immense bill was placarded throughout London, with the criticism in full, and an appeal to the audience whether any credit could in future be given to criticisms in that paper. The injustice offered to the performers was so palpable, as to create an exertion in their favor, and the play, which had thus far hung heavily, was rapturously supported through a night or two, in resentment of their ill-treatment.

The mortifying dilemma in which Pope's malignant hostility to Colly Cibber placed him, is perhaps known. In the continued warfare of these distinguished writers, the laureat's imperturbable good humor was an overmatch for the peevishness and hatred of Pope, which led him on one occasion, very unwittingly, to pay his adversary the highest possible compliment, and at the same time to treat with rudeness and con-

tempt the person for whom, through life, he held respect, and almost reverence. When the comedy of the "Provoked Husband" was produced, as the joint effort of Sir John Vanbrugh and Colly Cibber, the distinctive claims of each author could only be guessed at; and the high life scenes being quite in the style in which Sir John had greatly distinguished himself previously, were generally attributed to *him*. Pope felt wholly satisfied that these were Sir John's share, and resolved to have a hit at his old foe. In a very spirited article he analyzed the play at great length, complimenting Sir John highly upon the elegance and perfection he had given to the scenes of Lord and Lady Townley—the fable, the dialogue, and above all, the *moral* was perfect. He then proceeded to mangle and dissect the other portions of the play, which he believed to be Cibber's, and which he asserted were made up of vulgarity, dullness, ineffective satire on his superiors, and evidently the work of one whose pretensions to anything beyond coarse farce were not to be tolerated. The incomparable humor of Sir Francis, My Lady, John Moody, and the Cubs of Children, was pronounced a disgrace to the stage, and a most unfit adjunct to the Townley and high-comedy scenes.

We may well conceive the horror and mortification of the critic, when the publication of the unfinished manuscript stated their separate claims, and the reviled and insulted portion was claimed by Sir John, who relinquished to the hated laureat the share unconsciously eulogized by the critic. Cibber made a good use of the advantage given to him on all occasions, to the great vexation of Pope.

## CHAPTER IX.

1813-1814.

More naval celebrations—Perry's capture of the British fleet on Lake Erie—Enterprise and Boxer—Rostral column—Monody on Lawrence and Burrows—The Minister—Remarks on the German translated plays—Blue Beard—Marmion—Some account of its production and success—Benefit in aid of translating the Holy Scriptures—Cooper's (first time) Charles de Moor—Capture of the Java—Next the capture of the Peacock—Fennell—General Moreau—New Baltimore theatre—Opened under serious difficulties in an unfinished state—Loss of scenery by the enemy—General Harrison and Commodore Perry—The Ethiop—Large benefit receipts—Fennell's last performance and retirement—Affecting appeal to the public—His last effort a lamentable failure—But he receives a great benefit—Slight sketch of this actor—Thoughts on taxing theatres.

THE Philadelphia season commenced with a comedy, after which was performed a celebration of the capture of the British brig Boxer; also the defeat and capture of the whole British fleet on Lake Erie by Com. Perry, with a rostral column commemorative of the "First seven naval victories achieved by the navy of the United States." A monody on Capt. Lawrence and Lieut. Burrows was well spoken by Mrs. Mason. These frequent celebrations proved a welcome aid to our exhausted treasury, and revived a theatrical spirit in the people, which brightened our prospects every hour. Doyle, an excellent substitute for McKenzie, was now added to the company, and Miss Jefferson made a very successful debut as Sophia, in the "Road

to Ruin." The Misses Abercrombie, two clever dancers, became general favorites. "Timour the Tartar" was produced with great splendor, attracting a long succession of excellent houses. The German drama, at this time, stood high in public favor. We may call it, indeed, *the German season*. "Pizarro," "Virgin of the Sun," "The Stranger," and "The Robbers," had been long favorably established, as well as Kotzebue's minor pieces, "How to die for Love," "Horse and the Widow," "Of Age to-morrow," and others. Benyowsky has been already noticed. But this season they became entirely the fashion, and made the German drama a matter much discussed. Schiller's noble drama of "The Minister, or Cabal and Love," was now altered and acted with distinguished success, under the title of the "Harper's Daughter."

With regard to the moral of "The Stranger," "The Lover's Vows," and others, which were a good deal discussed at the time I am speaking of, a difference of opinion exists. I have nothing to say on that subject, but I may say that I have been exceedingly entertained by what the French call the *Bigarrures de l'Esprit Humain*, when I have seen the morality which condemns the German plays reconcile itself, by at least a constant attendance upon them, to all manner of musical as well as other versions of the detestable but favorite Don Juan. Of this piece no less than six different dramas, operas or pantomimes, have been produced on the Philadelphia stage; French, Italian and English having all been called into requisition for the important service. The German play of "Abaellino," by Zschokke, a German writer, lately much read, furnished but a simple and harmless original, from which to originate

the "Massaronis," "Macaires," "Fra Diavolo," &c., which have sprung from it.

● In speaking of what the auditors of the English and American theatres call the German drama, and of which their ideas are generally, perhaps, taken from, "Pizarro," "The Harper's Daughter," and some other acting pieces, it ought to be said, in regard to their literary and dramatic merits, that the German form of them have been so freely treated by English and American *play-makers*, that it requires some careful perusal of the originals, in order to fully appreciate their merits. With all due allowance for the necessity of changing some phrases, as well as situations, peculiarly local or national, it must be allowed that some of the alterations were dictated, either by an ignorance of the author's meaning, or an unwarrantable caprice. This remark applies with force to "Pizarro," particularly, in many scenes of which we find labored dialogue, or wild melo-dramatic action, substituted for the beautiful simplicity of the original; the acting version having been concocted by Mr. Sheridan for political purposes, and to produce an effect upon the feelings of the people of abhorrence to the French and their leader. The Germans, it is said, consider the "Virgin of the Sun" a very superior performance to the "Pizarro," which by the way, was only intended as a sequel to the other. Strangely enough, the *end* of the story was produced first, both here and in England, and anticipating, in some degree, the charm and novelty of Peruvian scenery and costume, lessened greatly the effect properly due to the *first* part.

I am not meaning to find fault with these changes, in adapting German pieces to our audiences, but merely



to speak of the fact as one in connection with literary identity, and to guard the reader against a false impression produced by the popular retention of a national name. In offering a German drama to an American audience, many alterations are positively indispensable. The vigorous language and forcible expression of the original would often startle and shock in a *literal* translation, while many appeals to the Deity on trivial occasions, and frightful imprecations, would render a faithful version insufferable. The great length, too, of the German tragedies, is a serious difficulty with us, although none with the author, in a theatre where the play alone forms the whole night's entertainment. When the tragedy of the "Minister" was produced upon the Philadelphia stage, it was found necessary to omit the whole character of Augusta—a portion of the drama upon which the great talents of Schiller have been most laboriously employed. While in the "Robbers," the episode of Kozinski and the disguise scenes of Charles as the Count were omitted, with great advantage to the general interest of the piece, and particularly as they affected the position and value of Amelia. A prolixity in some of the scenes, especially those of Francis, Kozinski, and the assumed Count, throws a weight upon the play, which may well be avoided, and save, to the actor of Charles, much power, otherwise wasted on minor situations, and which is loudly called for at the close of the 4th and throughout the 5th act.\*

\* This play was recently well performed by Mr. Anderson. I could not, however, but regret that he had not adopted the acting version which we formerly used, or which the scenes and speeches I refer to are omitted.

Many of the alterations made in "Pizarro" have nothing to do with the German original whatever, but, as I have already indicated, are purely English. It is known that, owing to the revolutionary and seditious character of many of the sentiments put into the mouths of the personages in them, the English would not suffer the plays of Kotzebue to appear for some time upon their stage. His very name was odious; and it was considered dangerous to the State in the then excited condition of the masses, to allow the utterance of any sentiment disrespectful to the throne. Perceiving the immense power of his general cast of plays with a popular audience, Sheridan, with his usual ability, seized upon the play of "Pizarro," and by some omissions and some changes avoided everything disrespectful to the English prince, while he directed all the odium which the author meant for the Spanish leader against Napoleon. The result of all this I may add was, that the dislike of the audience to Kotzebue was converted into the wildest admiration. It made German plays popular for several years, and led to a closer knowledge of Schiller than any other circumstance could have effected.

A learned elephant contributed in Philadelphia this season to the attraction of "Blue Beard" now revived.

On the 1st of January, 1813, "Marmion" was first produced, Mr. Duff appearing in it with great effect.

I believe I have already spoken of this showy and fine actor, and of his wife. They made their first appearance in America, according to Mr. Dunlap, at the Boston theatre. Duff had been an actor in the Dublin theatre at the time when Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Dwyer, then in his prime, had a serious dispute. This

difficulty having ended in Dwyer's leaving the theatre, gave Duff an opportunity to show talents before kept from view. He soon after came to Boston, bringing with him a very beautiful woman, his wife, sister of the lady of the song-writer, Tom Moore. The sisters had been dancers in Dublin, and their name Dyke. Mr. Duff appeared on the Philadelphia stage, first in 1811, playing the first night, and with the greatest success, "Macbeth" and "Diddler;" an instance of versatility of powers seldom met with. He succeeded, indeed, beyond any instance I ever met with. For many months he attracted great houses in "Three and Deuce," (which was performed as a first piece,) and in Richard, Macbeth, Lear, &c. I am safe in saying that he brought more positive profit to the house in two years than any star that visited us.\* Mr. Duff had six guineas a week, and often played on his sole attraction to \$700, \$800, and \$900. His second benefit (in which he performed Coriolanus) brought \$1574, which greatly exceeds most of Cooke's, Kean's, or Mathew's. Mrs. Duff at this time was very pretty, but so tame and indolent as to give no hope of the improvement we afterwards witnessed. Her benefit, to her husbands "Richard III," in imitation of and precisely after the manner of Cooke, brought \$949. Connected with Duff I must mention a circumstance.

James N. Barker, to whom I have already alluded, had written several pieces which had no fault but

\* It must be remembered that the stars took care to share the profits with the managers, except the greatest of all stars, George Frederick Cooke, and the profits of his performances were secured by those to whom he had bound himself. There was no one then demanding all or the largest share of the profits from us.

being American productions. This, however, was enough to destroy their success. At my request he now dramatized "Marmion." The merit of the piece was positive, but the old difficulty remained. I knew the then prejudice against any native play, and concocted with Cooper a very innocent fraud upon the public. We insinuated that the piece was a London one, had it sent to our theatre from New York, where it was made to arrive in the midst of rehearsal, in the presence of the actors, packed up exactly *like pieces we were in the habit of receiving from London. It was opened with great gravity, and announced without any author being alluded to.* None of the company were in the secret, as I well knew "these actors cannot keep counsel," not even the prompter. It was played with great success for six or seven nights, when believing it safe, I announced the author, and from that moment *it ceased to attract.* This is not a very creditable story, but a true one, and forms a strong contrast to the warmth with which "Matamora" and the "Gladiator" were received. Cooper also played "Marmion" in New York without a hint to its father.\*

At the request of many influential persons, a night was appropriated in aid of "The fund for the translation and publication of the HOLY SCRIPTURES into the Eastern Languages." The whole receipts, however, were only \$227, although for this occasion, Mrs. Inch-

\* Since the excellent labors of Dr. Rufus Griswold—who in his PROSE WRITERS AND POETS OF AMERICA, has done so much to make this country as well as other countries acquainted with its true literary merits, and so to give it a proper confidence in its own writers and its own judgments—such a resort would no longer be necessary.

bald's admirable play of "Such Things Are," was carefully produced for the purpose of exhibiting the benevolent Howard in the part of Haswell. Cooper, about this time, made his accustomed visit, and with the usual success, acting Charles de Moor for the first time. Washington's birth-day was celebrated by "Bunker Hill," with various transparencies in honor of Com. Bainbridge's "Capture of the Java." The next victory celebrated was the "Hornet's Capture of the Peacock."

Fennell at this time played four nights, on one giving "Gustavus Vasa," but with little effect. The play is ill adapted to representation. General Moreau and lady were frequent visitors of the theatre during his residence in Baltimore, and up to the period of his departure on the expedition which terminated his life. Of a lethargic habit, and little conversant with our language or the English drama, entertainment proved rather unamusing to him, and it was not unusual to see the General so much uninterested in the joys and sorrows before him, as to indulge in a sound nap, sitting, however, perfectly erect, and supported by the pillar of the box.

The liberality of the Baltimore public had induced the managers to form contracts for erecting a building more convenient and worthy of their patronage. In despite of the unfavorable state of the times, it became necessary to proceed with the enterprise, at least so far as to make a beginning under great disadvantages, and the new theatre was opened May 10th, 1814, with the "West Indian," and an occasional address, in commemoration of the naval victories, written by a gentleman of Philadelphia, and spoken by Wood.

ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE BALTIMORE THEATRE,  
 MONDAY MAY 10, 1814.

In ancient Thebes, a wall of ponderous stone  
 Rose, by the aid of modest melody alone ;  
 Obedient to the great Amphion's lyre  
 Which rocks of massy marble could inspire.  
 These walls—the offspring of no common care,  
 The destined mansion of the brave and fair—  
 Labor and anxious pain, and peril past,  
 Behold our sanguine hopes fulfilled at last  
 To night. From hostile arms, not distant far,  
 While every gale breathes notes of furious war,  
 Here beauty strives her bursting tears to stay,  
 For him whom glory forces far away ;  
 And e'en the gallant soldier, lingering here,  
 Heaves the soft sigh and hails the starting tear.  
 Neptune, resolved his ocean should be free,  
 Hails our new empire's claims upon the sea.  
 Bids Hull dispel the usurper's charm,  
 Fires his brave heart, and nerves his gallant arm,  
 The Trident soon, full many a hero wields,  
 Jones waves his banner, and the Briton yields.  
 Memory records with bold Decatur's name  
 The lessen'd star of Macedonian fame,  
 While he who once his fate in bondage mourned  
 Sees all his glories, all his fame returned.  
 And Lawrence too his fearful vigor tries,  
 Baffles the skillful, and the bold defies.  
 These and such deeds to tell to future days  
 To enshrine the hero's and the patriot's praise—  
 Shall be our welcome task ; a tribute due,  
 To fame resplendent, and to virtue too.  
 For this our walls, a monument, arise  
 To consecrate the fame that never dies ;  
 The trophy well deserved, with pride to wear  
 Proclaim what heroes did and what they dare.

For the first night, and several succeeding ones, the accommodations for the audience was confined to the lower boxes and the pit, both of which were well filled,

to a receipt of \$355, many failing to obtain seats. The stair cases leading to the upper boxes and gallery were wholly unfinished. Some beautiful scenery had been prepared at the Philadelphia painting-room, and carefully packed for transportation to Baltimore, there to be framed and adjusted. Two expensive green curtains accompanied these as far as Havre de Grace on their way. At this place a large warehouse had for some time been used as a temporary depot for military supplies on their passage to the army. As was afterwards ascertained, the enemy had been made acquainted with this fact, and a marauding party was dispatched, headed by Captain Sir George Cockburn, for the *avowed* purpose of destroying this public property. Fortunately, the most valuable part had been forwarded a few days previous. The building, however, was speedily destroyed with the contents, which included our scenery. The enemy's disappointment on discovering the small amount remaining, was avenged by a wanton and cruel destruction of private property. This achievement being accomplished, the party returned to their ships. The loss we sustained was less important in a pecuniary view, (though to us not trifling, even in this view,) than in rendering our opening still more embarrassing. The painters were all summoned from Philadelphia, and by incessant labor, day and night, we were enabled to present a few plays creditably. Warren was extremely chagrined and vexed at our loss, for which he consoled himself by a very poor joke, remarking with an allusion to the fabric of our curtains, that "we ought not complain, as these were the only bays (baize) the English had yet gained by the war."

Before the autumn, the theatre had been completed and the season was heralded in October by this

## ANNOUNCEMENT.

“The managers respectfully inform the public that the interior of the building is now completed and, the *lobbies, coffee room, passages, and discharging doors* fitted up in the best manner. The whole offering to the public a degree of accommodation not exceeded by any theatre in the United States.”

This was followed by a night appropriating the receipts to the defence of the city, from which the enemy had been then recently repulsed. It was well attended. The “Ethiop” and the “Exile” proved very attractive. The season closed to an average of \$410.

The season at Philadelphia commenced and continued with great spirit. Visits from General Harrison and Commodore Perry attracted very large audiences, while an occasional celebration assisted to replenish our wasted treasury. The “Ethiop” was carefully produced on the first night to \$1601, and to a succession of nights averaging \$870. Cooper played eleven nights to \$611 each. The benefit of the author of “Marmion” (Mr. Barker, to whom I have already alluded,) produced \$948, Jefferson’s \$1221, Duff’s \$1186, Blissett’s \$783, and Mrs. Duff’s \$806, with others of large amount, closing a season of \$581 nightly. These certainly were large receipts during an active state of warfare, and as such are worthy of record. Among the most interesting events of the Philadelphia season was the final retirement of the favorite tragedian, Fennell. Previous to his farewell night he issued the following melancholy appeal.

## TO THE PUBLIC OF PHILADELPHIA.

To many it may appear extraordinary, that my name should be advertised for a benefit, when I have for several seasons done nothing on the



stage to deserve one. The managers of the theatre have, however, allowed me the use of it for one night, and I am determined to appear once more before you. I offer no excuse nor apology for past errors, or present inabilities. I will be as silent as to causes as to effects; but I may be permitted to make a heart-feeling appeal to your general recollection of what I have formerly done on the theatre. To parents, guardians, infants, and adults, of what I have effected in a different capacity, and to my present pupils a contemplation of the struggle I have endured in my employment under their patronage, for my justification in obtruding myself once more on your notice.

My physical inability as to regular exertions on the stage, I partially admit, but I should deem myself unworthy of your last farewell, if I dared venture on my present task without a confidence that I am still competent to appear before you in the character I have chosen without a too importunate call on your indulgence, or a too great invasion of the feelings of my particular friends. I acknowledge I have undertaken a part (*King Lear*) which heretofore almost defied the energies of health and sturdy manhood, but I then had to *affect* a feebleness, which now, unfortunately, I *feel*; there will be on this occasion no need of acting "A poor old man, as full of grief as age," I must appear so in my real character; but should my incapacities exceed the strength of usual indulgence, give me but credit for my *desire* to please you in my last exertions, and gratefully shall I retire contented from your presence.

JAMES FENNELL.

The decline of his health, added to his unceasing embarrassments, had by this time rendered Mr. Fennell incapable of professional exertion, as was painfully proved on his night of retirement. During the last two acts of "*King Lear*," his nervous debility was so extreme as to compel an apology to the audience, and to trust himself to the care and attention of his fellow actors for the chance of getting through the latter scenes. His memory suddenly failing him, he sank under the painful excitement. It is very gratifying to add, that the liberality of the audience which never forsook him, bestowed a parting favor to the amount of \$1369. It is doubtful whether the retirement of any other actor occasioned a more general regret. The three last years of his life had been

passed in a series of mental and physical suffering, including a long imprisonment of several months at Baltimore, whither some of his creditors had pursued him. Depressed and miserable, he yielded, by his own statement, to habits of occasional excess, the effects of which soon became sufficiently obvious. His temper, naturally mild, now became irritable and uneasy, venting itself in ungrounded complaints of neglect from friends who nevertheless adhered to him with a fidelity seldom experienced by unfortunate men, even when more prudent. In the strange book called an "Apology for his Life," he relates some instances of neglect and unkindness which were wholly imaginary. His mind seemed clear and regular in all respects connected with his business. But from his first arrival in America, he sacrificed this in the pursuit of numerous schemes and speculations, many of them of the most absurd character. He declared and believed himself destined to boundless wealth, as the reward of his genius and perseverance. Perseverance, though most injudiciously applied, he possessed in a remarkable degree. Gifted with the utmost power of persuasion, and aided by a sanguine belief in the success of his plans, he enlisted the wishes and the means of many gentlemen of the highest character and business knowledge, to the amount of many thousand dollars, the whole of which was faithfully devoted to the purpose announced. He was, no doubt, a self-deceiver, for, from the first, he suffered the utmost embarrassment, and in many cases distress also, as he invariably stated, approaching to absolute want. At these moments the theatre presented a sure resource, and he would reluctantly leave his scene of excitement, but only long enough to

earn a supply for further waste. His talents and reputation secured him, with little labor, a certain income, which if below affluence, was yet a competence, and left ample leisure for other wholesome pursuits. But speculation was his passion, particularly in the direction of making *salt*. To this mania he sacrificed his talents, comfort, health, and as far as he could, his professional reputation.

I have spoken in this chapter of our building the new theatre at Baltimore, but have not mentioned any thing further. Notwithstanding the eager public wish for the erection of our theatre, the enterprise was not unattended with opposition. On this as well as on other occasions, petitions were circulated to induce the legislature, as well as city councils, to interdict the theatre wholly. Among others, the venerable Bishop Carroll, was strenuously urged, without success, to join the crusade against an establishment, not only patronized, but owned by the most influential and grave thinking members of the community. Our opponents were generally amiable persons, and probably their hostile efforts were among the causes of theatrical success in that city. They excited a constant watchfulness and mental control over the establishment, and kept it constantly in public view. Such a supervision it would be well if it always had. A tax of five, and since ten dollars per night was levied, but it was never felt as oppressive, and a city ordinance, which I copy, shows its judicious appropriation :

CITY OF BALTIMORE, ETC.

*Be it enacted and ordained*, that all moneys arising from license for theatrical exhibitions within said city be, and they are hereby, applied

to relieve the distresses of such of the citizens of Baltimore as were wounded, or of the families of those who were killed in the battles of Bladensburg and North Point, and bombardment of Fort McHenry, in the year eighteen hundred and fourteen.

While on this subject I may be permitted to express my approbation in general of such an impost, viewed merely in relation to its moral influence, and to say that a tax of this kind, if it had been generally laid throughout the country, might have prevented many of the disgraceful experiments of needy adventurers, who have undertaken here and elsewhere the arduous trade of management without talents, character, or capital, and with great injury of the drama as well as of public propriety. The numerous frauds practised by these persons on the proprietors, artists, tradesmen, and others, and the distress inflicted on many deserving actors, decoyed by specious promises from safe situations, are too well known to require illustration. If, instead of a tax of ten dollars, there was laid a tax of one thousand dollars a year, one-half payable in advance, with a requirement of perfect security for the rest, our theatres would be protected from the inroads of these unprincipled plunderers, and would gather in confidence the best dramatic talent of the day, much of which, for want of such protection, is found reluctantly strolling through the southern and western States, too frequently both in shame and want.

The drama was never more popular than at this moment. It is witnessed by far greater numbers than ever attended it in the days of Cooke, Kean, or Cooper, though not at all by the same class of persons. To restore it, therefore, to its former state is an object

of vast importance. When so large a portion of youth is drawn nightly to the theatre, it is most desirable that the impressions received should be far different from those now too frequently excited by vulgar and demoralizing performances.

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## CHAPTER X.

1815-1816.

Peace—Prospects brighten—Large receipts on Stock nights—Zembuca—Its uncommon success—Maggie and Maid—Large benefits—Mr. Barton—Cooper's continued attraction, particularly in comedy—Mrs. Burke—Almost a disturbance—Particulars of the difficulty—Injury from pretended friends—Mrs. Placide, Mrs. Claude, Johnson, Anderson, George Barnwell—Strange vagaries about the part of Millwood, as well as about some other characters—Emilia becomes suddenly important—Aping of eminent performers, and shameful imitation of Shakspeare and other great authors—Distinguished Spanish dancer arrives from stress of weather—Her equivocal reception, yet large receipts—Jefferson's ability as a machinist—Forest of Bondy—Mr. and Mrs. C. Young—Gas first used in the Philadelphia theatre—Burke—Andrew Jackson Allen—Mrs. Wheatley—John Jewett and his play—Guy Mannering—Aladdin—West's equestrian company—Rokeby—Mrs. Gilbert—Bertram violently attacked—Painful situation of an actress—H. Lewis—His brother's munificent bequest in honor of their father.

It was an agreeable release from the gloomy history of former years, to find ourselves now animated by some return of cheerfulness. The Philadelphia season of 1815 afforded a grateful vicissitude. Peace and its attending comforts seemed willing to recompense us as well as others for sufferings incident to a state of war. This year, indeed, not only repaid some extra exertions for the public entertainment, but contributed largely towards the liquidation of certain debts consequent to former heavy losses, as well as to the extraordinary expenditure attending the new

Baltimore house, under the peculiar circumstances formerly detailed. Fortune indeed seemed to smile upon us once more, and former cares were well nigh forgotten. It is nearly impossible to convey to readers any intelligible notion of a theatre's successes or misfortunes, except by a candid statement of the receipts. A manager of equal honor and experience protested against all anonymous statements of a theatre's prosperity, maintaining that the only avenue of ascertaining the true state of a theatre was through the "treasurer's books." This is somewhat homely in its illustration but very worthy of thought from auditors and managers. The most disgraceful and ruinous theatrical careers, have resulted from an unfair statement put forth of the theatre's success and resources. Some of the receipts this season were as follows:

West Indian and Review,.....	\$1150
Romeo and Juliet,.....	1117
Foundling of the Forest, (fourth year,).....	1005
Lady of the Lake,.....	940
Stranger,.....	909
Christmas night,.....	1213

Zembuca was produced to the following receipts: \$1764, \$1100, \$1006, \$815, \$839, \$743, \$479, \$490. After a short interval the "Magpie and Maid" were given, with an excellent cast, if we may offer the receipts as a test of public opinion. This delicate little drama produced \$1188, \$730, \$548, \$641, \$580, and its last night this season, added to Zembuca, \$1249. The benefits corresponded with the success of the season. Jefferson, \$1618, Duff, \$1145, George Barrett, \$1320, and to other actors large receipts. The average of benefits this season exceeded \$949, a sum not likely to be rivalled even with a double population. Mr. Barton first appeared as Hamlet and Romeo, Cooper

acted as usual a few nights; his average receipts \$860, benefit \$1146. It is odd enough that his largest house was to Charles Surface and Petruccio, 1260. Mrs. Burke played four nights to good houses, and a benefit of \$1206. During the late Baltimore season Mr. and Mrs. Burke applied for an occasional engagement, having recently left the New York company. It may be necessary here to state that an honorable understanding always subsists between respectable managers, in regard to performers who had violated their contracts by desertion from their duty. Such persons were not held capable of new engagements until the former had been completed by performance or compromise. This was the situation of Mr. and Mrs. Burke as regularly announced to us by the New York manager, Mr. Price, in due legal form.

The slightest experience will satisfy every candid person of the value and necessity of this sort of compact. Some ardent admirers of Mrs. Burke's fine voice and talent, were willing to sacrifice the equity of the case to an impatient curiosity, and actually proceeded so far as to issue the following inflammatory card to the public, incited undoubtedly by some ill-judging friends.

MRS. BURKE'S CARD.

NO NEW YORK DICTATION.

"The friends of the stage, having witnessed this lady's superior pretensions and charms as a singer, feel themselves authorised to hear at the end of the play, the true reason why she is not engaged to contribute to the favorite amusement of the Baltimore audience. We understand this lady has solicited an engagement with the managers of our theatre, and that that request has been refused. The reason Mr. Wood the acting manager assigns for denying us this gratification is, *that he cannot consent to engage any performer who has had a difference with the New York manager.* Is this fair, is it just, that our interest should be sacrificed to *oblige the New York manager?* Will not a Baltimore audience unite in this remonstrance.



This ungenerous attempt to mislead and inflame the public mind, only served to confirm the managers in their former resolution. Some slight attempt at disturbance in the evening was promptly repressed by the audience, and the engagement deferred until a satisfactory arrangement had been effected between the contending parties. Mr. and Mrs. Burke were soon after regularly attached to the company, and proved valuable acquisitions. I could fill a large space with instances of this attempt to impose private pretensions under the charge of invading the rights of the public. The only one, however, productive of serious results was that formally recorded at large.

The autumn season of 1815 commenced with unabated spirit. Mrs. Placide, Mrs. Claude, McFarland, Philips, Johnson, Savage, and Anderson, were added to the company and generally well received. Among other revivals, "George Barnwell" was represented to a large house. Mr. Entwistle (late Mason) as Millwood. A curious estimate of this character had taken place some time before, in consequence of Mrs. Sidons appearing in it. This eminent lady maintained an opinion that the high moral effect of the play had always suffered, from the low and vulgar manner in which Millwood was usually given. This idea, added to a wish of aiding her brother Charles, who had gained much reputation in Barnwell, induced her to offer a magnificent effort of her rare genius in so revolting a part. The consequence was that the tragedy ladies were now contending for a character, which had been hitherto especially conditioned against in every engagement. The chambermaid actress was now compelled (gladly no doubt) to vacate in favor of the tragic

queen; an arrangement, however, greatly benefitting the play. In earlier days Mrs. Whitlock, who, to avoid Millwood, had substituted in her list the little part of Maria, now insisted on the change, in which she was followed by the performers in nearly every theatre.

The same freak seized upon the actors on John Kemble's relinquishment of "Jaffier," the pet of all leading actors. No sooner did the great tragedian, from infirmity and increasing years, resign the lovers, than all the tragedians, great and small, scrambled for the ruder character of Pierre. London actors can well remember the startling effect produced by Emilia's reproaches of Othello for cruelty to his wife, at the time when public feeling was extremely excited by the pending trial of the Queen. From this time Emilia, formerly intrusted to a second or third, now frequently became the favorite of leading actresses. The continued declamation through the three first acts of "Hamlet," added to frequent attacks of asthma, were given as John Kemble's reason for omitting the important and powerful soliloquy commencing with, "*Why, what a wretch and peasant slave am I.*" This dangerous innovation was speedily adopted by imitators, whose untiring lungs were in no such danger of exhaustion, till it became an almost universal practice, nay numerous acting editions were published wholly omitting this splendid and characteristic soliloquy. Matthews was apt to call actors "imitative animals." I will not venture to say how truly. This paltry aping of some eminent actor, was productive of much unpleasant argument in the theatre, and not unfrequently of serious detriment to the best plays. Many vexatious embarrassments did poor managers suffer, in reconciling

claims to these parts. A single circumstance frequently changed the whole value of a character.

To accidents of this kind we can often attribute that permanent mutilation of the best plays which every actor notices; though undoubtedly this state of the drama often results from other causes also; generally, perhaps, from the vanity of some star who wishes to make himself the be-all and the end-all of the piece. Thus Conway maintained that Belvidera's famous last scene and death interfered unfavorably with the effect necessary to be produced by the previous deaths of Pierre and Jaffier, and urged this selfish mutilation of drama and story without even consulting the lady most interested in the question. The correctness of his judgment, and how much true taste for dramatic effect had to do with it, can be judged of by those who have witnessed the thrilling efforts of Mrs. Merry, Miss Kemble, Miss Tree, and other eminent performers of this part. It was, in truth, an illustration of that morbid vanity which preyed upon him through life, and which disfigured a fine character. The late fashion of mangling the "Merchant of Venice," by concluding the piece at the close of Shylock's character, has become almost universal, and arose no doubt from the selfishness of some Shylock. Some small Shylocks have favored the public with the trial scene alone. Miss Kemble, who justly prided herself on her performance of Portia, treated this insult to Shakspeare with just severity and contempt. Her last act of this play was always considered one of her most favorable exhibitions of comic power. Othello has not escaped these impudent innovations. Many pretenders to this part have chosen to omit wholly the

important scene in which the Moor's recall and ill-timed mention of Cassio, leads him to personal violence against Desdemona ; a scene of the utmost importance to the progress of his passion, and giving scope for the exercise of an actor's best talent. Numerous instances might be cited of this gross violation of justice and good taste. The cruel butchery of such plays as the "Honey Moon," "Pizarro," "Wm. Tell," "Rivals," "Inconstant," and numerous others, by carving out all except the principal parts, has become so frequent as to forbid any hope of speedy remedy. It may, indeed, perhaps, be thought fortunate that some Mercutio has not demanded the close of the play with his death, or that some modest Iago has not ordered the fall of the curtain at the end of the third act, after which, his object being attained, his character sinks into comparative unimportance

During this season, a vessel destined for Havana, was by stress of weather compelled to make harbor in Baltimore. Among the passengers was Signora Aria, a beautiful woman and accomplished dancer, engaged for the Cuban theatres. The vessel requiring repairs, which occasioned a detention of several days, an application was received through the Spanish Consul for the engagement of this distinguished *artiste*. The performance fully confirmed all that had been said of her talents, although the peculiarity of her dances at first promised no favorable conclusion. One of these resembled what we have since received under the title of the Bolero, and startled not a little some of the audience, at that time wholly unused to the style since so favorably received. Her first night produced \$861, and so divided were the audience as to the decency of

the exhibition, that at the close of the evening a strong remonstrance was forwarded to the managers against a repetition of her performance.

The bills announcing her re-appearance being by this time posted through the city, and a strong counter-remonstrance having reached us, it was resolved to conclude her engagement as originally designed. The receipts of the second night reached \$781, proving very satisfactorily that the public were at least divided on the subject. The number of ladies on the second night was unusually small. "Romeo and Juliet" was acted by the stock company to \$810; Jefferson as Mercutio, first time. "Zembuca," for two nights, closed the season to \$1138 and \$1094. The average of this season was no less than \$598 per night.

It is but a just tribute to state, that much of the success of the "Ethiop" and "Zembuca" was owing to the taste and skill of Jefferson in the construction of intricate stage machinery, of which, on many occasions, he proved himself a perfect master, not unfrequently improving materially the English models sent out to us. These valuable services were wholly gratuitous, all attempts at remuneration being uniformly declined. He felt himself amply repaid for the exercise of his varied talent, by the prosperity of the establishment of which, for twenty-five years, he continued the pride and ornament. Our spring season of 1816 at Baltimore proved highly fortunate. The "Magpie and Maid," produced with great care and well cast, repaid us by nightly receipts of \$621 each. The "Forest of Bondy" reached \$600 nightly. A benefit given in aid of the widows and families of those who perished in the defence of the city, was liberally

patronized. A pleasant comedy called "Jean de Paris" anticipated successfully the favorite Opera. C. Young and his beautiful wife appeared for a few nights as Osmund and Angela, Iago and Desdemona, and other characters. Young T. Jefferson made rapid advancement this season, which closed to \$524 nightly.

We now first introduced gas at the Philadelphia house, where extensive private works were erected, which was some years afterwards destroyed by fire. Mrs. Burke, after a year's absence, returned to us, and Burke first appeared as Sir Francis Gripe, a part he sustained for many years, with general approbation. Among the fresh acquisitions to the company was Andrew Jackson Allen, of eccentric memory. He was employed in inferior characters only. Mr. Robertson also was engaged. Mrs. Wheatley (late Williams), performed a second brilliant engagement, and with increased favor. This lady has been generally placed in the first rank of our comic actresses. Cooper followed in a course of eighteen nights, to an average of nearly \$650. On his benefit night he appeared for the first time as the Liar, and gained so much reputation as to render it subsequently one of his most attractive parts.

A strange person named John Jewett appeared in a drama called "The Armorer's Escape from the savages of Nootka, after many sufferings;" the part of the armorer acted by himself. His narrative having been received as genuine, much curiosity and some interest were excited by so unique an exhibition; it was presented to \$722, \$339, and \$301. "Guy Mannering" was first acted now, and as successfully as could well be expected from so feeble a musical force as ours. The "Woodman's Hut," (with an effective conflagra-

tion scene designed by Jefferson), produced several houses of \$700 each. "Aladdin" was more fortunate still, holding a long and profitable run of many nights. Holcroft's admirable comedy of the "Man of Ten Thousand" was revived for Jefferson's benefit, with unusual effect, to \$1009.

Mr. and Mrs. Duff's, and Mrs. Entwistle's nights were announced as their farewells. We encountered this season the most formidable opposition we had ever experienced. A powerful equestrian and melo-dramatic corps, conducted by Mr. West of the London amphitheatre, commenced on the 28th of November, 1816, a series of entertainments of a very superior order, and attracted in twenty-seven nights the large amount of \$21,800. The largest receipts were on the benefit night of Campbell, the clown, a performer of extraordinary merit, when the house produced \$1699. When this strong counter attraction is taken into view, our season of \$569 may be considered highly prosperous. At the two houses no less than \$72,000 were received during the season. As on former occasions of equestrian rivalry, the greatest injury was sustained in the box receipts, the pit and gallery showing no material diminution. "Rockeby," a drama by a gentleman of Maryland, was produced with care, but the story proved in many respects unsuited to stage representation.

The theatre continued to prosper in both cities during the autumn of 1816. At Baltimore, Mrs. Gilfert, formerly Miss Holman, gave great satisfaction in a round of her best characters. Declining health had somewhat weakened her powers, but her lady-like cheerfulness and grace gained her many admirers.

The receipts were wholly inadequate to her merits, seven nights averaging only \$430, and the benefit \$799. Cooper followed to \$618 nightly, with a benefit of \$788. The season closed with "Woodman's Hut," to \$701 and \$840. The average had been \$559 nightly. It will be seen by these sums that neither the good spirits nor good means of the Baltimore public had suffered materially by the near neighborhood of hostile armies or navies.

The tragedy of "Bertram" had proved highly attractive throughout the last season, in despite of a merciless attack upon its alleged immoral character. It may appear strange that a play written by a clergyman, authorized for performance by the Lord Chamberlain, and again revised by the licenser, a gentleman remarkable for his rigid treatment of pieces defective in moral tendency, should have become the object of so much remark and reproach, as it will be remembered by many that this piece was. These severe strictures were not confined to occasional essays or notices, but in our case, at least, proceeded from the pulpit, no doubt from the error of referring only to the original printed edition, unaware of the fact that every doubtful line or allusion had been carefully struck out by the licenser, whose authorized copy alone we followed. On one occasion the speaker became so much hurried away by a mistaken impression, as boldly to appeal to his audience, and ask what estimate could any one make of the feelings or the principles of that woman—of her perceptions of right or wrong—who could be found capable of representing the heroine of this shameful production. I know not whether the gentleman was aware that the unfortunate person who,



the week before, in discharge of her professional engagements, had been representing this character, was at the very time a regular member of his own congregation, and was seated on that Sunday, as she usually was, in her accustomed place at church, which was in close vicinity to the speaker, and in full view of every person present. The lady was the manager's wife. It is no part of my purpose to defend the play as we acted it. I am content with the approbation and support it continued to receive three successive seasons from persons whose approval is true praise.

Mr. Lewis, son of the late Mr. Lewis, of Covent Garden, made an unsuccessful appearance as Jeremy Diddler, Dr. Dablancour, and Ennui. A faint imitation of his father's manner failed to conceal the want of genius, or the disadvantages of a person not gracefully made. In all the true marks of genius which distinguished his elegant and accomplished father, he was wholly wanting.\* A recent English paper gives the

\* Mr. Lewis, the elder, for thirty-six years held the rank of "first gentleman comedian" on the British stage; and in his retiring address, proudly boasted that during so long a period of service, "it had never once been his misfortune to fall under the displeasure of the public," notwithstanding he held during a great portion of that time the difficult and unenviable post of manager. Although ranking as the ablest representative of high life and fashion in all their varieties, from the fops and fine gentlemen of last century, to the Goldfinch and Tom Shuffleton of later days, he was by no means confined to this line of parts, as he well evinced by his matchless portrait of Squire Groom, Prince of Wales, Marplot, Jeremy Diddler, &c. His performance of Ranger, Areher, Tom Shuffleton, the Copper Captain, &c., recall most pleasurable recollections of the British drama. Mr. Lewis took his final and regretted leave of the stage in the last named of these characters. By his talent and prudence he was enabled to leave a fortune of £55,000 to his family, notwithstanding the expenses of an elegant establishment, made necessary by his high associations and great public estimation. This favorite actor was a native of Dublin, where he remained until his provincial fame

following interesting bequest from a son of Lewis, an elder brother of the incompetent performer, of whom I have spoken. "From a wish to perpetuate the memory of one of the best of fathers, whose private worth and public merit were alike deservedly appreciated, I give and bequeath to the trustees of the National Gallery, the full-length portrait of my late dear father, painted by Martin Arthur Shee; and it is my particular request, that in consideration of the above-mentioned bequest (of ten thousand pounds) they will permanently provide some conspicuous and eligible situation in the National Gallery for said portrait, and preserve the same in good condition."

The portrait represents the celebrated comedian as the Marquis in "the Midnight Hour." The pecuniary legacy is directed to be invested in trust to pay the dividend to Miss Lewis, the testator's only surviving sister, for life, and at her death to be transferred to the "trustees of the National Gallery." This noble bequest does honor to the son of a distinguished actor and gentleman.

introduced him to a London audience, in the character of the West Indian. His debut was so successful, that he became at once the accepted high comedian of Covent Garden, and so continued for the remainder of his life.

## CHAPTER XI.

1817.

Betterton—Moderate success—Mrs. Glover—Incedon in Philadelphia—Perfect triumph—His most approved efforts—Silly introduction of songs—Phillip's first appearance in Philadelphia—Dwit's Bridge—Cooper's engagement—Malac—Phillip's second course—Pygmalion—Finn—His merit—Moderate attraction—Mr. White as Zanga—Innkeeper's Daughter—Winter scenes attractive—Caldwell from Charleston appears—A manager's miseries—Authors and actors—New version of Macbeth—Attempt at imposition—Young authors—Curious letter from one—Young theatrical aspirants—An instance or two.

THE arrival of Incedon and Phillips enabled us to present at Philadelphia, in 1817, an agreeable variety of entertainment in the performance of English Opera. In the ordinary drama, Mr. Betterton (father to Mrs. Glover) appeared as Lord Townley, Richard, Major O'Flaherty, Mercutio, and Othello, to moderate houses, and exciting little interest. The gentleman at an earlier day had maintained a distinguished position in the provinces, as a valuable and general actor. Cooper remembered him when he was quite a favorite as Richard. Time had now dealt hardly with his once fine person, which presented like his acting a sort of decayed condition or character. He was unable to reconcile himself to the inevitable penalties of age, and passed through several unpleasant differences with the managers of New York, and elsewhere. His avowed object in visiting America, was to effect engagements

temporary or otherwise for Mrs. Glover and her two daughters, at that time young ladies of much professional promise. The absence of regular authority from the lady, with the absurdly extravagant terms demanded, broke off all negotiation. The laborious custom of acting six nights now first commenced. The next actor in order was the far famed Incedon, so long the favorite of the British public. Great curiosity was excited by his announcement, and no small disappointment experienced at his rough and burly appearance. Some slight deterioration was perceived by those who had heard him in his earlier days, yet still so much remained of his fine powers and spirit, and so well established was his foreign fame, that crowds rushed to listen to him nightly. His first seven nights produced an average of \$912, the benefit \$1020. His attempts at acting had become more slovenly and ineffective than ever, hurrying through the dialogue at full speed, as if impatient to arrive at the songs. His acting in the "Quaker" was by far his most approved effort, while his singing of the part fully justified his high reputation. In Steven's great song of "The Storm" he greatly increased the effect by very appropriate action. As an instance of little attention to "keeping" among singers, he actually introduced "Hail Columbia," or the "Star of Washington," while acting Sir John Loverule in the "Devil to Pay." Phillips was beset by pressing requests to sing "Eveleen's Bower," while performing the Seraskien in the "Siege of Belgrade," and he gave no little offence by declining to comply with so strange a request.

The "Conquest of Taranto" was produced about this time at considerable expense, to nightly receipts

of \$612. The "Broken Sword" also proved quite attractive. Phillips now commenced with the "Devil's Bridge," new to our stage, and made memorable by Braham's (the original) uncommon excellence. The fine personal appearance of Phillips, so strongly in contrast with Incedon's ungainly figure and manner, greatly added to the pleasure of his performances. He was besides ranked high among the best singing actors, and in Young Medows, Lionel, and Lord Ainsworth, fully satisfied the audience. His reception and success was all he could have wished, and he became immediately a great favorite, which he continued to be throughout his whole career. The receipts of his first seven nights were equal to Incedon's \$914. Benefit \$1302.

As a rest from so long a series of opera, Cooper played seven nights to houses of \$713. Benefit \$983. A striking evidence of his unshaken popularity, following immediately the heavy attraction of the singers. During this engagement he added to his reputation by an able performance of Malac in the "Apostate." He was immediately succeeded by Phillip's second engagement of seven nights, averaging \$804, and benefit \$1373. A French pantomimist, Monsieur Givaud, greatly delighted the public by his performance of "Pygmalion," in a very pretty ballet of that name. This has always been remembered as one of the ablest efforts in that department ever exhibited on our stage. Finn, the excellent comedian, whose melancholy fate is familiar to most persons, first appeared here, in a range of tragic characters and to indifferent receipts. I might add, to indifferent audiences too, for they were unable to form a just estimate of his value, until he

charmed them in a list of his fine comic exhibitions at a later period. His houses were, "Hamlet" \$440, "Shylock" \$321, "Iron Chest" \$406, "Mountaineers" \$406, and benefit, "Macbeth," \$360. The "School for Scandal," with a changed cast, was played to a large house—Joseph Surface, BARRETT; Charles, WOOD. I had generally acted Joseph in Philadelphia, but these occasional variations of cast quite repaid the additional labor. Mr. White also first appeared as Zanga, in the "Revenge." The "Faro Table" was acted with but moderate success, comparing unfavorably with the same author's "Honey Moon" and "Curfew." Among the novelties produced, "The In-keeper's Daughter" and "The Snow Storm" proved the most fortunate. It was frequently remarked, that plays of winter scenery, as the "Exile," "Benyowsky," "Peter the Great," and "Snow Storm," were always agreeable to our audience. Mrs. Anderson, late Miss Jefferson, was now added to the company, and shortly reached a high place in public favor. With these large attractions our nightly receipts reached \$641, throughout the season. The benefits \$837 each.

I ought here to add, that during our spring season at Baltimore, Mr. Caldwell, from the Charleston theatre, acted a few nights with great approbation in the characters of Romeo, The Liar, Florian and Three Singles.

Not the least among a manager's numerous annoyances may be classed the incessant importunities of unfledged authors, and aspiring young ladies and gentlemen. The folly and presumption of these would readily fill a volume. Of the former, an instance or two may not be unamusing. While my friend Wignell

and myself were at our morning breakfast (the usual hour of unwelcome visitors), a well dressed person of middle age was ushered in, as calling upon "important business." A ponderous roll of paper under his arm, led to a well founded suspicion that he might prove to be an author. Such, indeed, was the fact, under some qualification as will be seen. After briefly stating his object, he unfolded the mighty mass of paper destined for trial of poor Wignell's patience, and announced his work under this sounding title, "The tragedy of Macbeth." The manager delicately suggesting a doubt whether a subject treated by Shakspeare with more than even his usual genius, might not prove a dangerous experiment in other hands, was drily answered by an assurance, that the present effort was intended as a compliment and advantage to the great bard. A warm eulogy on Shakspeare's general merits followed, with, however, an essential reserve. All due praise was awarded to the general structure of his plays, his delineations of character and customs, "but these merits were unhappily obscured by an antiquated and obsolete phraseology, wholly unsuited to modern taste. Many of his scenes and passages were barbarous and unintelligible to the masses, from the rough and ungraceful language in which they were given." To remedy this serious defect, our friend had actually translated Shakspeare's poetry into very common-place prose, and on this novel production he demanded a trial of public judgment. Even Wignell's gentle nature could scarcely receive this vandal attack with calmness enough to get rid of him civilly. It is probable that Shakspeare's bitter denunciation of him who should "disturb his bones" would scarcely have been

softened in favor of this desecration of his immortal verses.

Another and far less respectable attempt followed. In 1820, a slovenly looking young man of about eighteen called to offer a play, as he stated, for perusal, and acceptance if approved. Being much engaged at the moment, I requested that the manuscript might be left for a day or two, fixing the time for a decision. Some hours after, a kind of curiosity was excited by the appearance of the author, to ascertain some knowledge of his production, well remembering that bright genius has been often obscured for a time by a dirty face. It is but fair to state also, that some of the most able attempts at dramatic writing presented to us were the effusions of young and laborious persons. This may appear strange, but it is strictly true. On opening the manuscript, a few lines convinced me that the piece was not the product of a common mind, while a glimmering of recollection confused and bewildered me. A few pages, however, opened the whole secret. The manuscript was neither more nor less than a literal copy, word for word, of the admirable and highly finished comedy of the "Heiress," by General Burgoyne, so well known in our Revolutionary history. Not a sentence, not a word had been changed. It is well known to most readers, that this play for years ranked in the highest class of elegant comedy. Horne Tooke, a high authority, placed it among the most finished examples of this class of writing. The change of manners had thrown it aside with many others of great value, and this foolish youth probably never suspected the manager of reading a play which he did not seem to think worth acting, and that any



well-written piece might be acceptable. On his second visit, made to receive the decision, he was merely asked, "Is this play of your writing, sir?" "Yes, sir; I wrote it myself." "Did you compose it?" "Yes, sir." "What I mean is, did you invent the story and characters, and compose the language and dialogue of the persons represented?" "Yes, sir." "Now observe, young man," I was compelled of course to add, "in what a disgraceful position you have placed yourself. Look at this"—presenting to him a printed copy of the play, which I had among others in my library where we were—"here is the piece which you have attempted to impose as your own." This exposure, as may be imagined, threw the young man into a pitiable state of confusion and distress, from which he could only be relieved by a friendly assurance that his discreditable attempt should be overlooked and concealed on the promise of future good conduct. Of the offender and his fair promises I never heard again. It is not impossible, I should be willing to think, that his mind had been somewhat disturbed, but there was no such indication in his manner nor aspect.

Cases like these were easily disposed of. A greater difficulty was the rejection of many well written pieces, the production of educated, accomplished persons, who in the ardor of composing well-turned verses or dialogue, wholly overlooked the necessity of their fitness for representation.

Then there was the numerous class of deluded young persons, whose vanity and folly were cherished by injudicious friends, or not unfrequently by concealed enemies, for the purpose of exposing them to ridicule. The most extraordinary artifices were resorted to by

some of these writers—flattery, bribes, and ferocious threats were tried alike. Rare books were not unfrequent offerings. Innumerable were the cautions received against incurring a suspicion of undue partiality towards *foreign* productions, to the injury and neglect of native genius. The danger of losing public and private patronage, the alienation of devoted friends and admirers, even dark hints at personal resentments, were often suggested. Most absurd panegyrics in prose and verse were sometimes lavished in praise of the manager's professional talent, and domestic virtues of every possible kind. Frequently flattering allusions to some of his most approved personations heralded the request for acceptance of a five-act tragedy. The following letter, not altogether unaffecting in its allusions to the writer's misfortunes, exhibits the variety of pretexts and claims resorted to, in order to obtain a chance for dramatic immortality. The ingenious reference to the critical power and influence of the writer is not the least peculiar feature. As a quarter of a century has elapsed since its date, and its author I believe is dead, and at any rate can never be discovered or conjectured, no indelicacy I hope can well be imputed to its present insertion.

*Philadelphia, July 26th, 1818.*

W. B. Wood, Esq.

*Dear Sir*—The coincidence of your early life with that of my own, induces me to apply to you for leave to seek that real asylum for unfortunate genius—the stage.

In soliciting a situation in your establishment, I do it not without some pretensions to talents. Not, indeed, such pretensions as some of my brother Philadelphians presume on; as they wish to begin at the very top of a profession, the most arduous and difficult in which to arrive at mere mediocrity. I wish to commence near the bottom, and if by study, perseverance and industry, I may ever be able to reach the

top, I shall then perhaps have the satisfaction of reaping the honest reward of untiring exertions, a reward, which, judging by yourself, is always bestowed on the meritorious.

By the diploma I hand with this, you will perceive that I received the principal part of my English education, under the tuition of that excellent scholar and orator the Rev. Dr. Abercrombie. That I have proved no discredit to my preceptor, has been fully tested to the public, as I have, at different times, had the honor of conducting two periodical Journals in this city, which received a considerable portion of patronage, and were kindly spoken of by editors in almost every State in the Union.

One great object in wishing to join your company, is to become completely acquainted with the business of the stage, in order that I may be better qualified to pursue my favorite pursuit, as a dramatic writer. One piece, which I am now correcting and preparing for the stage, founded on an event in the life of Washington, whilst encamped at West Point during the Revolutionary war, has received the most flattering encomiums from a London dramatist, now in this country; and when duly prepared, will be presented to you for your final judgment on it. I am also writing a *Petit Piece*, in order to introduce Mr. Munoy's interesting little daughter in several characters. On the affecting and pathetic ballad of "Auld Robin Gray," I have founded a musical piece, in which some of the finest Scotch airs may be introduced with effect.

The poetry written on seeing you play Rouben Glenroy, was composed upwards of twelve years ago, when I was but fifteen years old.

As you have engaged Mr. Roberts, who is without doubt a second Jefferson, I would undertake to furnish him with an original comic song, or humorous address weekly. In short, if I am so fortunate as to receive an engagement from you, I shall use my best endeavours to make myself (what I am confident I would prove to be) a useful member of the company.

I may, perhaps, have pursued a wrong course in taking this method of soliciting employment from you; but when you consider that I have a wife and child depending on me for support, you will no doubt excuse my aberration from the usual mode.

I was, not long since, enjoying the full tide of prosperity, but one shipwreck, and three bad voyages to the West Indies stripped me of my all, and has left me nought to depend on but the talents with which heaven was pleased to endow me.

I will call on you in the beginning of the week, and sincerely hope, will be able to enter into an arrangement with you, as I anxiously wait for employment.

Have you not seen the sunny morn,  
O'erclouded ere mid-day?  
And all its brightest clouds, in scorn  
Swept by the gale away!

That sunny morn, was like my youth,  
 When all seemed bright and fair ;  
 When fortune smiled, and love, and truth,  
 Did soothe my every care.

But when misfortune's storm swept o'er,  
 My early morn of light,  
 Friendship, alas ! I found no more,  
 To cheer my hope's sad blight.

Have you not seen the sapling bend,  
 Beneath the storm's rude stroke ?  
 And raised up by some kind friend,  
 Become a mighty oak ?

May I not hope that you will prove,  
 A kindly friend to me ?  
 That I once more may feel and move,  
 As freed from penury !

The lines enclosed by the writer were the following:

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING MR. WOOD PLAY "REUBEN GLENROY."

Plain, honest, Reuben ! rough, yet good,  
 Thou'rt portrayed happily by Wood ;  
 None other can, with equal grace,  
 The child of nature truly trace.

In him the candid lover see,  
 With bosom open, honest, free !  
 Bless'd with a heart devoid of guile,  
 His chiefest joy, is Ros'lies smile.

And now with safety, staff in hand,  
 On the rude mountain see him stand !  
 With purpose bold, his manly form,  
 Braves all the peltings of the storm.

From yawning chasms—fearful steeps—  
 (Whilst o'er his head the tempest sweeps)  
 Benighted travellers to save,  
 Behold him ev'ry danger brave.

Mark! when the ingrate whom he saved  
 With grossest villany behaved,  
 His noble heart, though almost broke,  
 A manly feeling only spoke.

And now let woe or weal betide,  
 With honest Cosey for his guide,  
 See him to London straight repair,  
 To snatch a brother from despair.

Behold him now, with heart elate,  
 Receiving Ros'lie and ostate,  
 Restored as 'twere again to life,  
 He saves a brother—gains a wife.

O, Wood! thine is the gift to trace  
 Each human passion in thy face;  
 Thy actions spring from nature's laws,  
 And always must command applause.

The importunities of valued friends in favor of inexperienced persons of both sexes, have ever proved a source of unspeakable annoyance to managers. Scores of instances might be given where a rejection was deemed an affront to the patron. Occasionally a few of these unprepared and ungifted pretenders, armed with extraordinary recommendations, were reluctantly allowed to exhibit their insufficiencies, and as may be expected, to the amusement or contempt of the audience. The insolence and eccentric freaks of some of them were equally vexatious and amusing. I will only recall a few instances. During the reign of *infant actors*, a lad of some eleven or twelve years introduced himself, bearing a letter from a highly valued New York friend, to whom I felt myself obliged for several acts of kindness in earlier days. The letter recommended its bearer to my good offices, as a young person (in the judgment of friends) possessing remarka-

ble promise of future excellence on the stage. After a struggle between old friendship and public duties, the former prevailed, and a trial night was appointed. Our embarrassment was by no means lessened, on learning that the desired debut must be made as Octavian, a character which has so often foiled the best efforts of eminent performers. The young aspirant saw no danger and felt no fears. The absurdity of a little boy's squeaking out the sorrows of a frantic lover, who had been for years the lonely resident of a forest, passed without particular notice, until an interference of the Moor Sadi with the sacredness of his solitude, leads to an encounter with an armed man, who sustains a sudden and utter defeat. A slight titter only rewarded this lilliputian feat, the Moor (Jefferson) being himself of rather moderate size. But in the last scene, where a similar triumph is to be achieved also, over a warlike veteran well armed, the ridiculous situation of the contending parties seemed at once to strike the audience. It happened that this second victim to the prowess of the little mad boy, was represented by an actor approaching six feet in height. Encumbered by his ponderous moorish robes he presented of course a strong as well as strange contrast to the little ragged and half naked child standing over him, wielding the large sabre wrested from his fallen foe; the young victor leaping and placing his small foot on his enemy's chest with the most exaggerated expression of triumph. This warlike evolution concluded the play with shouts.

On another occasion, a slight dandified young man, fortified by numerous influential recommendations from persons of reputed judgment, made a bold at-

tempt at fame as Romeo. Well educated, and evidently conscious of the value of his text, he indulged himself in the most strange and eccentric illustrations of it. New readings occurring in every scene, were sheltered from uncivil notice by the apparent zeal and enthusiasm of the young actor. In the last scene, at the death of the hero by poison, he appeared to resign himself to his fate, and was duly applauded, according to custom. Juliet, who, in despair, was about to throw herself upon the lifeless body, was startled by a sudden restoration of the "seeming dead," accompanied by a loud whisper, "I'm not dead yet." This unexpected announcement was followed by a renewed series of expiring evolutions, which continued until abruptly ended by the jeers of an exhausted audience.

We have all read with delight Beresford's "Miseries of Human Life," with mingled feelings of mirth and sadness. During a tedious European voyage, the passengers beguiled the heavy hours by concocting an idle manuscript illustrative of the miseries of the Sea. All these, however, sink into insignificance by the side of a manager's vexations. A voyage after a while is forgotten. Its miseries are succeeded by transports in the moment of its close, and a happy restoration to the comforts of home and friends. But the wretched manager toils on without hope of relief, even from time itself, with the bitter conviction that two out of every three disappointed applicants become active enemies. The truth of this position has been often painfully confirmed through a long professional life. I should, indeed, have been almost willing, had I consulted nothing but my own inclinations, to allow these

*debutants* to gratify their foolish aspirations. For even where the performance was ridiculous, the audience might be amused, but no one but an actor can tell what mortifications these crude attempts inflict on *the regular and respectable performers doing corresponding parts*, who are placed in a position where they must either render *themselves* ridiculous—a thing some of them have no ambition to do—or work through the play with a vexation unintelligible to their auditors. The manager under whose control they are, and to whose success implicit obedience on their part in the discharge of *casts* is indispensable, certainly has no right to disregard so grossly their feelings and reputation. The frequent murderous attempts on the character of Romeo by novices, had rendered the performance of Juliet wholly undesirable to the leading actresses, who on more than one occasion voluntarily relinquished it, in preference to being exposed to the ridicule of the audience by some unfledged youngster; and this may possibly be one reason of a fact well known to managers, that this play rarely attracts a large audience, even when supported by superior talent.



## CHAPTER XII.

1817-1818.

Betterton, Cooper, and Inledon at Baltimore—Phillips—Blissett's return—His value—Mrs. Darley's first appearance for six years—Wheatley from Dublin—His peculiarities—Herbert—Rage for acting Richard—Baltimore benefit—James Wallack, Jr.—Appearance at Baltimore—Henry Wallack—Red Riding Hood—Hughes—Mrs. H. Wallack—The green man—J. Wallack at Philadelphia—Great success—Duff for five nights in Opera—Mr. and Mrs. Bartley—A close criticism—J. Wallack's imitations—The Wyandott Chiefs, and an Indian address—The Libertine—Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania—Wood's benefit—Payne's Brutus.

THE Baltimore autumn season of 1817 affords little worthy of special notice. Betterton acted four nights to moderate houses. On one of these, "Maturin," by Shield, was produced with little effect, badly cast, and feebly acted. Cooper in ten nights averaged \$530, and at his benefit received \$853. Inledon followed with nine operas, \$550 each, and a benefit of \$939; closing the season successfully to average receipts of \$539.

The spring season of 1818 presented little novelty beyond the first engagement of Phillips for seven nights. These averaged \$508, with a benefit of \$637. He renewed his engagement to less receipts for three nights. The season averaged \$446. The autumn affords more interest by the return of Blissett from a western tour,

which he had made in search of health. We were now enabled to give Dr. Caius, Dablancour, Mons. Le Medecin, Mock Duke, Sheepface, and many other parts, in a manner which had not been practicable during his absence, for although his list was very limited, yet his temporary loss was severely felt, and, indeed, could not be made up. Mr. and Mrs. Darley now rejoined us, after an absence of six years. Wheatley, from the Dublin theatre, appeared (first time in America) in the two parts of the Stranger and Petruchio. This performer, a correct and sensible speaker, had in his acting a quaint solemnity of manner, often approaching to the ludicrous. Had he been allowed to appear as he wished in Richard, this would surely have proved his first and last appearance; but having been engaged, through a negotiation conducted by Phillips, for two years, it became necessary for the managers to guard against a rage which was then prevalent, and which had also seized him, to appear as Richard.\* The mania of appearing in particular characters is often vexatious to the manager. Richard, as I have intimated, was the epidemic at this time. And Herbert, a respectable actor in comic old men, for which he was expressly engaged, insisted as others also had, on the privilege of opening in the part of Shakspeare's tyrant. In the case of Herbert, this mad prank was resisted by the managers, unless the party should be willing to test his future value by this night's experiment. He

\* Kean's wonderful success, particularly in Richard, had set half the provincial actors tragedy mad to exhibit themselves in this arduous character. No less than three performers during this year were prevented from blighting their future prospects by a rash attempt to rival the little great man of Drury Lane.

chose the safer course, and appeared as Sir Able Handy with credit. Indeed, as comedy was the line in which alone he sought to establish a reputation, nothing could have been more ill judged than to injure his reasonable prospect there by an absurd attempt in tragedy.

The 12th of September, 1818, the anniversary of the battle of Baltimore, was devoted to a benefit in aid of the widows and families of the brave men who fell on that day. The receipts of the night were worthy of the occasion. During the season, James Wallack first appeared as Macbeth, Pizarro, Hamlet, Coriolanus, and Octavian, to an average of \$441; Richard, which he took for his benefit, brought \$654. Cooper followed in four nights, averaging \$485 each; benefit \$875. Henry Wallack also first appeared in America during this season as Othello, a part ill chosen, and more so from his persisting to make him a black, in a place where the general practice prevailed of showing him a tawny Moor. This excellent actor, by an injudicious pertinacity in acting Richard or Othello, made an unfavorable impression in Baltimore, which required some little time to efface. His after performances in melodramatic parts as Daran, Roderic Dhu, Rob Roy, Ethiop, and Don Juan, obtained him the favorable estimate hazarded by his first attempt. At Philadelphia he was persuaded to a more judicious choice on his first appearance. The "Libertine," as produced at Covent Garden, was selected and given with care, H. Wallack as Don Juan. It succeeded well. This was the third edition of the Don's adventures offered on the American stage. "Bellamira," by Shield, obtained little praise. Reynold's "How to grow Rich,"

was revived and well acted. "Where to find a Friend," closed the season of four hundred and twenty-on nights. I must not omit to mention the pretty little ballet of "Red Riding Hood," executed by the Abercrombies to very general satisfaction. This trifle actually enriched the treasury. A benefit in aid of the Baltimore monument fund produced \$735.

The protracted season of 1818 afforded at Philadelphia, where we now went, an unusual variety of talent and entertainment. Wheatley, who was still harping upon "Richard III.," reluctantly consented to appear in the character of Shylock, and made an equivocal impression. Hughes, an industrious and useful man, was favorably received as Valencio, in the "Conquest of Taranto," and proved a valuable acquisition to the company. Herbert, now eschewing Richard, which he had aimed at, made a tolerable fair effort as Job Thornberry and Robin Roughhead. Henry Wallack also, by changing his ground, and renouncing particular characters for which he was not so well suited, appeared with general approbation in Pescara, and other melo-dramatic characters. Mrs. H. Wallack, an agreeable dancer, gave great satisfaction in the ballet of "Love among the Roses." This branch of art she soon after relinquished in favor of the regular drama, where she was quickly received as an approved representative of the young ladies in farces. A revival of "Forty Thieves," at this time, strengthened by the occasional appearance of a white camel, or some sagacious elephant, proved nearly as attractive as on its first production. Cooper made his accustomed visit, and averaged \$675 for eleven nights, with a benefit of \$964. He now appeared for two nights to

houses of \$945 and \$1113, in a pleasant little comedy from the French, called "The Green Man." Mrs. Wood appeared (first time) as Lady Macbeth, with much approbation. J. Wallack fulfilled a successful round of thirteen nights to an average of \$640, with a first benefit of \$1520 and a second one of \$718. His popularity thus convincingly established, remained unimpaired during a long series of years. Among the novelties of the season was Maywood, afterwards well known, and who acted Shylock, Othello, Sir E. Mortimer, and Sir Giles Overreach, to \$380, \$269, \$281, \$249, and King Lear for his benefit to \$404. Duff now acted five nights, on three of which he appeared as Count Belenio, and to an average of \$602, a powerful evidence of how much he remained an object of favor. An important feature of the season was the advent of Mr. and Mrs. Bartley, of acknowledged celebrity. The lady appeared as Belvidera, but not with so much success as she might have gained by the selection of a part of less gentleness. A strongly marked countenance, and a commanding person, were unfavorable to a successful portrait of this timid and delicate character. In the "Ode of the Passions," which followed, as a recitation, these personal requisites were nobly useful in her fine delineation. This performance seemed actually to improve upon the audience with each of her repetitions of it. Bianca, Euphrasia, Julia, in "Deaf and Dumb," Mrs. Oakley, and Madame Clermont might be cited as her most approved efforts. On her benefit night, Mrs. Bartley recited a poem written expressly for her by Thomas Moore, Esq., called "A Monologue," expressive of the effect of national music upon national character,

in which "will be introduced the airs of green Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, and America." Bartley was more successful than his lady, and continued so till the last. His Falstaff at once established him with the public, and by a judicious variety he became quite attractive. The receipts of the two averaged for eleven nights \$556, their benefits \$918 and \$792.

An instance of close criticism was elicited by the performance of Murphy's "Grecian Daughter." A gentleman of much worth, but some peculiarities, waged fierce war on every occasion against everything like plagiarism, or even like imitation. In this spirit he ingeniously discovered that too free use had been made of one of John Randolph's eloquent figures, found in an address of his connected with the subject of servile insurrections. Mr. Randolph's language ran nearly thus: "At the first stroke of the alarm bell, every Virginian arms in haste; while each mother clasps her infant closer to her bosom." Murphy, in the play says, in describing the horrors of a siege: "The iron ranks of war, from which the shepherd retires appalled, leaves the blasted hopes of half the harvest; *while closer to her breast the mother clasps her infant.*" Upon this ground an elaborate article showing Murphy's plagiarism was composed, and sent to the manager. The author of the article, whose knowledge of dramatic chronology was not so remarkable as his memory of similar expressions, was informed that the publication of the "Grecian Daughter" had rather *preceded* the address of the great orator. And as the criticism might not have proved Murphy to have been so much of a plagiarist as was intended, these strictures, which were especially designed for the press,

were carefully suppressed. Wallack renewed his engagement for seven additional nights, and gave with great approbation Rolla, Don Felix, Bertram, Richard II., Walter, Sylvester, Daggerwood, Michael Dashall, and on his benefit the following imitations, Kemble as Rolla, Munden as Peter in "The Cabinet," Betty as Young Norval, Matthews as Buskin, Rae as Ordonio, Cooke as Richard, Fawcett and Blanchard in "John Bull," Kean as Shylock, and Inledon as Hawthorn. Our bills announced at this time a savage show, in these terms :

FIVE CELEBRATED WYANDOTT CHIEFS.

HORDA-SHOW-TEE,	TA-YOU-RO-WAT,
NA-NI-LU-DU,	SY-U-SHAES,
MAN-DU-SHAU-QUAN.	

They will appear habited in the exact costume and arms of their country, and exhibit under the direction of the interpreter.

AN ADDRESS TO THE AUDIENCE, IN THE WYANDOTT TONGUE, BY A CHIEF.

A WAR DANCE,

Expressive of adulation to the God of war, with the speech of petition. Seneca Dance, Chiefs' Grand Council, dance and speech. Green Corn, or National Dance. Buffalo Dance, or Dance of Plenty. Brag Dance, and War Speech. Mode of taking Prisoners. Dance of Courtship, and Speech of Peace.

The "Libertine," to which we returned after our savages had departed, produced only \$553 and \$253. "Rob Roy" brought \$989, \$469 and \$441. A benefit in aid of the funds of the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge, produced a receipt of \$950. Bartley acted "Sir Fretful Plagiary" and "Puff," on the same night. The season closed with Payne's "Brutus," first time, for Wood's benefit, to a receipt of \$1308; the nightly average during the season had been \$555, and 22 benefits brought \$769 each.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1819-1822.

The Bartleys—Admired by a select audience, though few—Cooper and Bartley—Mr. Keene a singer—Effect produced by similarity of two sisters—Warren has a poor benefit, and is obliged to ask a second one, which was worse than the former, and no benefit at all—White the Elocutionist—Astounding intelligence—Our Chestnut Street Theatre in flames, and soon after level with the ground—The labours of a life lost in an hour—Conjectures as to the cause of the catastrophe—A retrospect, and notice of an early favorite of this theatre—Poor season in Baltimore—We open in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street House—Our announcement—Master Edwin Forrest, then sixteen years old, is introduced to us and appears for the first time—His first benefit unlike most of his subsequent ones—Is sent West—Our good auguries of him—Alarm of the public about the safety of our building—Address to the public fortified with threefold certificates—The alarm subsides—Kean appears and is greatly attractive—Mrs. Alsop, a daughter of Mrs. Jordan—Her melancholy and interesting fate—Kean in Baltimore—A reprehensible custom, and some notice of Kean—Omnidana, including a bold essay, being one in favor of Monopolies.

PAYNE'S "Brutus" proved eminently successful among his old admirers, and in the Baltimore spring season of 1819 was acted by the stock company to \$919, \$512, and \$526. The Bartleys were not attractive generally; although highly approved by the select few who witnessed their efforts. Their houses were only \$280 per night, and Hamlet, by Mrs. Bartley, for the benefit, \$541. The season proved barely a safe one.

Cooper and Bartley in the Baltimore fall season of this year had each been well approved, as the "Green



Man;" and Jefferson following them gained favor by giving a totally different manner and character. Mrs. Entwistle, after an absence of two years, now appeared as Beatrice. Blissett and Herbert, as Richard and Richmond for their benefit, to \$472. Brutus continued attractive, and with the "Heart of Mid Lothian," strengthened a feeble season materially. Cooper played seven nights to receipts of \$532. Marmion, first time here, to \$969. His benefit \$575. Mr. Keene, a singer of some reputation, appeared as Belino, Paul, Henry Bertram, and Carlos in Duenna with partial success. The Bartleys, after seven nights of moderate attraction, closed a languid season.

Keene the singer opened the season of 1819-20, at Philadelphia, to houses of \$375 and a benefit of \$647. A night for the Baltimore poor produced \$516. Cooper came next for ten nights, and first appeared here as Marmion; the average only \$530, benefit \$575. An important falling off was now apparent, and fresh energies were applied to keep up receipts. The Bartleys were still less fortunate; their nightly receipts being only \$335, Mrs. Bartley acting Hamlet on her night to \$1041. J. Wallack announced a farewell engagement of ten nights, during which he acted very finely Omreah, in Horace Twiss's tragedy of "The Carib Chief." The average \$326, and benefit (last appearance in America) \$1106. A night in aid of the Savannah sufferers produced \$572. The numerous novelties which we produced this season proved that there was no want of provocation to public support. The "Heart of Mid Lothian" received unusual applause and attention. This melancholy story was exceedingly well dramatized, with a faithfulness few

of the author's novels have been so fortunate as to find. A pleasing effect was produced by the strong resemblance between the sisters, Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Darley. This feature, aided by a careful attention to costume, served to increase the impression, made by a well-arranged cast of the piece. In a more prosperous season it would have enriched the treasury, but unfortunately fell upon times which forbade more than moderate success. Having felt compelled to speak somewhat irreverently of Wheatley's performance of tragic parts, I am now gratified, by the duty of recording his excellence in the part of old Davie Deans. The audience generously marked his ability, on this occasion, which I am inclined to believe won him a more favorable opinion, than all his previous efforts had obtained. Noah's amusing play of "She would be a Soldier," or the battle of Chippewa, written for Miss Lee Sugg, afterwards Mrs. Hackett, was produced this season with great care and expense. Our military manœuvres were regulated by a portion of United States troops stationed near us, which mainly contributed to our success. Miss Fanny Wright's tragedy of Altorf was received with general approbation; Cooper coming from New York for the night to appear as Altorf. The benefits shared in the general depression, and fell greatly below former seasons. Warren tempted the public by an entertainment, consisting of five acts, from as many different plays of Shakspeare. This failed to \$427, and he suffered the humiliation of being compelled to submit the following appeal.

#### MR. WARREN'S BENEFIT.

Mr. Warren presents his respectful compliments to his friends and patrons of the drama, and begs leave to offer his name for a second

night. That which was intended for his benefit on the 3d of January, having proved wholly unproductive, he has been induced by some of his old friends to make this second effort, in the hope that he may receive a share of that patronage which, even in this failing season, has not been withheld from others, and surely

“’Tis no sin for a man  
To labor in his vocation.”—FALSTAFF.

This second attempt on the 25th February, 1820, yielded only a receipt of \$274. H. Wallack’s benefit, postponed on account of a storm, was renewed, and the second trial brought \$1162. Fredolfo was again tried, and failed. Mr. White, an elocutionist, known to persons careful in pronunciation by a useful little lexicon of words often *mis*-pronounced, made a second appearance as Octavian. Blissett and Herbert’s benefit offered the two comedians as Richard and Richmond, while Blissett strengthened the night by reciting the story of “The Dutch Milkman and his Monkey.” This dispiriting season, after bringing out unusual novelties, closed to a heavy losing average of \$399. Among the new pieces were “Wanted, a Wife,” “Roland for an Oliver,” “Falls of Clyde,” “Helpless Animals,” “Robinson Crusoe,” “Short Reign and a Merry One,” “Battle of Hexam,” “Belles without Beaux,” entirely acted by ladies, “Jew of Lubbeck,” and the last night with the “Ruffian Boy,” to \$627. The drooping character of this season made it evident that important changes and acquisitions would be necessary in order to commence the coming year with any chance of success. Frequent occurrence of snow, which made fine sleighing throughout the winter, proved very detrimental to our attractions, which to many were exceeded by the attraction of sleighing parties. I may here say, that any specific cause of excitement

without, tells immediately on the house; whether the cause of the excitement be pleasurable or otherwise. In regard to sleighing, particularly on fine moonlight nights, the experience of this year confirms that of former years, and proved that this amusement cost the theatre at least \$150 per night.

Notwithstanding occasional languor, and such small losses as I have spoken of, we had now for five years or more passed a safe and even course; using every occasional profit that occurred in liquidation of claims growing out of former losses, and the large sums necessary to completing and furnishing the Baltimore house, providing gas for both cities, and other heavy expenditure. At this moment we were overtaken by a calamity, which once more threw all our plans into confusion and distress. Our Philadelphia season closing on the 29th of March, the company repaired to Baltimore for the usual spring term. We commenced cheerfully, on the 3d of April, with "Wild Oats" and "Ruffian Boy," notwithstanding a severe snow storm. On the succeeding morning I was awakened at an unusually early hour, by a visit from our old property-man, Charley Ward, who will be remembered by all persons that visited the theatre any time within twenty years of the date I am speaking of. He presented, silently, a number of letters, which rather perplexed me, as I had so recently left home, where Mrs. Wood's illness now detained my family. The first I glanced at bore an extra superscription. It ran thus:

*Philadelphia, April 3d, 1820.*

DEAR WOOD:

This letter bears sad news for you. Early last evening your beautiful theatre was wholly consumed by fire, Yours,

RICHARD BACHE, *Post Master.*

Warren was apprised of our misfortune by letters from home, and hastened to meet me, that we might decide what course it was necessary to pursue. Altering the order of plays for a few nights, we hastened to Philadelphia, in time to witness the last wall topple to the ground, and the smoking ruins of our favorite house. The destruction was so complete that the green-room mirror, a beautiful model of a ship, and the prompter's clock, were alone preserved. The expensive gas works shared the common fate. It is not generally known that the *stockholder's* property consisted of the walls alone. The scenery, lights, wardrobe, and other appointments having been purchased from them by the managers some years before. The loss was very great, as the property had been liberally augmented and improved through a long series of years. The most irretrievable part, was the splendid English scenery, presented to Wignell in 1793 by Richards, Hodges and Rooker, artists of the first reputation in their day. The wardrobe was of great extent, including the whole of the dresses from Lord Barrymore's theatre, as well as those from a French establishment recently purchased. The library and music were of an extent and value unknown to any other American theatre. Two grand pianos, costing 100 guineas each, a noble organ, used in the "Castle Spectre," and other chapel scenes, and models of scenery and machinery, imported at a large cost, swelled the sum of our misfortune. The appointments of every kind were most ample and complete.

It has been a question whether we were prudent in accumulating so much property, and of so perilous a character. It is necessary to state, that until within a

few months of the disaster we had been guarded by insurance to a considerable amount, but the frequency of fires, as well as alarms, rendered the offices reluctant to venture on the risk of theatres and certain dangerous manufactories; and while we were actively engaged in applications to different offices here and elsewhere, our policy expired. The stockholders were more fortunate, for their insurance fully covered their loss. I must add that notice had been given to them that the risk would be declined at the termination of the policy, which would have occurred a month or two after the date of the conflagration.

The destruction was by many imputed to the malice of an incendiary. This charge, however, is liable to much doubt, as being wholly unsupported by any probable evidence. Every possible inquiry and investigation failed to give to the greatest sufferers, the managers, the slightest reason to believe it any other than the result of accident. The corner of the building on Carpenter street, nearest to which the fire first appeared, had long been appropriated to the use of a fire company, and the latticed window of this apartment looked full upon the staircase of our theatre, which part of the building was first on fire. It is therefore more reasonable to believe that, during the frequent alarms of fire which occurred about this time, a spark might have fallen from the lanterns or torches usually hung upon this latticed window, and smouldered for some time. The house was so easily accessible on every other side of the building, that an incendiary would scarcely have hazarded discovery by using for his purpose a place visited almost hourly by some one of the fire companies. It is remarkable that the occu-

pants of the refectory, immediately adjoining the engine house, were annoyed the whole day by a strong smell of fire, without any one thinking to look in upon the theatre. The season had closed on the previous Thursday, and no person had entered it after Friday. On this day at noon a party of ladies and gentlemen arriving after the close of the season, and desirous of seeing the building, were shown through every part of it. This party, the last visitors who ever entered it, included Generals Scott and Brown, and several ladies. The spring season of Baltimore, about to commence, just before the fire took place, being a short one, a very small portion only of the wardrobe, books, music, and properties had been removed thither, the bulk being left at Philadelphia; the loss consequently was very great. After the destruction of Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres, the complete orchestra parts of many operas were only to be found in this theatre. On this night Mr. Warren and I lost all that we possessed, and with the burning of this theatre we saw sink the toilsome earnings of twenty years. Despair, however, was not the fashion of the time, and in a few hours after a lease was offered by the proprietors of the Walnut street theatre (or rather circus), upon such liberal terms, and in so kind and generous a manner, as to leave on our minds a most respectful and lasting impression. The lease was concluded for eight years.

Before taking leave of our favorite theatre, I am tempted in this place to offer an humble record of a person so closely connected with it in early times, and so much an ornament of it, that his name comes almost inseparably before me, with the memory of this now

departed theatre. They both now form, alike, a part of the past. I refer to Moreton, the comedian, a performer who, having died in the close of the last century, can scarcely be remembered by many of my readers, but whom many persons now deceased, but not less capable than any still living to appreciate high merit, constantly recalled with the liveliest emotions. His bright though short dramatic career, and his fine, elegant and engaging traits of personal deportment and character, left upon all who were acquainted with him the deepest and most agreeable impression.

Of his early history not much was ever known in the theatre. His father, a Mr. Pollard, (for this was the real name of the family,) was engaged in some British military capacity, during our Revolution, in the neighborhood of Saratoga, New York, where the future comedian received his birth. How long this continued to be the residence of his family cannot now be ascertained. It is certain, however, that the present subject, as well as an elder brother, passed his youth in England, receiving all the advantages of an excellent education. At a proper age he was placed in a counting-house, and carefully instructed in the art and mystery of commerce. By means of his father's influence, who, it is to be supposed, from the circumstance, was of some consideration, he was fitted out for India, placed in the Bank of Calcutta, and speedily raised to such a station of high responsibility, as proved in the end the source of deepest misfortune to him, and cast him back once more, to yield his last breath in the same land where he drew his first. Mr. William Green, an actor of respectable talents, and well received in this city for many years, who also



engaged in some commercial capacity in Calcutta about the same period, knew Moreton well, and has frequently given the writer instances of the high estimation he held, both as a public officer and a gentleman. The British Government, it is known, in those days firmly refused permission to form a theatrical establishment at Calcutta. This prohibition was so rigidly enforced, that the military officers, finding their circle of amusements painfully circumscribed by the climate and arduous duties, determined to repay themselves for their disappointment by creating an amateur theatrical establishment, and furnishing performers from their own number. Among these histrionics, Moreton and Green figured prominently, particularly the former, whose attractions on these boards probably led to the adoption, as a profession, of a pursuit at first assumed merely for a recreation. Unhappily for Moreton, his heart was gentle and kind, almost to weakness. A peculiar generosity of character marked him to the latest period of his life. Proud and honorable himself, he never for a moment suspected deception or artifice in another. What was his exact position in the bank is not now known, more than that it constituted some branch of the cashiership, and placed large sums under his control. A highly valued friend on one occasion fell into temporary embarrassment, although possessed of extensive means. The fear of some blemish on his credit led him to the thought of momentary irregularity, feeling a perfect confidence that no danger of either character or interest could possibly attach to his friend. When the case was explained to Moreton, and he felt satisfied that the relief for a few hours would save the commercial credit of

one he so highly valued, (besides being fully secured from injury,) in an easy but luckless hour he suffered his friendship to overrule his duty and the rigid laws of the establishment. Possessed of ample securities to replace the sum far within a safe term, he permitted his friend to overdraw his account for a large sum. By a strange fatality, at this very moment an investigation was suddenly ordered in regard to some other matter, in the course of which his act of imprudence was discovered. Alarmed and distressed at this unlooked-for exposure, he immediately produced the ample securities pledged with him for the safety of the bank. No question was made of the fulness of the security, but a gross violation of duty appeared, for which the partiality of friendship offered no palliation. The strict regulations of British, and indeed of all European moneyed institutions are well known, and although the report of the case fully exonerated Moreton from anything like a dishonorable charge, rigid discipline demanded his immediate resignation. The sympathy of the community consoled him for a while, but at length, finding no hope of re-instatement, and suffering besides from a severe illness brought on by this act of folly, he resolved on returning to England, where Mr. Wignell, while engaged in 1793 in forming his first company for the new Chestnut street theatre, found him wholly unemployed. His health had continued to decline since his return to England, and the rupture of a blood-vessel soon after, from excessive chagrin at his cheerless situation, rendered him henceforward a hopeless invalid. The prospect, however, of excitement in a new pursuit, among strangers, who were not likely to be aware of his misfortune, roused

him for a while, and flattered him with sanguine hopes of recovery. Finding in Mr. Wignell a great congeniality of mind and manners, he commenced his career of the stage in tolerable spirits. His first efforts, however, were far below the standard of his amateur performances at Calcutta, and rather disappointed expectation. He often afterwards remarked how painfully different he found his situation as a hireling actor, whom all had a right to criticise and condemn, from that of the confident amateur, whose every effort was overvalued, leaving his confidence in no fear of a check from coldness or opposition. Devoted, like most youthful aspirants, to the tragic muse, Moreton was by no means aware that his highest reputation would be obtained in a different walk. It is only meant that his tragic were far inferior to his comic efforts. Hamlet and Romeo, with him, might have wanted force and intentness, but in grace and tenderness, it is doubtful whether either have been surpassed or even reached by his successors. Pulmonary threatenings frequently occurred after any considerable exertions, giving a feebleness and apparent labor to his serious personations, while in some parts of comedy, as Charles Surface, Floriville, Millamour, Howard, Young Rapid, Sir George Airy, Cassio, and Harry Dornton, his easy, elegant and finished correctness rendered his loss one that the audience long and severely felt. Nor was his talent, although so eminent in that walk, confined to light and genteel comedy. He possessed uncommon skill in delineating the different shades of intoxication upon characters of opposite rank, a feature of vast difficulty in acting, and too often overlooked even by respectable performers. Thus, although equally true

to nature, his picture of inebriety in Cassio, Floriville, or Charles Oakly was as widely different from that of Forge, the drunken blacksmith, or Gabriel, as is the jealousy of Othello from that of the Silly Gardener, Fixture, in the farce. As an artist also, he possessed considerable ability, and the writer can recollect several portions of scenery from his pencil of more than common merit. This talent led him much into the society of professional artists, many of whom held him in very high estimation. His hours of leisure were passed in the studios of the eminent miniature painters, Malbone and Trott, or of the more eccentric genius, Gilbert Stuart, the distinguished portrait painter, whose admiration of what he called Moreton's "natural grace," selected the latter to stand as model for the figure of Washington in the full length, so well engraved by Heath. The easiness of disposition, so sadly illustrated in the Calcutta affair, rendered him to the last a prey to depredations of the prodigal and unprincipled, who, aware that he enjoyed a respectable stipend from his family, in addition to his professional income, felt no scruple to victimize him on every occasion that offered.

In music as well as in painting he possessed great taste, although wholly uninstructed. Reinagle, our musical manager, was frequently heard to speak with surprise of the accuracy of his ear (singularly conspicuous too in his speaking), and of the taste with which he would sit down to the piano, and execute a delightful voluntary, at the same time wholly ignorant of the very rudiments of the science. His attractive manners made him the object of much attention at Annapolis, where the company first appeared, owing

to the existence of yellow fever in Philadelphia; and an attachment to a most amiable young lady, the daughter of a distinguished judicial character of one of the oldest families in Maryland, was formed during his first season of acting, and continued until his death, which alone prevented their union.

During the year 1797 a strange circumstance occurred in Philadelphia, exciting much interest at the moment. On some public mission, affecting the interests of their nation, a deputation from one of the northern Indian tribes arrived in the city. Several of these tawny deputies were remarkable for their fine manly appearance, and a refinement of manner quite unusual, even among those tribes, whose intercourse with the whites had partially introduced some education and polish. Of course, their arrival excited much curiosity, and among those who visited them, Moreton, with a few friends, made up a little party, with a view of sketching the forms and features of some of the chiefs. During the interview, one of the principal men was observed to bear an extraordinary resemblance to Moreton. At first, this remark was received with a smile, and would have been forgotten, had not the same resemblance forcibly struck several others on entering the apartment. At length it reached Moreton, who perceived at once a positive likeness, so palpable, indeed, as to be perfectly evident to himself. Notwithstanding the fair complexion and auburn hair of the one, so unlike to the olive hue and raven locks of the other, still there was an expression, shape, and even carriage so very similar, that Moreton gaily remarked, "If this man came from among the Mohawks, I should believe it possible that we were relatives."

“Ask him his history,” said one; “he seems intelligent and well educated, and surely will not take it amiss.” Some effort was necessary to overcome his good breeding, but he at length entered into conversation with the chief, and by degrees led him to speak of his tribe, his birth, and progress of education, in the course of which he mentioned his father, *Mr. Pollard, an English officer*. Moreton received this intelligence with an emotion not unnoticed by the stranger, who, at the conclusion of his story, desired to be made acquainted with the name of his questioning friend. This led to a more confidential interview, during which the red brother produced several vouchers for the exactness of his statements, and fully confirmed the fact of close relationship between the parties. It appeared that the father of Moreton (who bore the deserved ill reputation of being a gay, careless man), had for some time lived with a very beautiful squaw, who became the mother of this young chief, as well as of a daughter. During the stay of the deputation in Philadelphia, the brothers might be seen together daily in the streets, where few observed them, without remarking the resemblance.

A revisitiation of the pestilence in 1797 compelled Mr. Wignell to avoid Philadelphia once more; and New York remaining healthy, he opened the Greenwich street circus as a theatre. Here Moreton made an extraordinary impression as Jaffier, Romeo, Floriville, Alonzo, in *Revenge*, Harry Dornton, and many of the leading characters of comedy and tragedy. His health, too, rallied considerably, but on his return to Philadelphia a serious change took place in his strength and appearance. He struggled manfully, but

in vain; night after night, until his last effort as Lothario, in the "Fair Penitent," when his feebleness became fully apparent to the audience, and unfortunately being compelled to lie upon the cold stage for a considerable time, on one of the severest nights of winter, it was but too evident, when raised and carried to his dressing-room, that his acting was past. He lingered a few weeks, and then expired so calmly, that the person who watched him was not aware of the moment of his departure. The regret and respect evinced on the occasion of his funeral proved how highly he was valued. The number comprising the procession, as well as spectators, not probably being exceeded in the case of any other public character of the time. No actor here has ever, by his talents and worth, more elevated the profession than the gentleman of whom, with my humble ability as an author, I have attempted thus to make some memorial.

Reverting now to our dull dramatic annals, I have only to record that the short spring season of 1820 at Baltimore, where we were when our theatre at Philadelphia was destroyed, was the most unfortunate which we had had for several years; and this notwithstanding all the novelties of the Philadelphia season had been produced for the Baltimore public. Cooper was the only star, and his houses averaged but \$330, and his benefit came to only \$534. Three of the performer's nights, and these too favorites, amounted (gross receipts) to \$97, \$76 and \$74. We gladly closed to an average of \$264.

So large was our sick list in the autumn season of 1820, that three of the first five nights' performance were unavoidably postponed. Our accessions were

Mr. and Mrs. H. Williams (now Mrs. Maywood,) Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Young, (since Mrs. Hughes.) Cooper played five nights to houses of \$260, with a benefit of \$414. It is almost needless to state that these last two failing seasons happened very inconveniently on the heels of the fire at Philadelphia. "Henri Quatre" was first played here successfully as to applause, but not as to profit. The same may be said of the "Heart of Mid Lothian." A lethargy seemed to seize on the public cheerfulness, and novelty either in drama or actors was equally unattractive.

The foregoing pages have exhibited rather minutely the vicissitudes of a theatre, and may have the wholesome effect of destroying some of the misapprehensions which prevail in regard to the enormous profits derived by managers, actors and stars. I am well aware that theatrical fortunes are not the only ones grossly overrated, although, perhaps, others are not so to an equal extent. The rent of the Philadelphia theatre advanced in twenty years from \$3000 to \$5000. For a short time it was held at \$5500. There were besides 120 free admissions held by the stockholders. On some occasions the profit on shares was enormous, as when some extra attraction was announced. I was assured by Mr. Dahlgreen, secretary to the stockholders, that in four or five different years, the price given for season tickets added to the rent afforded twelve, fourteen and eighteen per cent. upon the investment which the proprietors had made. Herein we were less well off than some other establishments, in comparison with which our rent had been thought moderate. Take for example the Park street theatre, New York. The rent of this theatre was heavy, undoubtedly, advancing



from \$10,000 to \$16,000, but *it was unencumbered with free admissions of any kind*. Adding these to our rent, it will be seen that it was scarcely less than that of New York, where, I may add, a great part of the scenery and furniture had been provided by the proprietors, and not, as with us, by the management.

We began again in Philadelphia, on the 11th November, 1820, at the building still known as the Walnut street theatre, at the corner of Ninth and Walnut. The house having been originally constructed only with a view to circus purposes, and subsequently imperfectly changed to dramatic uses, required expensive improvements in every part. The performers' dressing-rooms, the green-room, and indeed nearly every portion of the building needed alteration. With great labor and cost the house was prepared for opening on the day I have stated. Every possible provision for safety, comfort and attraction in the choice of pieces had been liberally made, but unfortunately our company was not strong. Commencing with little spirit after our late calamity, we felt slight hopes of the future, and opened appropriately enough with the "Poor Gentleman" and the following announcement:

#### TO THE FRIENDS OF THE DRAMA.

The managers respectfully inform the friends of the drama and the public in general, that the building formerly known as the Olympic theatre, has lately undergone a complete alteration, and been converted into a splendid and convenient theatre. The ponderous dome has been wholly removed, and replaced by a light and elegant ceiling. The stage has been brought forward several feet, and finished in the best manner, for the purposes of the drama. A pit has been erected, which for space and elegance has never been equalled in any theatre on the continent, while the lobbies and boxes have received the most essential improvement. A large and convenient new door has been opened on Ninth street, by which the audience of the pit may leave the theatre without meeting the other

part of the audience, and avoid the delay formerly experienced. The pit lobby now occupies all the space of the former pit of the Olympic theatre, and offers much promise of room and convenience to visitors.

A survey of the theatre has been taken, the result of which will be seen in the following certificate :

“The subscribers having viewed and examined the improvements made in the Olympic theatre, by Messrs. Warren and Wood, are decidedly of opinion, that it is firmly and substantially secured in a workmanlike manner, and calculated to sustain amply the weight and pressure of an overflowing house.

WILLIAM STRICKLAND, Architect,  
 PHILIP TUSTIS,  
 JOSEPH RANDALL,  
 ALEXANDER HAMPTON.

• *Philadelphia, November 7th, 1820.*”

Mr. Williams appeared as Fréderic, and Mrs. Williams (Maywood) as Rosaline. “Henri Quatre,” “The Vampire,” &c., produced little profit. An interesting event followed—the first appearance of a young gentleman of Philadelphia, Master Edwin Forrest. This youth, at sixteen years of age, was introduced to the managers by Col. John Swift, as a person who was determined to be an actor, and had succeeded in obtaining “the slow leave” of his family. We had been so unfortunate in the numerous “first appearances” of late, that the young aspirant could hope for little encouragement of his wishes, the drooping state of theatricals furnishing another and stronger reason for our course. The usual arguments were strongly urged against embracing a profession, at this time so especially unpromising. The toils, dangers, and sufferings of a young actor were represented with honest earnestness, but, as was soon discovered, in vain. Forrest was at this time a well grown young man, with a noble figure, unusually developed for his age, his features powerfully expressive, and of a determination of purpose which

discouraged all further objections. He appeared on the 27th of November, 1820, in Douglas, with the following cast: Lord Randolph, *Wheatley*, Glenalvon, *Wood*, Old Norval, *Warren*, Lady Randolph, *Mrs. Williams*, Anna, *Mrs. Jefferson*. So much disappointment had been expressed by the public at many late first appearances, to which I have already alluded, that no great excitement was perceptible on the present occasion. The novice, however, acquitted himself so well as to create a desire for a repetition of the play, which soon followed, and with increased approbation. Soon after he added to his reputation by a spirited effort as Frederic, in "Lover's Vows." These performances were considered by all the principal actors, as far beyond any they had ever witnessed from a novice. Still no enthusiasm was evident in the public, and his benefit as Octavian was even less than the former nights, which were Douglas \$319, Frederic \$252, benefit \$215.

This cool reception in his native city, which might have discouraged a less ardent and confident mind, had no such effect on Forrest, who reiterated his intention to adopt a theatrical life. Our theatre at this time presented no vacancy worthy his acceptance. Two circumstances must be mentioned as contributing to the failure of his benefit—a heavy snow storm and the announcement of Kean for the next week. Two greater drawbacks could not easily have happened. Of the progress of Master Forrest, as the bill announced him, I shall in future pages present some stirring particulars. After a consultation with his friends and the managers, it was resolved that he should abandon the young Roscius plan, and take a wide range through the

western theatres, for the purpose of passing a regular apprenticeship to his profession. He left us with favorable auguries for the future.

Notwithstanding great efforts had been made before we entered it, to make the new theatre in which we now were perfectly safe, we were hardly in it before we were embarrassed by the prevalence of a malignant and most injurious report, that the whole building had been badly constructed, and was insecure. The western wall, it was alleged, evidently projected; and the affair, it was now discovered, was attended with many alarming particulars. The managers did all that they could, in a personal way, to show the folly of this rumor, but their efforts produced no effect, for the circulation of the story had taken it where such refutation did not follow. After various councils it was found necessary to invoke a board of different persons, well known in various ways to the community, who should inspect the building carefully, and report to the public. The following address was accordingly issued, having appended to it three certificates. The first made and signed by Mr. Carstairs, and other well known master builders; the second by a committee of the chief fire companies, and the third by the various gentlemen known by social or fashionable distinction.

#### TO THE PUBLIC.

The Managers of the New Theatre beg leave to lay before the public the following circumstances and testimonials to them, that every precaution against accidents from fire exists in their establishment. In the original construction and successive improvements of the edifice of the New Theatre, the greatest care and attention has been paid both by the Proprietors and Managers, to the protection of the audience from every possible casualty that might happen from fire: three large delivering doors are opened at the back of the stage and communicate with the

open street; the three large doors in front for the Boxes, Pit and Gallery. (separately) are so formed that some of them do now, and all will be made to open both outwardly and inwardly, so that the least pressure from within will always force them open; the large Venitian and other windows in front and on the second story, open upon the terrace over the portico into the open air, and a few feet above the ground; in addition to this, one large passage of sixteen feet in width, leading from the eastern lobby through the open arch into Sixth street, and all the lobbies, as well as the wide and roomy staircases which communicate with them, are entirely unobstructed by doors, and connect fully with each other two very large Venitian windows on the western side of the building, open upon the ground alley leading into Chestnut street, and an additional door hung with counterweights like a sash is now made from the middle of the lobby of the main door, with these the avenues leading from the front to the back of the theatre, will amount to no less than sixteen. The Pit lobbies are supported by massy stone walls of two feet thick, and capable of containing double the number of persons that could possibly occupy the Pit; the avenues are no less than four in number to the staircase, which is so capacious that any audience could discharge themselves in three minutes; the columns which support the Boxes are of wrought iron cased; the girders of the building are ample and worked in with the brick, which is twenty inches thick from the basement to the plate of the roof; the house is ventilated by a funnel of six feet in diameter, which runs through to the roof; there are *two Fire Engines* and *one Hose Company* within the walls of the Theatre.

In consequence of these provisions and the constant attention, solicitude and care of the Managers, in the internal regulations and government of the same, and the most minute attention to the fires and lights, and the immediate aid which could be rendered, they most sincerely believe that no apprehension in this respect need ever be entertained by any audience in the New Theatre. But should such an accident, however improbable, ever unhappily occur, they are confident that the provisions and facilities above described, will admit the whole contents of the house to remove in perfect safety in less than five minutes from the occurrence of any serious alarm.

The subscribers, at the request of the Managers of the New Theatre, have examined that edifice thoroughly, and report that it is constructed of brick and stone, in the most substantial manner; the roof is of wood, but perfectly secured, supported and solid; capable of resisting fire for a considerable time; the ventilator is large, and sufficient to throw off any quantity of smoke; the ceilings are plaistered with several thick coats of whiting; the scenery is, for the most part, painted on both sides, and therefore not liable to blaze should it take fire. The avenues

are large, the doors all open outwards, and the means of egress such, that in the opinion of the subscribers, any audience the house could contain might walk out in five minutes.

THOMAS CARSTAIRS,  
JACOB VOGDES,  
JOHN DARRAGH,  
JOHN L. ROBINS.

We, the subscribers, members of THE FIRE COMPANIES, in the city of Philadelphia, have accurately examined the New Theatre, and are of opinion that no accident could befall the audience from fire, inasmuch as the building is in all parts substantial and massy, the walls thick, the beams, floors, and frame work very strong, the various outlets large and sufficient, and do not hesitate to declare that we should not fear to enter the house while it would be on fire.

CURTIS CLAY,  
ANDREW HAMILTON,  
CHARLES GOVETT,  
ROBERT MORRELL,  
MATTHEW M'CONNELL,  
JOHN W. MORRELL,  
JOHN C. RICHARDSON,  
ADAM TRAQUAIR,  
THOMAS CASH, Jr.,  
THOMAS L. CONNELLY.

At the request of Messrs. Warren and Wood, the subscribers have examined the condition of the New Theatre, in Philadelphia, as respects its security in case of fire, and are of opinion that the outlets and other precautions are sufficient to remove all apprehensions on the subject.

THOMAS M. WILLING,  
GEORGE HARRISON,  
A. J. DALLAS,  
JOSEPH HOPKINSON.  
CHARLES J. INGERSOLL,  
MICHAEL KEPPELE.

*Philadelphia, January 2, 1821.*

Notwithstanding these conclusive evidences, allusions were constantly made by the timid to the Richmond calamity nine years previously; and we found ourselves at length compelled to carry on a theatre in

the face of a full public conviction, that it was every way insecure. That these impressions chilled our opening and our performances for some weeks after, was undoubted; yet we shall presently see how much stronger charity and curiosity can prove than ill-founded terror. In addition to the survey made and the certificates published, it was thought advisable to show the building's safety; and accordingly immense beams of seventy feet in length were provided in order to bind the walls, with other precautions which, as has been proved, were of no positive value at all. The original and slandered walls have since maintained themselves without a question through thirty-four years, crowded though their enclosure has been on numberless occasions, with multitudes whom Forrest, the Ravels, Ellsler, and a whole succession of attractive actors, singers, dancers and pantomimists for more than a generation have brought within their circle.

"The Steward," a bad alteration of the "Deserted Daughter," and "The Fate of Calas" were in these times acted with little effect. Cooper appeared for seven nights to \$400 each, and a benefit of \$773. *Ivanhoe* was coldly received. Time has rendered remarkable the fact that Forrest's first appearance was immediately followed by Kean's. It was now to be proved how much of the terror expressed of the house's insecurity was real, and how much imaginary. This eminent actor appeared as Richard on the 8th of January, 1822, and at once satisfied the audience that his vast fame had been fairly acquired. The verdict however was not perfectly unanimous; some determined critics, who had persuaded themselves that Cooke's loss was never to be supplied, were on the

first night loud in condemnation of the new actor, whom they honored with the flattering names of Quack, Mountebank, and Vulgar Impostor. Strangely enough his second appearance at once converted these judges into his most enthusiastic admirers. Othello now brought over to the Kean faith the most obstinate partizans of Fennell. The little hero acted Richard with marvellous spirit, although upon his first entrance his agitation was so strong as to be visible to those near the stage. His receipts for sixteen nights were

Richard .....	\$1178 00
Othello.....	837 00
Merchant of Venice.....	1260 00
Hamlet .....	718 00
Richard.....	883 00
Brutus.....	897 00
First benefit, "New Way to Pay Old Debts" .....	1397 00
Macbeth.....	615 00
King Lear .....	1351 00
Rule a Wife.....	699 50
Bertram .....	650 00
Town and Country.....	675 00
King Lear.....	889 00
Second benefit.....	1199 00
Merchant of Venice .....	400 50
Iron Chest.....	727 00

By these receipts it appears that the panic had passed away. The increasing crowds on his nights of acting might have been calculated to increase the public fears, but this rational motive for apprehension seemed to have the opposite effect from what was expected. Curiosity carried the day, and it was only on the ordinary stock nights (with less audiences) that we ever heard now of the unsafety of a house which had been recently and tastefully altered, and decorated



with the most strict attention to perfect security and comfort.

The next novelty was an interesting one, no less than a daughter of Mrs. Jordan, the Thalia, as she was called, of the British stage. From mental or physical causes, this unfortunate lady, who bore the name of Alsop, was understood to have become an absolute slave to opium and ether. The mother's fame drew a respectable audience to witness the pretensions of the daughter. Some personal resemblance was marred by an obliquity of sight, at times quite clearly apparent. She inherited some sweet tones of her mother, with talents of no common kind. She chose for her debut "Donna Violante," one of her mother's most popular performances, and at rehearsal gave such promise of excellence as created an unusual interest for her. At night all was changed. The demon opium had been invoked, and a reaction now disqualified the victim from all professional power. The first scenes were passed in comparative toleration; but in the scenes with Felix, an utter prostration of power became painfully evident to the audience. An occasional line or speech would be given with fine effect, but be suddenly succeeded by a dreamy kind of abstraction. The nervous distress of the poor creature became so intense, that at the end of the act she entreated me (as Felix) to get through the remaining scenes as well as possible, declaring her utter inability to do so, and its cause.

Here I am compelled to record an uncharitable charge made by some unfeeling persons, who are ever found ready to impugn our vulnerable profession, to the effect that her failure of power and spirit was owing to a disgraceful excess. A very cruel slander!

During the performance many evidences of talent must have appeared, as her engagement fully equalled the average of the season, excepting Cooper and Kean. One night in this season a snow storm reduced the sum in Sheridan's "Rivals" to \$65 50.

A few months after the engagement of Mrs. Alsop with us was ended, the New York newspapers announced her death from laudanum; by accident, according to some, by intention, as stated by others. The audience had evinced no ignorance of her merit, as in this wretched season her benefit reached \$619. During her short stay with us this lady and her history created much interest. Occasional aberrations of mind were more than suspected. Her mother, and her obscure death in France, were most painful points of recollection to her. Speaking of her mother, as I constantly did with admiration, she in her turn clung to the sad subject with affecting tenacity. Among other strange fancies, she was possessed with the belief that her mother, while it was well known to every one, and is certain that she was living in France, had, on several occasions, secretly visited London; for what object the daughter could never explain. She solemnly assured me again and again, that she had distinctly seen her mother on two or more occasions. The situations in which she thus reported that she had seen her were very public ones, where she could not escape being seen, but where her object was yet evidently to escape recognition. Nothing could remove from the nervous mind of this lady, the full conviction that her mother had ventured at dusk one evening through the dangerous labyrinths of carriages, at and about Charing Cross, in evident fear of

being recognized. This and similar delusions, with a sensible and well bred deportment, rendered this daughter of Mrs. Jordan a general object of regard behind the scenes.

The "Child of the Mountain," a translation from the French, was well received about this time. But two of the well deserving favorites of New York appeared to experience the effects of a strong drain on a reluctant audience. Mrs. Barnes, I am almost ashamed to state, played to these receipts.

Isabella.....	\$156
Castle Spectre .....	186
Jane Shore.....	141
Honey Moon.....	193
Stranger.....	169
Benefit, Douglas, "Actress of all Work and Wandering Boys"..	492
Warren's benefit, "The Exile".....	319
Second night of the piece.....	74

Mr. Barnes now came to experience little pleasure or profit.

Rivals.....	\$104 50
Steward.....	71 75
School for Scandal.....	105 50
Laugh when you Can.....	107 00
She Stoops to Conquer.....	138 50
Benefit, Bold Stroke for a Husband, Collin's ode to the Pas- sions, Mogul Tale.....	350 00

Kean was engaged with a view of closing the season with some eclat. The receipts were as follows :

Richard.....	\$ 613 00
Othello.....	528 00
Riches.....	523 00
King Lear.....	412 50
Iron Chest.....	537 00
Benefit, "Venice Preserved".....	1005 00

With all this attraction the average to the managers, after paying stars, and benefits was only \$304 50, a sum insufficient to pay the usual weekly expenses, and leaving the large outlay incurred in altering and furnishing the house a total loss.

The Baltimore spring season introduced Kean to the following receipts.

Richard .....	\$789
Othello.....	611
Merchant of Venice.....	799
New Way to Pay Old Debts.....	696
King Lear.....	929
Macbeth.....	630
Iron Chest.....	602
Brutus.....	430
Hamlet.....	652
Town and Country.....	633
Bertram.....	570
Riches.....	495
Richard.....	654
Benefit, Othello.....	785

The advent of Kean introduced a custom, which, however tolerable in view of his great genius, led subsequently to much annoyance and to many abuses. I allude to the habit of calling out performers, *dead or alive*, and after the curtain has dropped, to receive a tribute of extra applause. The absurdity of dragging out before the curtain a deceased Hamlet, Macbeth or Richard in an exhausted state, merely to make a bow, or probably worse, to attempt an asthmatic address in defiance of all good taste, and solely for the gratification of a few unthinking partisans, or a few lovers of noise and tumult, is one which we date with us from this time. It has always been a matter of wonder with me that the better part of the audience should tolerate these fool-

eries. Can anything be more ridiculous, than that an actor, after laboring through an arduous character—a protracted combat, and the whole series of simulated expiring agonies, should instantly revive, and appear panting before the curtain to look and feel like a fool, and to destroy the little illusion which he has been endeavoring to create? “The time has been that when the brains were out, the man would die, and there an end, but now they rise again with forty mortal murders on their heads.” This custom, reprehensible as it has ever appeared, even in rare cases of superior talent, becomes absolutely insufferable when seeking to gratify the vain aspirations of common place powers. To such an extent has it of late years obtained, that on some occasions nearly the whole characters of a play have been paraded to receive the applause of their partizans; as they certainly must have done derision of the more numerous and sensible portion of the house. We are all aware that this custom was borrowed from the French stage, and was doubtless a part of the system employed by the *claqueurs*, or acknowledged hired applauders. Not the least offensive feature is the establishing of a personal communication between the audience and performers; a practice equally indelicate and unwise. The invidious feelings among performers from supposed injurious preferences may easily be imagined.

A minor branch of this stage quackery is exhibited constantly in the liberal bestowal of wreaths, bouquets, (with or without rings enclosed) upon insignificant as well as upon distinguished stage artists. These in most cases are openly prepared and paid for by the “grateful recipients,” of their own purchases. Even in the case of Fanny Ellsler (who certainly stood in no need

of such aid) the basket of bouquets, &c., formed an unconcealed part of the dressing apparatus for the evening. It is well known to me that in the career of other performers, these marks of a grateful and admiring public were made use of on several different nights, when the ambition of the performer outran his means; and not only so, but that the identical vases, goblets and cups, have travelled with the performer from theatre to theatre, and been presented and accepted at every place with new "emotions of the deepest sensibility." It is time that such foolery and imposture should cease.

Kean, to whom I have alluded as the great dramatic feature of this season, created no less surprise in the green-room than when before the audience. All had read or heard of his wild and irregular habits, his association with the "Wolf Club," and other persons, most likely to render his manner coarse and offensive. He appeared among us instead a mild, unassuming and cheerful man, wholly free from every affectation of superiority or dictation. His suggestions as to business on the stage, were always given with a gentleness of manner which secured their immediate adoption. The deficiencies of humbler performers were treated with indulgence, and created even in the most careless of them a desire to excel. His presence in the green-room was always a source of enjoyment. I speak of him and his deportment throughout a long series of performances. In private society, particularly in the company of ladies, he was distinguished for his modest and unassuming manner as well as conversation.

One of his weaknesses and a cause of his ruin was the allowing himself to be beset by a crowd of idlers, al-

ways found ready to attach themselves to the skirts of each new actor, singer, dancer, or equestrian. These thoughtless persons were in the constant habit of calling at the stage-door after the play, in order to waylay and carry him off to some late supper or party, at the moment of extremest exhaustion from his labors. A protracted sitting, and a late banquet, were sure to leave him the ensuing morning weak and enfeebled. His strength of constitution, however, would enable him to rally for the night's exertion, too often to be followed by the same indiscretion. Unlike Cooke, who could bear two or three bottles of port wine, Kean would be upset by as many glasses. He was aware of his folly in submitting to these midnight wastes of time and health, but wanted firmness to resist them. I frequently remained with him in his dressing-room after performance for several hours, in order to tire out these persevering tempters, who would remain in their carriages at the stage-door with the most indelicate pertinacity. On one occasion we staid inside the building until nearly three o'clock, before the rumbling of the carriages announced the departure of his persecutors. It was impossible not to feel a deep interest for a man who, too weak to resist temptation, possessed sensibilities of conscience and character which brought the deepest contrition and shame on every occasion of offence. Elevated in one day from the obscurity of a provincial actor to a rivalry with Kemble, some mild allowance may be extended to a delirium caused by so sudden a transition. To this too must be mainly attributed the foolish caprices which involved him in so many difficulties with the public.

Of his acting it is almost unnecessary to repeat, that his success was equal to his fame. The effect he produced in particular passages has not yet passed from the memories of some now living, notwithstanding the evanescent character of theatrical impressions. A gentleman known throughout this country for eminence in the profession of the law, but whose sensibilities to literature, music, and the arts are not less well known in the city where he resides, in the retired dignity of advancing life, not long since paid the following high tribute to Kean's excellence as Sir Giles Overreach. He had been discussing in conversation the merits of other actors of former times, with equal justice and delicacy, but added, "No impression I ever received from a play, or an actor, approached the effect produced by Kean as Sir Giles, in the scene where, after a powerless attempt on his daughter's life, in the mad rage at her stolen marriage, which defeats the ambitious views of his whole life, he exclaims

"I'm feeble—some undone widow  
Sits upon my arm, and takes away  
The use on't; and my sword—  
Glued to the scabbard with wronged  
Orphans' tears, will not be drawn."

Cooper delighted to expatiate on the surprising variety and force of genius exhibited by Kean in this character. He was indeed, as Kemble quaintly observed, "terribly in earnest."

In Othello he surprised us by a new reading. Instead of

"Are there no stones in Heaven  
But what serve for the thunder?"



He said,

“Are there no stones in Heaven?  
For what then serves the thunder?”

It is curious that the change of text never appeared to be noticed by any except the performers; it may be from the fearful muttered passion, which probably rendered the words indistinct. On this reading being remarked to him, he merely replied, “I believe I have always read it so.”

During a rehearsal of “Othello,” I inquired whether he could inform me to whom the authorship of the following exquisite lines belonged. They occur in Othello’s speech to the Senate, and immediately follow this line of the original, “Men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.”

“Of battles bravely, hardly fought; of victories  
For which the conqueror mourned,  
So many fell. Sometimes I told  
The story of a siege in which I had to combat  
Plague and famine—soldiers unpaid,  
Fearful to fight, but bold in dangerous mutiny.”

Hodgkinson was the first Othello I saw, and these lines which he read struck me so forcibly, that I never forgot them. Some years afterwards I heard them from Fennell, who latterly omitted them. I distinctly remember finding them in an old Covent Garden prompt-book of our early library, not in the printed text, but interwritten upon a blank leaf. Kean, like every other actor or reader to whom I have applied, had never met with them, but acknowledged their great beauty and power. I confess they have always been to me a subject of admiration, and it has cost me no small expense of fruitless search to ascertain the author.

Betterton, Sir Wm. Davenant, Lord Lansdowne, and other alterers of Shakspeare, as well as various editions of Shakspeare, have been examined without success.

While on the subject of unfathered verses, I am tempted to insert some which I feel assured are not familiar to many. They were found in my boyish days among a mass of old mercantile letters. Whose are they ?

#### LINES ON SHAKSPEARE.

On a biforked hill, with fame's evergreen crowned,  
 Encircled with azure serene  
 Whilst the sylphs of his fancy played wantonly round,  
 Willy Shakspeare enlivened the scene.

As all pensive he sat, keen eyed Wisdom drew near,  
 Just sent from the regions above,  
 And smiling, she whispered this truth in his ear,  
 Thy lays breathe the spirit of love.

To his side came the Muse of the bowl and the blade,  
 To hail him great prince of her art,  
 Whilst Comedy round all those dimples displayed,  
 That give a brisk pulse to the heart.

Bright Genius approached him with pleasing respect,  
 In her arms a young eagle she bore,  
 To show, if unshackled by icy neglect,  
 To what wonderful heights she could soar.

Recumbent before him, straight dropt this sweet maid,  
 And expanding the wings of her bird,  
 Take the quill of sublimity, Shakspeare, she said,  
 And go fashion the tear starting word.

To Genius he bowed as he plucked forth the quill,  
 To the breeze where his vestments unfurled,  
 Like a sunbeam, with fancy he fled from the hill,  
 To charm and illumine the world.

For the good of mankind, he rare precepts conveyed,  
 And his strains had such power on the ear,  
 That whenever he played for the concourse that strayed,  
 He could call forth a smile or a tear.

Old Time knew his worth, with the sigh of esteem,  
 From the earth bade sweet Willy arise,  
 With his genius he fled, but he left us his theme,  
 Which shall ever be dear to the wise.

Kean was so delighted with these lines, that he obliged me to make him a copy before he would leave me.

His engagement thus far had been productive and pleasant to all parties. His profits were—

Engagements and benefits at Philadelphia.....	\$7197
Engagements and benefits at Baltimore.....	3243
	<hr/>
	\$10440

We were not active during this season in efforts to rebuild our Chestnut street theatre. In this we were guided by a policy of our own.

No one except a manager can conceive the advantage of a monopoly in theatrical concerns. The smallest oppositions, however certain of failure, inflict more or less loss on the principal establishments. On this account we had delayed building a new theatre at Baltimore as long as possible, lest by a temporary success, it might suggest extravagant profits to others. When we afterwards did do it, it was no sooner erected than people began to talk of another, under the idea—a mere 'delusion—that ours was enormously profitable. The importance of monopoly has been lamentably evinced in the fate and failure of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, both of which continued at least with safety until the expiration of their patents, when the

minor theatres were admitted to the regular drama. A natural consequence of the admission of these, as it will always be of competition by inferior theatres, was, that the best plays were nightly butchered by novices, malcontents, and worn-out performers. How greatly the audience suffered by this change was soon apparent.

One of the many advantages possessed by the patented theatres, I may add, while speaking of monopolies, was the wholesome control of the Lord Chamberlain, whose power extended to the adjustment of differences between the managers and performers. The case of the rebellion of "the glorious eight" is an example; for his decision restored order, and prevented a long and expensive series of litigations. The continuance of so many eminent actors in the same theatre for twenty or thirty years is evidence that the system was successful.

## CHAPTER XIV

1821-1822.

Invitation to take charge of a New York Theatre—Declined—Occasional interchange desired by Mr. Price—Booth's appearance—A variety succeeds him—Master George Frederic Smith—Wallack meets with an accident—Great benefit for the Orphan Asylum—The only really full house ever seen in a theatrical career of forty-seven years—Phillips—Inledon—Blissett leaves us finally—Our regret at his loss—He retires to Guernsey—Notice of him—French dancers—Charles Mathews—His receipts affected by the report of yellow fever—Anxiety to get back to the Chestnut Street House—Singular letter from Tyrone Power, who wants to play tragedy—A man sometimes discovers that he is better than he thought he was—Feats on the tight-rope introduced into our theatre, and result in a failure—Opening of the new House in Chestnut street—Auspicated with *The School for Scandal*—Disturbance about the place of pit entrance—A short episode on mottoes—Booth and Mathews—An epoch in *Tom and Jerry*—The piece is not liked by the managers—But is demanded by the audience—Managers yield to the pressure—The low moral character of this piece shown, and its baneful professional influence—An upheaval of the supernumeraries of all sorts.

IN April of 1821, an important negotiation was opened with the New York proprietors. Mr. Beekman, the junior of the firm there, came over to Philadelphia for the purpose of engaging my services as manager of the Park theatre, under their direction, either receiving a stipulated salary, or an interest in the profits. Doubtful whether rebuilding the Chestnut street house would benefit our situation, and yet unwilling to leave my old home, I felt considerable em-

barrassment on the subject. The offer of a certain yearly sum was not to be rashly declined, and by this time the public here had begun to express impatience at being transferred to a house so decidedly unpopular as the Walnut street house. These were inducements. But how my relations with Warren were to be adjusted was the first question. As I expected, he resisted the measure stoutly, although assured that Price was willing to purchase my situation and interests in the different theatres which we had under our charge. He insisted that Price's system of management and mine differed so widely, that insuperable difficulties must arise with the performers and others, and that to make the matter practicable, Price would have to purchase the interests of both of us, which was evidently not that gentleman's wish. Numerous minor impediments sprung up in addition to Warren's reluctance, and combined at length to put an end to a tedious negotiation. My friends, one and all, discouraged my emigration, and cheered me with the assurance that a new edifice was quite practicable, and if erected, would repair my late calamities. But a connection of a minor kind with New York was still proposed.

Mr. Beekman now wished to engage our company to perform in New York from the 10th September to March, and from the 15th of March to the 4th of July. The object of this plan was to prevent each of our theatres from being overwrought by too long continued a season. But the difficulty of it was, that the plan overlooked the fact that our theatre must close, or a second company be engaged. The whole matter, therefore, came to an end. The discontents between Price and his proprietors, which had led to the discussions, were

soon after adjusted, and that gentleman retained the Park theatre to himself, we remaining as we had been. An interchange of principal actors, if not of the whole company, was, however, at all times a favorite idea with Price, and was often urged upon us for consideration. We were, however, pretty well as it was. We could not find time for New York, in addition to what we had; and Baltimore through our whole management proved far the most safe and profitable scene of our operations. The division of the year into two Baltimore seasons, with a longer one at Philadelphia, enabled us to relieve both from too protracted a series of performance. Philadelphia, of course, was necessary as a principal place of management.

The short autumn season of 1821 at Baltimore presents nothing interesting, except the FIRST APPEARANCE OF BOOTH. He first acted, on the 2d November, Richard III., and created an unusual sensation. He was previous to this almost wholly unknown, unless by passages copied from the English papers, detailing his first success at Covent Garden, his breach of engagement there, and utter defeat of an ill judged opposition to Kean. His first effort here at once raised him to an object of interest. His receipts were—

Richard.....	\$383
Iron Chest.....	315
Othello .....	303
King Lear.....	360
Town and Country .....	194
Mountaineers, benefit.....	525

The violent enthusiasm of a part of the audience on his first night led to great expectation of future success, but it was never realized. This excellent actor

suffered the misfortune to be overvalued by some persons, and undervalued by others. He was seldom justly appreciated. An attempt to elevate him above Kean, and to claim for him the *originality* of a peculiar style of acting practised by both, could not fail to create a prejudice against him, and he suffered from it afterwards in every part of the Union. The discussion became angry. His partizans were referred to dates in vain. Even John Quincy Adams, (an unbounded admirer of Booth,) was for some time under a mistaken impression that his performance at Brussels, where he was engaged with an English company, was the first exhibition of this peculiar style. This gentleman's deserved reputation as an experienced judge of acting, entitled his admiration of Booth to no common respect, and, indeed, many others of unquestionable taste took up his case with zeal, and ventured upon comparisons of him with Kean, to the disadvantage of the latter. Time, however, which confirms the judgments of truth, dispelled the false idea, and Booth suffered with all in the result, as he had also with a great many during its progress.

Booth, in his earlier career, was more engaging than he afterwards was. His affected eccentricities and assumed insanity did not occur in his early years, in America at any rate. He seldom spoke of Kean, at least he did not while engaged upon the stage, and when he did it was always with perfect respect. His character, too, seemed often marked with great frankness. The circumstances of his second failure in London he gave to me with perfect candor. It appears, from his account, that while the Drury Lane managers were preparing, at great labor and cost, a



splendid revival of "King Lear" for Kean, their rivals of Covent Garden determined to forestal them, though by an imperfect effort. For this purpose they engaged Booth (probably on the strength of his former excitements) for a few nights, the number to depend on the success, at £20 per night and a benefit—Booth, *Lear*; Edgar, *Ch. Kemble*; Edmond, *McCready*. After a few nights the receipts so diminished that they found it necessary to discontinue the play. Probably in compliment to Booth's talent and exertions, they agreed to try the experiment for a few nights longer, on condition of his being satisfied with £10 per night. With this condition the play dragged through for a few nights longer, when Booth, according to agreement, announced for his benefit "Richard III." How deplorable this effort was may be understood from the fact that he was obliged on the ensuing morning to pay £80, the sum necessary to make up the deficiency in the expenses of the night. The loss swallowed nearly the whole of his earnings on the former nights. I give this statement exactly as Mr. Booth detailed it to me. Thus disappointed, he acted through some of the provinces, and often with deserved success, for in these establishments, as it would not have been wise to play the eccentric, he behaved himself with entire regularity. In conclusion, I must say that with all his follies and attempts at singularity, this really fine actor was an object of interest to all who can appreciate genius and study. Ill-directed by imprudent associations, it is greatly to be lamented that all attempts to withdraw him from these to circles more suited to his mind, manners and reputation, were so unavailing. In associations, such as I have spoken of, neither low nor

uneducated, but not safe associates for him, he passed unhappily, and greatly to his own injury, the best years of his life.

This Philadelphia season of 1821-2 commenced with the addition of Mr. and Mrs. Burke, Mr. and Mrs. Wallack, and Nichols, from the Charleston theatre, who appeared as Count Belino. The tragedy of Wallace, still a popular piece, was acted many nights successfully. Miss Drake, of the Kentucky theatre, appeared as Juliana, in the "Honey Moon," and Mr. Pelby, from the Boston theatre, as Macbeth, Rolla, Bertram and Pierre. On his benefit night he appeared as Brutus, and afterwards gave imitations of Kean, as Othello, Hamlet and Richard, but with only moderate receipts. "Damon and Pythias" was now first acted by the stock company for eight nights to good houses. A party of French artists also gave an exhibition of small sword exercise. We were also favored by a visit from a deputation of the Indian tribes—Grand Panis, Panis Republic, Panis Loups, O'Mahais, Kansas and Ottoes.

The next prodigy announced was Master George Frederic Smith, his first appearance on any stage, in the character of Octavian. This was the young hero, whose feats in this part have been described in another place. Mr. James Wallack, who was now announced to appear as Hamlet, was thrown from the mail stage, while on his way from New York, and received so severe a fracture of his leg as to detain him for some time at Brunswick, near which place the accident occurred. This accident rendered him for many months incapable of any professional exertion. It deranged too our plans very much, as we had depended greatly on that gen-

tleman's attraction for this part of the season. "Undine" was, however, produced with great care, and with an excellent cast, which was poorly repaid. An ill name hung on this Walnut street theatre, rendering all our efforts fruitless. Joanna Baillie's "De Montfort, or the Force of Hatred," was revived and played to one good house. Noah's play of "Usef Caramalli" was coldly received. During this season occurred the frightful and well remembered destruction, in Philadelphia by fire, on the very coldest night of the winter, of the Orphan Asylum, in which calamity more than twenty of its inmates perished. In the moment of the highest sympathy a benefit was offered and accepted. The public in their most generous feelings gave us a noble response, and from an assemblage as much distinguished by its brilliancy as its numbers, the large sum of \$1760 was received. After deducting all expenses I had the great satisfaction of paying to the treasurer of this excellent charity upwards of \$1400. The performances on the occasion of this benefit were "The Voice of Nature" and "The Forty Thieves." Attached to the theatre as I have been for 47 years, this is the only instance I ever witnessed of a *full house*. On this memorable night every seat was occupied, from the orchestra to the remotest part of the gallery. Satisfied as we were with the perfect security of the building on this night, the thought frequently occurred of the terrific scene which any sudden alarm from within or without might occasion; and it rendered the occasion one of painful anxiety and terror to me. When, after everything was happily over, I saw the last remaining auditors disappear from the boxes and pit, I felt a sensation of

the most agreeable relief. Of course, after this occasion we heard no more of the danger of the house tumbling down.

“Mahomet” was revived about this time for the purpose of introducing Master William Forrest. After a considerable absence Phillips returned to fulfil an engagement of 12 nights to houses averaging \$475, and benefit \$389. He now appeared in several new characters and operas. “The Barber of Seville” was prepared with great attention, and was enriched by the two stuttering and sneezing servants from Coleman’s translation of this amusing piece, a form in which it had been originally produced. “The Russian Impostor” and “Fontainbleau” were also produced during this engagement, which was announced for Phillip’s last appearance in Philadelphia. I have spoken of our effort for the benefit of the Orphan Asylum. Phillips gave a concert for the same worthy purpose.

Phillips deserves some further notice. He was skillful as a man of business, *and always to be depended upon*. Music he practised simply as a trade, without the slightest enthusiasm for the art. During his frequent long engagements, he was never known to sing a note for his own, nor for others’ amusement, unless called upon by some claim having the aspect of duty. In private company, therefore, he very reluctantly contributed a song. Inledon, on the contrary, loved his art, and delighted himself as much as he did the audience or private friends. He would frequently on a morning call at my house, and gratify my wife, who was fond of music, by an absolute concert of songs, solos from famous oratorios, and even snatches of concerted passages. This passionate love of his art

appeared to increase with his years. I have known many ardent professional enthusiasts in various branches of art, but none to compare with Incedon. Phillips was wholly intent on the profits of his talents. During one of his visits he was urgently solicited to give a concert for the gratification of many citizens "who were not in the habit of visiting the theatre." For this purpose he engaged the Walnut street house, announcing his *concert*, which consisted wholly of songs, selected from the favorite *operas*. The result was, that to an entertainment composed of operatic music, and given in a theatre, the receipts from these over-sensitive persons exceeded \$1200. A second concert was demanded by them, and produced \$800. He used to call this "the best humbug he had ever been compelled to practise."

Noah's play of "Marion" was moderately productive, as was also the "Snow Storm," a story taken from an affecting incident in Russian history. The season closed with the "Spy" or "Neutral Ground," by a gentleman of New York. This piece was an excellent adaptation of Cooper's novel, and met with unqualified approbation. During this year we suffered severely from sickness. Jefferson, Francis, Wheatley and others were unable to appear for nearly a third of the season. About this time we were compelled to part with Blissett, who for twenty-eight years had been a strong feature in all our corps. By his father's death in 1821 he had come into possession of a very handsome estate, and a profession was no longer necessary to him. But before this he had been so long a confirmed invalid, that he was often lost to the stage for weeks and months together, though in fact forming part of our company. That some of his complaints

were purely imaginary there can be no great doubt. They were, notwithstanding, sufficient to paralyze his exertions, and he at length addressed us in the following letter.

*Philadelphia, January 27th, 1822.*

*Gentlemen*—As my departure for England next summer seems indispensibly necessary, it will prevent my giving you a decisive reply on the subject of a future engagement. Should any unexpected occurrence take place to prevent it, I shall be happy to continue a member of your establishment. I must here beg you to observe, that I have not remained insensible of your consideration and indulgence, in the many instances of my unavoidable and painful delinquency, and I cannot omit embracing the opportunity which this affords me, to express my most sincere thanks and grateful acknowledgments. With best wishes for your success,

I remain, gentlemen,

Your obliged servant,

TO MESSRS. WOOD AND WARREN.

FRANCIS BLISSETT.

Soon after this he retired to the Isle of Guernsey. Mr. Blissett was acknowledged by all, I believe, who ever saw him to be a remarkable performer, and my "Personal Recollections" would be but imperfectly rendered, if I gave no further record of this actor, with whom, through a quarter of a century, I was in constant professional relations.

He was born in London about the year 1773, but was soon removed to Bath by his father, an eminent comic actor and great favorite in that city. The son was destined for the orchestra, and received a careful musical education. At an early age young Blissett was placed in the band, and gave promise of excellence as a violinist. On the occasion of his father's benefit he was permitted, at the age of eighteen, to make his appearance on the stage, in the character of Doctor Last, and succeeded so well as to induce the father to change the plans of his future profession. His birth

was not regular, and to this circumstance, those who knew him best attributed in a great degree the strange reserve of his character, and his peculiar pursuits and habits, as well as the readiness which he showed to remove to a distant country. He formed a member of the admirable company with which Mr. Wignell opened the Chestnut street theatre, in 1793, and continued a firm adherent to that corps until 1821, when, as I have already stated, he came by his father's death into the possession of an elegant competency. It was his father's earnest wish that he should return to England twelve years before, and he wrote many pressing letters to that effect, adding large inducements, but the son resolutely declined. His father was an admirable actor of the Old School, and appeared in London, with good approbation, as Shylock, Falstaff, Hardcastle, and Copp, when upwards of seventy, and died at the advanced age of eighty-three years. After Blissett left us he selected Guernsey as his residence, why we have never been able to learn. It was probably chosen from the love of retirement and seclusion, so peculiar to him from early youth. Although the cause of so much mirth to others, he was himself (like many famous comedians) a confirmed hypochondriac and a melancholy man. Into gay society no temptation could draw him. His life was passed in occasional intercourse with a very limited knot of friends, and he both resisted and resented all efforts to bring him out as a companion to amuse. Like his fellow comedian Jefferson, he felt the utmost horror at the thought of being made a source of amusement to convivial parties. He seemed most happy when shut up in his room with his books and violin. He

read much, and was a close observer of manners. His acting, which appeared so natural and unstudied, was the result of most laborious application, joined to great natural comic talents. It was a common saying in the theatre, that he gave more study to his characters than any of the tragedians bestowed on theirs. The circle of parts in which he moved was more limited than that of any favorite comedian we recollect, except Weston; yet in this range he had few equals, and scarcely a superior, as Peter in the Stranger, Dr. Dablancour, Dr. Caius, Mons. le Medecin, the Mock Duke, Dumps, Clown in As You Like It, David in the Rivals, Crabtree, Cobbler in Forty Thieves, Sheep-face, Canton, Gravedigger, Molkus, Gabriel, Crack, Label, Verges, Abel Day, Francis in Henry IVth., Joey, Launcelot, and Dougal.

He was scrupulously honest in giving *all* the words of his author—seldom indulging in liberties with the text or action of his part. His pride was to excel in little characters, and he would frequently render a part of twenty or thirty lines only very formidable to the other actors. During his most comic efforts, it was amusing to hear his doleful complaints of diseases, which existed chiefly in his imagination, under the influence of which he would sometimes work himself up to a frenzy of terror, lest he should be wholly unable to finish the performance he was engaged in. Notwithstanding his unbounded popularity, he seldom received a good benefit—at least as compared with the other comedians. He realized the mortifying stage truth that the principal *part* will always receive the highest honors and largest profits. This he keenly felt and often complained of. The failure of his benefits might



be chiefly attributed to the very small number of his personal acquaintances, a class which usually add their friendly exertions to the professional claims of a favorite player on the occasion of his benefit night. In the company he was a great favorite, and his depression and distant manner were subjects of much regret. He had little powers of continuous conversation, but he would occasionally delight his friends by some out-of-the-way observation, or touch of that dry humor, which rendered his acting so attractive. He had always a ready hand for any benevolent purpose, but seemed half ashamed of what he might have well been proud of; he cherished a very few friends, and professed himself to be "a cold hearted man"—a character to which his fellow actors denied his claim. His recollections of America were ever warm and grateful; the very last letter received in this country from him, contained an affectionate message of regard to his old manager, and the warmest assurances of respect and esteem. For some time before his death a few years since, at the age of seventy-five, in Guernsey, he entertained a purpose to return to America, and finish his days in his favorite city. He lived with few friends, but died without an enemy: and though his retirement could not be said, like Garrick's, "to eclipse the gaiety of nations," yet it certainly tended "to diminish the stock of harmless amusement."

I remember no actor so difficult to describe as Blissett. His style, if one can so call it, (being greatly varied, according to the part he assumed) was marked by a singular truthfulness and reality. His French characters proved him no mannerist, for each was a distinct portrait—no one reminding you of the other;

yet this variety was all within a very limited circle of parts. A *lady artist* once observed:—"There is no drawing a comparison between Blissett and Bernard or Jefferson; *he* reminds one of an exquisite miniature, while the others present highly finished full portraits." Yet each of these artists was nearly perfect in his department. Blissett, from a diffidence in his own ability, added to his imaginary physical sufferings, was always fearful of undertaking characters of great length, or requiring exertion. Dennis Brulgruddery is the only *long part*, as the actors call it, which he could be prevailed on to attempt. In this he succeeded admirably, as he also did in several other and smaller Irish characters. His brogue was as true as his French or German accent.

In the spring of 1822, at Baltimore, Labasse and Sautin (the first French dancers ever engaged here,) appeared to moderate houses. Dwyer, who appeared about the same time, was hardly more attractive; he brought \$287 and \$220. A new American operatic drama, by a gentleman of Baltimore, with music by Mr. Clifton, was produced for one night; and Pelby first acted here as Rolla, Octavian and Hamlet. Cooper made his first appearance for two years to houses of \$255 and \$336. In the course of this engagement, Miss Tilden (afterwards Mrs. Bernard,) made a very successful attempt as Virginia. "Marion," by Noah, closed a feeble season.

Charles Mathews now first appeared on the American stage at Baltimore, on the 23d of September, 1822, in the "Trip to Paris," and continued for nine nights as follows:

Trip to Paris.....	\$752 00
“ .....	385 00
Country Cousins.....	468 00
Earth, Air, and Water.....	489 00
Poor Gentleman, and the Diligence.....	471 00
Heir at Law, and Polly Packet.....	431 00
Road to Ruin, and Christmas at Brighton.....	222 00
Youthful days, and Mons. Tonson, (first time).....	579 50
Ways and Means, and Mons. Tonson.....	309 00
Road to Ruin, and Sleep-walker for his benefit.....	1001 00

He also on this night gave his incomparable imitations of Kemble, Braham, Cooke, Kean, Incledon, Bannister, Blanchard, Fawcett, and Munden. The smallness of the receipts, during the engagement, will cause surprise. They were, however, materially affected by a partial prevalence of yellow fever at Fells' Point, a place immediately adjoining the city, a matter which created a considerable panic. This calamity, added to the depressed state of the times, rendered this season one of the most ruinous which we encountered. Booth followed to \$237, \$188, \$123, \$207, \$147, \$222, 124, 237; his benefit, Hamlet, came to \$269.

After the very unproductive seasons in Walnut street, the audience always looking back to the old house in Chestnut street, became impatient for its revival; and at the urgent request of the stockholders, a communication to that effect was sent to the managers, expressing a strong wish that the rebuilding should commence with the least possible delay, or that the managers should decline it at once. After a short pause, it was concluded to comply with this request, and the subscription list at once opened, was filled within three days. A lease was granted (in consideration, as was expressed, of personal feelings towards the lessees),

of the most liberal conditions, and unshackled by any of those annoying stipulations which have too often restrained the well meant exertions of the manager, and rendered the property unpopular and unproductive. The lease was given for ten years at a rent of \$3000, renewable for ten more at the expiration of the first term, in the event of either of the lessees being desirous to continue it.

In February of 1822, a letter was received from Mr. Tyrone Power, who, many years after, became so well known in America as an actor of *comic* parts, and whose melancholy loss at sea in the *President*, called forth such vivid feelings of sympathy from all who remembered him. As he was never known in this country but in comic parts—with which he seemed to be absolutely identified—the very soul and embodiment of drollery, it will be read with interest by all who ever saw him on the stage, as evincing the strong feeling of genius, the quality of which the possessor never much developed. He seems at this time to have relied on his power as a tragedian, much more than as a performer of comic parts. He says, after stating his success at Brighton, Margate, Dublin, Newcastle, &c.

To W. B. Wood Esq.

*Sir* :—Learning that you propose opening the new theatre in Philadelphia, during the approaching December, I trouble you in consequence with proposals which I think may answer your purpose and mine. It is my wish by rather a novel effort (the only way to insure success in this age of novelties,) to do something more than I can hope to effect under the existing system of the Theatres Royal. In explanation, it will be necessary to say I have led the *first comedy*, and the whole range of melodrama in Dublin, and have also led the *first tragedy* at Newcastle, Brighton, Margate, &c., and in both lines have been successful, so much so; that I am encouraged to hope not only from the voice of a Provincial audience, but from the opinions of some of our best judges in the theatri-

cal world, that it would answer my purpose to put into effect what I have for some time aimed to do, viz: to play a range of characters in *tragedy* and comedy of as varied a description as possible, for instance, *Richard*, *Young Rapid*, *Sir Giles*, *Doricourt*, *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Rover*, &c. This, if a fortunate hit, could not fail from its novelty to be a profitable one. I shall be happy to meet you on a footing, that securing me from any pecuniary loss, shall leave little risk for you. A salary is not my object, as I have a very good one here. I aim at something effective, both as to fame and fortune. Therefore, if you would on these premises clear my expenses, giving me a fair run of twelve or fourteen nights, I will endeavor to make an engagement to mutual advantage.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

TYRONE POWER.

It will be perceived that Mr. Power never once glanced at the line of parts to which he was afterwards elevated with such advantage to himself, as well as the public; and indeed it is said that his discovery of his great comic powers was very much an accident. On the death of Conner, the favored representative of Irish characters at Covent Garden, the managers found many of their most attractive pieces disabled for want of an Irishman, to represent his countrymen. In this dilemma they examined the London and provincial companies in vain, to find a substitute for Conner. A principal performer, who had observed Power's aspiring character and versatility, suggested that it might be well to make a trial of him, as he was a man not likely to decline an effort which, if successful, promised mutual advantage. The confident boldness which distinguished his acting in later days, caught eagerly at the welcome opportunity, and his first attempt at once stamped him one of the most popular actors of his day. Authors were liberally employed in writing dramas for the display of his newly discovered talents, and they were now exhibited with unequivocal success. His la-

ter history and melancholy fate are well known. I find it recorded that Power's great predecessor, "Irish Johnstone," was indebted to successful rivalry for the large fame and fortune he acquired. Incedon and Johnstone, the principal singers at Covent Garden, were nearly of equal estimation for a time. The former, however, by his extraordinary power was soon enabled so effectually to eclipse his rival, as to put an end to competition or comparison between them, in the line of song. At this crisis, Johnstone, who was a man of prudent and business-like habits, perceived the necessity of changing his ground, and happily conceived the plan of attempting the Irish parts, which at that time were but imperfectly filled. His success, like Power's, was extraordinary and complete, while his musical abilities, though not equal to Incedon's, were yet quite enough to gain him an advantage denied to most actors in this department. In this respect Power, who could not sing well, suffered in many of his characters by comparison with Johnstone. Power, in his early efforts, was unfortunate in tragedy, although he was at times not without a fine pathetic effect, as was proved by his performance in the affecting drama of "St. Patrick's Eve." His anticipations of future eminence were steady and undoubted. While in London he told a friend that although his salary had been raised to £2 per week, he intended soon to make it twelve, which he soon after really did. He felt no less prophetically inspired than the great man, (I forget whether it was Hardwicke or Eldon,) who determined to be Lord Chancellor of England, and soon afterwards became so.

The failure of the last two seasons now rendered

necessary something more exciting than the legitimate drama, and in the autumn of 1822 an arrangement was made with the celebrated equestrian, Hunter, for four nights, for an exhibition of feats on the tight-rope. But though suited to the circus, the exhibition proved lamentably unproductive to us. The receipts were \$182, \$188, \$83, \$104, and benefit \$218. This too was at a nightly expense of nearly \$300.\* Mrs. Battersby, a clever actress from the New York theatre, was well received as Juliana, Irish Widow, Widow Cheerly, and others. Mr. F. Brown, from the Boston theatre, acted a number of nights to discouraging houses, although occasionally aided by Mr. and Mrs. Duff, and H. Wallack; receipts varying from \$200 to \$79. A sequel called "The Death of Life in London," was acted with little notice of any kind. H. Wallack followed in a star engagement to \$124, \$57, \$160, \$148, \$66, \$102; benefit \$155. The season averaged to the treasury less than \$150 nightly. Mrs. Battersby acted Hamlet and Irish Widow for her own benefit, without attraction.

The new Philadelphia theatre, being the same edifice now known as the Chestnut street theatre, opened on the 2d of December, 1822, much to the satisfaction of the public as well as the actors. The following address, by Wm. Sprague, of Boston, was the favored effort among a host of competitors, and on the opening of the new Philadelphia theatre was spoken by Mr. Wood.

\* I have frequently spoken of the receipts of the theatre. I do not remember that I have mentioned the ordinary expenses of a night. Without this the reader would, of course, be at a loss to know when we lost and when we did not. At our establishment the nightly expenses were usually \$300, or thereabouts.

## ADDRESS.

When learning slumbered in the convent's shade,  
 And holy craft the groping nations swayed,  
 By dullness banned, the muses wandered long,  
 Each lyre neglected, and forgot each song,  
 Till heaven's bright halo wreathed the drama's dome,  
 And great Apollo called the pilgrims home.  
 Then their glad harps, that charmed old Greece, they swept,  
 Their altars thronged, and joy's high sabbath kept.  
 Young Genius there his glorious banners reared,  
 To float forever loved, forever feared.  
 The mystic legends of the cloister known,  
 Old Superstition tumbled from his throne;  
 Back to his cell the king of gloom retired,  
 The buskin triumphed, and the world admired!

Since that proud hour, through each unfettered age,  
 The sons of light have clustered round the stage.  
 From fiction's realms her richest spoils they bring,  
 And pleasure's walls with rapture's echoes ring.  
 Here hermit wisdom lays his mantle down,  
 To win with smiles the heart that fears his frown;  
 In mirth's gay robe he talks to wandering youth,  
 And grandeur listens to the stranger, Truth.  
 Here beauty's daughters bend with tingling ear,  
 When love repeats the tale to love so dear;  
 Their sacred bowers the sons of learning quit,  
 To rove with fancy and to feast with wit.  
 All come to gaze, the valiant and the vain,  
 Virtue's bright troop, and fashion's glittering train.  
 Here labor rests, pale grief forgets her wo,  
 And vice, that prints his slime on all below,  
 Even vice looks on!—For this the stage was reared,  
 To scourge the fiend, so scorned and yet so feared.  
 The halls of judgment, as the moral school,  
 His foot defiles, the bronzed and reckless fool:  
 God's lovely temple shall behold him there,  
 With eye upturned and aspect false as fair.  
 Then hither let the unblushing villain roam,  
 Satire shall knot its whip and strike it home.  
 The stage one groan from his dark soul shall draw,  
 That mocks religion, and that laughs at law!



To grace the stage, the bard's careering mind  
 Seeks other worlds, and leaves his own behind;  
 He lures from air its bright, unprisoned forms,  
 Breaks through the tomb and death's dull region storms.  
 O'er ruined realms he pours creative day,  
 And slumbering kings his mighty voice obey.  
 From its damp shroud the long-laid spirit walks,  
 And round the murderer's bed in vengeance stalks,  
 Poor maniac beauty brings her cypress wreath,  
 Her smile a moonbeam o'er a blasted heath  
 Round some cold grave sweet flowers she  
 And lost to reason, still to love is true; she pleads;  
 Hate shuts his soul when dove-eyed servant bleeds;  
 Power lifts the axe, and truth's burning eyes,  
 Remorse drops anguish from his shuddering dies.  
 Feels hell's eternal worm, forsakes the dust,  
 War's trophied minion, and waves his sword of rust,  
 Grasps his worn shield, and waves his sword of rust,  
 Springs to the slaughter at the trumpet's call,  
 Again to conquer again to fall.

With heads to censure, yet with souls to feel,  
 Friends to the stage! receive our frank appeal.  
 No surly lay we frame; acquit your trust;  
 The drama guard! be gentle, but be just!  
 Gain her courts, unbribed, unslumbering stand;  
 scourge lawless wit, and leaden dulness brand,  
 Lash pert pretence, but bashful merit spare;  
 His firstlings hail, and speak the trembler fair.  
 Yet shall he cast his cloud, and proudly claim  
 The loftiest station and the brightest fame.  
 So from his mountain-perch, through seas of light,  
 Our untamed eagle takes his glorious flight:  
 To Heaven the monarch-bird exulting springs,  
 And shakes the night-fog from his mighty wings.  
 Bards all our own shall yet enchant their age,  
 And pour redeeming splendor o'er the stage.  
 For them, for you, truth hoards a nobler theme,  
 Than ever blest young fancy's sweetest dream.  
 Bold hearts shall kindle, and bright eyes shall gaze,  
 When genius wakes the tale of other days,  
 Sheds life's own lustre o'er each holy deed  
 Of him who planted, and of him who freed!

And now, fair pile, thou chaste and glorious shrine,  
 Our fondest wish, our warmest smile be thine.  
 The home of genius and the court of taste,  
 In beauty raised, be thou by beauty graced.  
 Within thy walls may wit's gay bevy throng,  
 To drink the magic of the poet's song.  
 Within thy walls may youth and goodness draw  
 From every scene a lecture or a law.  
 So bright thy fane, be priest and offering pure,  
 And friends shall bless, and bigot foes endure:  
 Long, long be spared to echo truths sublime,  
 And lift thy pillars through the storms of time.

The first play was the never-tiring "School for Scandal," with the following cast:—Sir Peter Teazle, *Warren*; Sir Oliver Surface, *Francis*; Charles, *Wood*; Joseph, *H. Wallack*; Sir Benjamin Backbite, *Johnson*; Crabtree, *Jefferson*; Rowly, *Hatwell*; Moses, *Burke*; Careless, *Darley*; Trip, *J. Jefferson*; Snake, *Greene*; Lady Teazle, *Mrs. Wood*; Lady Sneerwell, *Mrs. Lafalle*; Mrs. Candor, *Mrs. Francis*; Maria, *Mrs. H. Wallack*; Maid, *Mrs. Greene*.

Much attention had been bestowed on the safety as well as the comforts of the audience, by large doors of exit and entrance from the boxes. A convenient and handsome entrance had been provided to the pit from Sixth street, thus preventing the confusion of too many auditors meeting at the Chestnut street doors; the gallery entrance was from the rear of the house, on Carpenter street. This excellent arrangement, however, proved unsatisfactory to a portion of the public. On the second week we were surprised to learn that serious objections had been made to the pit entrance, but we were unable to learn on what the objection was founded. An explanation soon appeared in the shape of this inflammatory hand-bill:

EQUALITY,  
OR THE  
NEW THEATRE  
AS IT SHOULD BE.

To the independent citizens, who, from a long experience and due appreciation of their rights in the great charter of citizenship, can well understand their relations, and spurn at any indignities in the social compact, the following hints may not be unnecessarily offered:—

You, citizens, whose patronage the drama is proud to acknowledge, and whose inclination, taste, or means may lead to the Pit or Gallery, why subject you to an entrance comparatively less respectable than what has been assigned to those whose *assumed* superiority has led to distinctions wherein *no* distinctions are at all justifiable?

The national spirit of America has triumphed over the pride of European armies; shall that spirit slumber under the degradation of European distinctions?

There was evidence that some of the persons connected with the McKenzie riot had an agency in this attempt to injure the theatre, under the false pretence of disrespect to a portion of our auditors, to whom we were indebted for the kindest support. We deemed it proper to notice the handbill by a respectful announcement, that in consequence of partial disapprobation of the pit arrangement, a door in Chestnut street would be immediately provided. This, though it was an expensive alteration, was done; and the Sixth street entrance was afterwards given for the use of a fire engine house.

Previous to the opening of the building, a good-natured discussion arose as to the motto for the proscenium.

A tasteful moral maxim was considered to be an appropriate object for the eye to rest upon, in entering a place dedicated to the improvement as well as the delight of an auditor. We recalled some of these

sentences, which were generally selected from Shakspeare, Pope, &c. For a long series of years the standard motto had been

“Veluti in speculum ;”

Then followed several, such as these :

“Shoot folly as it flies.”

“For useful mirth, and salutary woe.”

“To raise the genius, and to mend the heart.”

“To catch the manners living as they rise.”

“All the world’s a stage.”

“To hold as ’twere the mirror up to Nature.”

That which appeared above the stage of the first Chestnut street theatre was a quotation from Titus Andronicus :

“The eagle suffers little birds to sing.”\*

We finally adopted one more remarkable for its safety than for any novelty or special point.

“To raise the genius, and to mend the heart.”

With our new house we were prepared to offer eminent talent and musical novelties. The greater part of Mathew’s pieces were entirely new, as well as the character of the entertainments. Mr. Wilson first

\* The aptness of this motto arose from the fact that at this time, 1793, there were yet some remains of municipal regulations, rather stringent, on the Theatre, and which were removed upon the prospect of a splendid and well regulated theatre being in progress, and under the special patronage of the most respectable portion of society. Several years before, stage exhibitions stood by law prohibited, but were disguised under the title of concerts, select dramatic readings, &c., and winked at by the authorities, from the propriety with which they were conducted. The release from these prohibitions and penalties is delicately alluded to in this last motto, which was the tasteful and appropriate selection of Mr. A. J. Dallas, one of the most liberal patrons of the Drama.

appeared as Pierre with approbation, and became a permanent member of the company. Cooper came as usual, and acted nineteen nights to \$540 per night, and a benefit of \$424. During these nights Coleridge's noble tragedy of Remorse was revived for this actor. He gained a large addition to his fame by the acting of Ordonio, as he had done in Zanga. It was the general impression that the best efforts of this favorite actor were exhibited at this period. Wallack no doubt roused him to his best exertions. Wemyss first appeared in America as Vapid, Rover, Doricourt, Prince of Wales and others, previous to his taking rank in the regular company. Mrs. Tatnall, an actress of provincial celebrity, played a short engagement with varied success, and a benefit of \$1012. J. Wallack succeeded, and to nightly receipts of \$445. Subsequently a coalition with Cooper for five nights produced \$573 nightly, Cooper's benefit \$1231, Wallack's \$863. Booth now acted three nights to \$264, \$267, and \$300. The managers had strongly urged the transposition of these performances to the end of Mathews' nights, now commencing. As we had foreseen, a feeling of intense curiosity to witness what was coming would be likely to depress the attraction of any one who should appear immediately. Mr. Booth's admirers were, however, of a different opinion; and he himself had repelled the suggestion with much indignation, "begging it to be understood that it was not his custom to give way to Mr. Mathews' or to any one else." Mathews' engagement occupied but four of the six weekly nights, and Booth was to occupy the remaining two. The experiment of Booth's three nights changed his views, and little argument was now

necessary to obtain his consent to a postponement until Mathews should finish. An amusing part of this history was, that Mathews (or rather Mr. Price,) objected to Booth's acting on the off nights under the pretence that it might weaken Mathews! Of course no attention was paid to suggestions interfering with the contracts of others, and Booth consented to give way to Matthews for a few weeks. The novelty, as well as the rare excellence of Mathews' performances, caused an excitement rarely equalled. The receipts for seventeen nights amounted to the large sum of \$13,751. His benefit \$1312. A false notion had prevailed with some, that Mathews' best talents were to be found employed in characters of mere mimicry, and prepared expressly for him. The public approbation bestowed on his Lord Duberly, Dr. Pangloss, (for he appeared in both,) Ollapod, Rover, Twineall, Morbleu, and many others, quickly dispelled the illusion.

Booth now resumed, and with even less success than he had before. It was truly mortifying to witness performances to such receipts as he brought. "King Lear," \$237; "Town and Country," \$296; "Octavian," \$167; his benefit, "Distressed Mother," produced a receipt of \$492. We had now the first appearance of Mrs. Duff, since her late very decided success in Boston. For the first time she seemed to have made in that city a discovery of powers, up to that time latent, and now destined to astonish and delight future audiences. Her success as Hermione fully confirmed the judgment of her Boston friends. She also acted Statira. Duff acted Mr. Oakly for a benefit. Another Zyanga made a first and only appearance. Among the novelties, Lord Byron's "Two

Foscari" was produced, and acted carefully to the satisfaction of the audience.

The season closed with four representations of "Tom and Jerry."

On the propriety of acting this peculiar drama, great difference of opinion occurred. The unchanging pictures of low vice, without a single redeeming quality of humanity or virtue, were objected to by many; for, upon the receipt of this piece from London, with all its models of scenery, dresses, and character, it appeared at once to many, both actors and auditors, as a drama which presented scarcely anything but pictures of such an aspect. These persons could not understand the force of Logic's philosophy, which, if it means anything, seems to express this principle, "That in order to guard yourself against gamblers, boxing, and other sporting characters, beggars, house swindlers, and the endless variety of cheats and ruffians, it is absolutely necessary to become their associate." What possible thing, it was asked by many, can bring any man of decency or character into any, beyond a momentary association with such persons as these. The notion that one must acquire "Slang" in order to understand a "Kiddy" of Covent Garden or St. Giles, seemed to them a shocking and dangerous doctrine. No instructions are given to enable such unlicked cubs as Jerry Hawthorne or Jemmy Green to make a palpable show among very common persons, yet we see these very green subjects transferred to the Argyle Rooms, and Hail fellow! well met! with the most exclusive establishment in Europe. The disgusting scenes of riot and debauch were urged, of course, against the production. The mixture of well-dressed

vagabonds, with those of less imposing appearance, seemed without moral or object. Besides this, the piece originally produced at a minor theatre, although ably represented by a high class of talent expressly suited to it, and mainly depending on individual pictures as the beggars, &c., was by these very peculiarities unsuited to a transatlantic audience. These were chiefly the objections urged by patrons and real friends of the theatre, who were incapable of sacrificing the properties of the stage to a momentary curiosity. Other and powerful objections were created behind the curtain.

The chief peculiarity of this piece consists in the fact, that the under characters are in effect the leading features, and almost entirely the objects of amusement or interest, and are thus rendered of dangerous importance. Dull and questionable dialogue, with the drudgery of endless changes of dress, engross the labors of the actor without a possibility of distinction, beyond the privilege of being occasionally knocked down by some vulgar ruffian, or admitted to the revels of the most degraded of both sexes. In every theatre the department known as "supernumeraries" must be always an object of interest to the managers, as on their conduct and deportment must depend the effect of many important scenes. In the progress of time these persons, in our theatre especially, had been brought into a system and regularity as creditable to themselves as it was valuable to the theatre. The nature of such scenes as I have spoken of, placing the auxiliaries fully on the same footing as the principal performers, led to a total and most injurious change. Throughout the numerous scenes of drunken riot,



fighting without cause or object, violations of peace and decency, the thoughtless aids, to whom we necessarily assigned these parts, were at once invested with an unlimited power to make themselves conspicuous, and to engross the largest share of applause. Thus suddenly elevated to a false position, it was not surprising that a neglect of order and propriety became painfully evident, and that when their services were required in pieces of a different character, precluding the hope of distinction, this demoralization of a useful "arm of the service" should continue. As a fact it did continue, in a more or less degree, to the end of my theatrical career; and the decorum hitherto observed on the stage, and in the dressing-rooms, gave way to noisy disputes, and not unfrequently to earnest exhibitions of the pugilistic skill exhibited so successfully before the curtain. Most persons of judgment can understand the moral objections to the play. But the objections it has in another view—the professional ones—cannot be appreciated but by a manager.

On a careful review, however, of numerous opinions which we had solicited, the number of Tom and Jerry's advocates so greatly exceeded their opponents, that we felt ourselves no longer at liberty to hesitate, and the play was introduced under every advantage of careful preparation. Its success was only moderate.

We had at this time underlet the Walnut street theatre to a branch of the New York company under Cowell's management, where pieces were produced and well acted to a long succession of good houses, evidently more to the satisfaction of the public than at the Chestnut street theatre, where new influences, of which I speak hereafter, had now begun to prevail.

The starring system now began to show its baleful effects on the actors, whose benefits after a season of extreme labor uniformly failed. Jefferson's only reached \$697. The season of ninety-one nights brought a nightly average of \$555, which, after paying stars and benefits, left \$420 per night to the theatre. A theatrical spirit, however, had evidently revived, and encouraged every exertion on our part.

The autumn season of 1822 proved wholly unproductive, notwithstanding the introduction of "Tom and Jerry," with the new and appropriate addition of a correct model of the treading-mill, as now in use; being fourteen feet long, and four in diameter, and an exact representation of the original one.

Mr. and Mrs. Duff's engagement in the spring of 1823 produced nightly receipts of \$210. Mr. Duff's benefit \$299, Mrs. Duff's \$634; after which they combined with the regular company to the end of the season. Payne's "Adeline," from the French, made no sensation; the same may be said of "The North American," by a gentleman of Baltimore.

## CHAPTER XV.

1823-1824.

Change of prices—Duff's return from Boston—Mrs. Battersby—A manager's difficulties—Sickness among the company—Cooper—Booth injudiciously compared with Kean—Benefit for Deaf and Dumb Asylum—Another for the Greek fund—Cooper acts some new parts very effectively—Pearman's first appearance—De Camp, uncle to Mrs. Butler—Barker's Superstition—Cooper's non-arrival in time to play—His perilous efforts to get here through the ice—Conway, Cooper, and Conway—Cost of Stars—Decline of patronage at Baltimore—The nation's guest—The various causes suggested to us for the failure of the Baltimore season—Conway again—Mrs. Barnes—Stevens, the dwarf—Mr. Clason—Pelby—Burroughs' first appearance—Total failure of *Der Freyschutz*, which though so beautiful an opera, was never attractive to numbers—First failure of the Washington season—No better success at Baltimore.

THE Philadelphia season, commencing December 2d, 1823, was marked by an injudicious change of prices, in imitation of the rates at the New York theatre; rates, however, which had never been approved either by our judgment or our experience. That greater numbers patronize the theatre because the prices are seventy-five, fifty, and twenty-five cents, instead of a larger sum, had been emphatically disproved by our books; and a slight inclination to exclusiveness of the better class by making it too cheap, would of course be as prejudicial, as the reverse of this would confessedly be. Children were now admitted at

half price, one-fourth of the price previously paid without the least objection.

Duff, one of the most valuable actors, was engaged. Returning from unsuccessful management at Boston, and various starring enterprises, he sensibly resolved to resume the character of a regular, in which he had been greatly distinguished. Mrs. Battersby, an actress of beauty, as well as ability, now became a member of our company, and would have proved no mean acquisition, had she been willing to relinquish the coarse and doubtful applause bestowed by a few on her representations of Hamlet, Irish Widow, Macbeth, Joan of Arc, and other male characters, for the more substantial approbation of the public, who proved, beyond doubt, their approbation of her talents within proper limits. Our records of this season present a fact properly mentioned in connection with it, and which shows the hazards and incertitudes against which a manager may labor after having made every possible provision for the completion of his plan for the season. How would it have been possible to guard against such casualties as these? Duff, ill seven nights; Jefferson, ill nine nights at Baltimore; in the Philadelphia season, Duff, ill seventeen consecutive nights; Duff, ill again nine nights; H. Wallack, ten; and Mrs. Duff, forty-three nights. Cooper's engagement produced \$420 nightly, and a benefit of \$435. Booth followed in six nights, acting to \$381 average, and a benefit of \$1038. On this occasion he gave the following odd announcement, which had the effect of collecting an audience, and a receipt worthy of his ability. It will be readily seen how deeply past disappointments left their impression.

“An essay having recently been made with success by Mr. Booth, at the Boston theatre, to satisfy doubts as to the possibility of one actor closely resembling another, without any imitation by either—to accommodate the wishes of many citizens of Philadelphia, Mr. Booth will this evening recite a soliloquy from Richard III., first in his own manner, and afterwards as a celebrated tragedian, leaving the originality of his (Mr. B’s) efforts to the decision of the audience.”

Here Booth gave an instance of his subserviency to the flattery of unwise friends. What but infatuation could have induced these person to revive the question of originality, on which Booth had been fatally wrecked in more than one case? Kean was no longer present, and Booth possessed talents which, if not obscured by indiscretion, were sufficient to secure fame and fortune. It has ever been a deep cause of regret to the more thinking part of his admirers, that this useless question should have been revived.

A benefit in aid of the Philadelphia Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, produced a receipt of only \$405, yielding a very trifling profit. A benefit in aid of the Greek fund was more fortunate, reaching \$922. Booth volunteered on this occasion, and acted Hamlet greatly to the satisfaction of the audience. Cooper, on whom we mainly depended during the illness of our principal performer, succeeded well in an engagement, during which he appeared as Selim, in the “Bride of Abydos,” with brilliant effect. He also added to the variety of our pieces by appearing as Alasco, Durazzo, and Orsino. This long engagement averaged \$396, with a benefit of \$895. Pearman, a sweet singer from Covent Garden, appeared as a substitute

for Phillips, and to a limited degree succeeded. He was aided in his engagement by V. De Camp, uncle to Mrs. Butler, and an excellent general comedian. Their nights afforded little to the treasury; Pearman's benefit brought \$705; De Camp's \$625. The charming opera of "Clari," as translated by Payne, was now produced; and by one of those amusing blunders, which still are common ones, the bill announced all the music except "Home, Sweet Home," one of the sweetest things in it. The averaged receipts of Pearman and De Camp was \$286. H. Wallack now became tired of a regular actor's drudgery, and essayed once more as a star, at a most inconvenient moment for us, as Duff was, by frequent attacks of rheumatism, rendered wholly uncertain. Booth made a second attempt, with a success wholly unworthy of his acting, which at this time was still excellent, particularly in Richard, Shylock, and Brutus. His benefit was only \$353. He acted Zanga also, without adding to his reputation. Cooper again averaged for six nights \$426. His benefit, King Lear, brought \$422. Major Barker's drama of "Superstition" was acted with deserved applause. A benefit was now announced "For the purpose of completing the front of the theatre, by the construction of a marble balustrade and pedestal, on which it is intended to place a statue of Shakspeare."

The benefit fell considerably short of the night's expenses. On the 21st of February, the first time such a thing had occurred during his connection with us, Cooper failed to arrive in season for his engagement. This will be noticed hereafter. Pearman attempted a course of operas to \$184, \$183, \$164, \$194, \$135,

and a benefit of \$426. By this musical engagement the theatre suffered a loss of more than \$600, while the singer received \$126. We now declined any further experiments in the way of operas. Booth for one night played Selim in the "Bride of Abydos" to \$171. During passion week the theatre was closed. It reopened (after a benefit or two) with Conway, his first appearance in Philadelphia. His receipts were :

Hamlet.....	\$526
Coriolanus.....	420
Macbeth.....	337
Provoked Husband.....	457
Rule a Wife.....	218
Benefit, (Gamester).....	466

Cooper and Conway now combined their powers for seven nights to the following receipts :

Venice Preserved.....	668
Othello.....	737
Julius Cæsar.....	357
Orphan.....	493
Henry IV.....	496
School for Scandal.....	719
King John.....	212
Cooper's Benefit.....	888
Conway's Benefit.....	889

It must be admitted that the starring system was carried out this year, as the following sums were paid to stars, leaving to the theatre a sum just about sufficient to pay the charges.

Booth 12 nights and benefit.....	\$1046 61
Cooper 24 " .....	1880 50
Pearman 11 " .....	856 45
De Camp 7 " .....	350 50
Conway 5 " .....	437 25
Greek benefit.....	622 50

Deaf and Dumb.....	105	25
Cooper and Conway.....	2013	50
Performer's benefits.....	2599	50
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Total.....	\$9912	06

The single instance just recorded, of Cooper's non-arrival in time to act, is worthy of notice, as well as his extraordinary efforts to fulfil his duty. During his stay of a few hours in New York, between his nights of acting, the North river became suddenly so completely blocked up by the ice, that all attempts to cross were for a time abandoned by the usual means of passage. In this dilemma he engaged the services of a pilot boat, on the condition of paying \$100, in case he should be landed in Jersey within a specified time, or \$50 should the attempt prove unsuccessful. The latter was the case, and the party returned to New York, after a long and perilous effort. It is due to the principal stars to state that these failures rarely occurred with them, but were chiefly confined to persons of the second or third class, whose unimportance caused little inconvenience to the theatre or audience.

While the Philadelphia theatre at this time—the autumn of 1824—was hourly returning to a safe and wholesome state, that of Baltimore was dwindling down to nearly total neglect. Stars of all degrees and magnificent spectacles were produced at unsparing cost by a powerful company, but all in vain. The season first introduced Mr. Conway, to an average of \$240. His benefit was strengthened by Booth, and by Mr. and Mrs. Duff, producing \$738. Mrs. Duff (as a star) only reached \$116 per night and a benefit of \$408. "Lafayette," a drama by Woodworth, was acted twice, and was soon followed on the 25th November by a visit



from the "Nation's Guest." The entertainments were "School for Scandal" and "Romp," the receipts only \$454. Several other novelties were offered, the most successful of which was the "Bride of Abydos," for seven nights, to houses of \$349. This proved the only saving feature of the season, which averaged but \$252. The decline of this theatre, on the spot where public spirit had sustained us through years of great commercial distress, and where the horrors of war had been brought to our very doors, was quite unexpected. Some strange communications were addressed to us, no doubt in a friendly spirit, offering various reasons for this decay. Some suggested that the seasons, spring and autumn, were unfavorable, because unfashionable, and that winter was the only proper time for the theatre—not recollecting that our divided seasons occurred at these periods, when the city was crowded with country merchants and strangers, by whom so large a portion of support had been bestowed. Another discovered that the house was too limited in size, and inferior in this as well as in other respects to Philadelphia and New York, and argued that the pride of possessing an extensive theatre would necessarily lead to its being nightly filled. Another found the cause in the absence of a constant succession of musical talent, which he maintained was the sole wish of the public, who did not by any means conceive actors or acting necessary. How far this friend was likely to have been right, I have already furnished some means of judging, in what I have said, in a former part of this book, as to the wisdom of uniting musical and dramatic entertainments in one management or house. Another advocated the erection of a second theatre, as a sure means of excit-

ing a competition favorable to both. This plan was adopted some time after, with what success is known to those who were familiar with its concluding history.

This active season of December, 1824, commenced with Booth's acting six nights to receipts of \$410, and a benefit of \$505. Cooper soon succeeded to the same average as Booth, and a benefit of \$812. After a short interval Conway appeared for six nights to houses of only \$254, and a benefit of \$767. This feeble engagement depressed his spirits greatly, and he left us in deep despondency. Cooper and Mrs. Barnes acted seven nights, and with the occasional aid of Cherry and Fair Star averaged \$401. Mrs. Barnes' benefit \$658, Cooper's \$372. The pleasant little comedy, of "Sweethearts and Wives," was allowed to be well acted, and worthy its success. "Mr. Stevens, the celebrated Dwarf," appeared as "Tom Thumb," first night \$672, second \$189. Mr. Clason acted Hamlet for one night, and with general approbation. A delightful comedy, altered from an old English drama, called "A woman never Vexed," was produced to good houses and unusual applause, the first house \$1138. Pelby played again, but without attraction. W. Burroughs, from the London minor theatres, made a favorable impression in Romeo, Frederic Friberg, Young Mirabel, and several melo-dramatic characters. His first engagement averaged \$245, and a benefit of \$848. Much expense and labor had been bestowed on the famous opera of "Der Freyschutz," which was first produced to \$464, \$216, \$290, and \$205. From this piece we expected a certain and large profit. Public expectation appeared at the highest point, and additions to the band, chorusses, and other appointments were made on

a scale until this time new to our theatre. The heavy loss of time and money by this experiment nearly discouraged any further musical attempts. It was a subject of frequent remark, that this drama received less patronage from the German part of the audience than any other opera ever produced. A gentleman of that nation remarked to me, with some unkindness, "that there were more of his countrymen *on the stage*, than *before the curtain*." He alluded to the chorus, executed almost wholly by them. The extra expenditures incident to this piece raised our nightly charge to \$400. By some the unexpected neglect was attributed to a want of superior singers for the principal parts. This was disproved by the fact, that when revived with star singers, approved in London, its success was even less. Splendid as the music must be considered, its character and the mysterious fable has always appeared unsatisfactory, with the single exception of the *incantation scene*. The French opera corps of New Orleans produced a version of this opera, with more effect certainly than was ever reached by English singers, although of very superior talent.

Our Baltimore season, in the spring of 1825, had been anticipated by a company under the direction of Phillips and Duineford, at the opposite theatre, and proved ruinously unproductive. "Der Freyschutz" was as little cared for here as it had been in Philadelphia, the receipts being but \$228, \$130, and \$73. Duff continued ill during three weeks of the season, to our great inconvenience. T. Burke died here, 6th June, 1825. The Washington season for the first time wholly failed.

Little improvement was apparent in our Baltimore season. Our receipts averaged only \$225. Bur-

roughs, and a pretended Greek conjurer, failed of attraction even on their benefit nights. "William Tell" was the only popular piece of the season, and was played to \$910 in three nights. Fielding and Garner were now added to the company. Cooper acted two nights to \$352 and \$538. Burroughs was an actor of great value in a regular theatre, and we should gladly have retained him, if his unconquerable passion for *starring* and managing had not rendered the reception of an important offer unworthy even of his answer.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1825.

Cooper opens the season—A riot is threatened at Kean's coming, but is prevented—Kean's last engagement in Philadelphia—Mr. Lee—Miss Lydia Kelly's first appearance and great attractiveness—Acts along with Cooper—They play on the author's benefit night—Mrs. Mangeon—Conway's last appearance—Some notice of him—His melancholy state of spirits and subsequent fate—An episode suggested by a professional mistake of this fine actor—The impracticability of two stars moving in one orbit—Great actors are great only in great parts—Instances—Minor stars bring receipts on their benefit nights—Mr. Hamblin appears—Mr. White also—And Mr. Edwin Forrest, who comes back to us greatly improved—Francis leaves the stage—His professional and private merits—Baltimore spring season—Miss Kelly—Kean appears—Shameful riot, and we close abruptly this season—Who are generally rioters—Return to Philadelphia—Kean renews his engagement there—Mr. and Mrs. Barrett—Edwin Forrest—An unexpected season of twenty-five nights.

THE Philadelphia house re-opened on the 21st November, 1825. Cooper played ten nights to an average of \$483, and to a benefit of \$777. Burroughs followed in five nights of \$345, and a benefit of \$830. The play of "Charles II." was successful, and proved a source of profit. On the 11th of January, the house was closed for two nights, in consequence of a threatened opposition to Kean, who was now about to appear. A fortunate hint from some friends of the drama enabled us to anticipate the rioters, by a well-timed accession of civil protection, with the power to resort to a military one in reserve. This proved an ample se-

curity against rioters of every grade. The few silly violators of public decorum and private rights, must have felt themselves as void of judgment as they were of propriety. One or two of the "common disturbers" were sufficiently identified, but not thought worthy of notice. Kean's engagement was deferred until the 18th, when he attracted the following receipts:

Richard .....	\$1165
Macbeth.....	650
King Lear.....	751
Iron Chest.....	642
Town and Country .....	570
Merchant of Venice.....	786
A New Way to Pay Old Debts.....	720
Richard, for benefit .....	1254
Othello .....	941
Brutus.....	636
Othello .....	501
Hamlet .....	574

During this engagement a heavy snow had fallen and gave fine sleighing; an "outside" pleasure which, as I have already mentioned, is always one of the greatest drawbacks on theatrical receipts.

Mr. Lee, of Drury Lane, about this time acted Richmond and Macduff, and Miss L. Kelly commenced a long career of extraordinary attraction and success. Her first nine performances gave a nightly average of \$610, and a benefit of \$1111. These receipts were to old comedies alone. Two nights more brought \$485 and \$444. When Miss Kelly with Cooper played four nights to \$2248, and her second benefit \$1323, Cooper's \$1010, the engagement was thought very worthy to be renewed. It produced on the second occasion nightly receipts of \$554, with a third benefit to Miss Kelly of \$653, and one to Cooper of \$426. These

stars also played the "School for Scandal" on my night, and with the aid of horses in the after-piece of "Forty Thieves" gave a house of \$1201. Mrs. Mangleon, a singer, performed for two nights, as did Mr. and Mrs. Conway, dancers, to empty houses, and a benefit of \$524. Their namesake the tragedian appeared for the last time in "Hamlet" and the "Honey Moon," to indifferent houses. At the close of his second night he declined any further effort, although the "Conquest of Taranto" had been prepared for him at some cost, and would doubtless have repaid his labor. I urged that he should at least announce a benefit, as he professed this to be his last appearance on our stage, but he was sadly out of spirits, and my endeavors to influence him in his own interests were vain. This excellent actor, whose career terminated on this occasion, deserves a special notice. After terminating, in 1816, an engagement of three years at Covent Garden, where he divided with Charles Kemble, the particular line of business in tragedy and comedy, which fell to their lot, he "skirred the country" as a star until 1821; when, on Mr. Morris forming an independent company for the opening of the Haymarket theatre, he was engaged as the leading performer there, at a period memorable for the establishment of the *John Bull* newspaper;\* a paper to which Theodore Hook was a constant and principal contributor. This writer set himself in a malignant and cruel opposition to Conway, who, being distressingly alive to literary criticisms, was on that account made by Hook a particular object of his pen. On one occasion, as Conway himself informed me, he called on Hook for an avowal of a contemptuous de-

\* These particulars I get from Mr. Bunn's recent books.

scription of him “as a fantastical person of the name of Rudd—who was thrust night after night into principal parts, and suffered to annoy the auditors by the deplorable coxcomity of his manner of action.” This offensive description and cruel allusion to his birth, which was said by some persons not to have been legitimate,\* so affected poor Conway, that he determined to act no more in London. And under a delusion, brought about in this morbid state of feeling, that he was driven from the stage when in fact he was received with high approbation, he actually withdrew from an actor’s post, with a salary of £14 a week, to the humble place of a prompter, with a stipend of about one fourth the sum. From this situation, so unworthy of his talents and education, he was roused by some of his friends, and induced to visit this country. His merits being unquestionable, he met with a success which would have satisfied any man whose ambition would have been content with a fame less than Garrick’s or Kemble’s. I have mentioned his performances, from time to time, very frequently in the preceding history of our stage. In this last engagement, which I have spoken of in this chapter, he gave both on the stage and in social intercourse unquestionable proofs of an unbalanced mind; a condition very often attendant on a state of occasional melancholy, such as was noticed in him. As frequently happens, however, even when reason is fairly unseated, there was so much that was still the action of sanity, or of habit passing for sanity, that no alarm was created, sufficient to invoke a special care from strangers. Many observed that he

\* Mrs. Rudd was housekeeper to Lord George Seymour, who was charged to be Conway’s father.



was deeply serious, and often melancholy; but he allowed it to be understood that he was industriously employed in studies preparatory to an application for holy orders. He left us in the way I have already stated, convinced, not only without evidence but against it, that he was undervalued; and mistaking occasional sharp criticisms in the newspapers—put there probably because they were untrue, and because it was known that they would annoy him—for the settled verdict of the public. He took passage by sea for Charleston, S. C., and embarked on the voyage, maintaining aboard ship his usual reserve of manner. When approaching the city, he seized a moment when no one was near, and threw himself into the sea, from which his body was never recovered. Prior to leaving England he had borrowed about £200 to pay his expenses hitherward. This debt, with some others in that country, appeared to have been discharged at the earliest moment that he could do it, and with great fidelity, from his receipts in this country. And from some remaining effects in America, which were taken possession of with great humanity, by the British consul, Mr. Buchanan, he made a provision for his mother in England. The melancholy fate of this excellent actor caused much regret. Mr. Bunn, in his recent book, rightly speaks of Conway as having possessed a mind of very considerable cultivation, and of his having performed with eminent ability some characters, such as Lord Townley, Mr. Oakley, &c. He mentions that in “*Coriolanus*” he was surpassed by John Kemble alone. It is much to be regretted that after Mr. Conway’s death, some persons in New York made public certain letters which had been addressed to him by a woman remark-

able in literary history, and in earlier life distinguished for her fine mind ; though obviously in her dotage at the time of these communications. They were letters from Mrs. Piozzi, (Dr. Johnson's friend,) then in her 80th year, and breathing a warmth of friendship so remarkable, as to have been indecently published at New York, after poor Conway's death, under the title of "*Love letters from Mrs. Piozzi.*" Conway's extreme sensitiveness seemed in some degree traceable to early success and to extreme flattery by injudicious friends, which led him step by step to a belief that the world wronged him, because it did not concede to him confessedly the first honors of his art. If he had the misfortune of many correspondents who indulged in the extravagant style of Mrs. Piozzi, his delusion cannot be wondered at.

Mr. Conway's stature was above the common height ; and some ridicule having been thrown by a critic, who had no better charge to make, upon his person as "a thing of legs and arms"—he became extremely sensitive on that subject.

Nothing could exceed the horror which he felt after this remark, at acting with performers of under size ; and he declared to me that he would prefer to act with the worst actor or actress in the theatre, if of reasonable stature, than to appear with one of merit, who labored under the disadvantage of a small person, forcing a contrast to the eye fatal, as he urged, to his success. This whim led of course to various scenes of vexation and trouble in the cast of plays.

Mr. Conway having once adopted the career of a star, instead of that of a stock performer, made a great professional mistake in combining with Cooper and other striking actors for his attraction. And the oc-

casation is one of which I may perhaps avail myself to make some remarks upon such an error.

When it is recollected that the great power of starring lies frequently in the privilege of selecting a character out of the reach of competition, it is surprising that star actors will ever hazard comparisons which they always have the power to avoid. An audience will generally receive more pleasure from a good actor in the leading character, than from two leaders or more. This is no theoretic opinion of mine, but is one which is the result of a long observation of theatrical facts and conditions. The case of Duff is strong on this point. For several years he held so high an estimation with the public as to justify our casting to him "Hamlet," "Richard," "Macbeth" and "King Lear," plays generally held back for the engagement of Fennell's and Cooper's superior powers. Duff's popularity, however, put an end to this restriction, as his receipts to these plays for two years equalled the matured attraction of the other representatives. Consequently his strength was not wasted in inferior parts, where no excellence can obtain distinction. I can recall but two occasions during this period in which he appeared in company with a star, and at his own request. I am aware that my view of this subject may surprise non-theatrical persons, by which I mean persons not professional actors or managers.

I have constantly heard our visitors express a wish to see a play, all the parts of which should be filled by first class actors. But they should be informed that the experiment has been actually tried more than once, on the occasions of some complimentary benefits, but has invariably resulted in disappointment to all par-

ties. In the same way repeated attempts to form a large body of talent into a small space, by giving five acts of as many different plays, have in every case proved most unsatisfactory exhibitions. Matthews always regretted his having been led to this plan, in order to secure a large benefit receipt. The reason why minor parts cannot be well filled by great actors, is apparent enough in the fact of the actors being placed in wrong positions, and that their real value for the moment is overlooked, by their being so misplaced. If a performer of standing in his art, he is placed in a position where he is expected to afford the same pleasure in a secondary part, without materials for his genius to work with, as in a first, where they are ready to his hands. When Kemble and Cooke agreed to support each other, the result was certain. A little idle curiosity was excited, with small pleasure gained. Mr. Kemble as Richmond, Antonio, in the "Merchant of Venice," or Macduff, proved himself in no degree superior to the regular actors of those parts. Cooke as Pizarro, Herbert, or Kent, was degraded without advantage to the play, as he was compelled to struggle against a want of proper materials. Although brilliantly successful in the "Jealous Kiteley," he was annihilated as Ford by the humor of Falstaff. So too he failed in "The Suspicious Husband," from being in company with such parts as Ranger and Clarinda. King Lear truly says, "Nothing can come of nothing," and great talents are only wasted on inferior parts. In every respectable theatre actors may be found fully equal to the performance of the Ghost, or Horatio, Macduff, Edmund, Cassio, Casca, or Tullus Aufidius. And when they are expected to rival Hamlet, Lear, or Coriolanus

they are expected to do what Shakspeare never intended, and what if he had would have destroyed his play. Cooke felt an extreme reluctance to be "pitted," as he called it, against another eminent actor; not from any distrust of his own merits, but from feeling that it was dividing between two the credit which could in the nature of dramatic representations never belong to more than one. Cooper's acting with him for four nights of his first engagement soured him wofully, as throwing him into a position which was unnatural and unfit for him. Kean well knew the value of his single power, and long resisted the invasion of other stars. When Elliston of eccentric memory held Drury Lane, he determined at once to strengthen his own theatre and weaken Covent Garden, by engaging Charles Young to act the corresponding characters to Kean. This arrangement the latter never forgave, nor failed to complain of. He maintained that his talent had proved sufficient to draw large audiences, and that although the addition of Young might increase a few houses, it would lead the public henceforward to expect a rival or auxiliary to himself whenever he appeared. Undoubtedly in a professional and personal view his position was a right one. Cooke charged Fennell with an attempt to force himself into competition for the purpose of establishing a claim upon Cooke for a free performance on his benefit night. Fennell's account of this transaction as given in his life is wholly incorrect and confused. That the combination of "two stars in one sphere" proved far from profitable to the theatre, even while the process was going on, I can prove by my treasurer's books; and it weakened the subsequent engagements of each party to a ruinous degree.

Cooper suffered less than any others, as no part of his attraction could be attributed to novelty; the only charm in many of the others. He possessed solid and certain popularity for nearly thirty years, unimpaired by the fame or attraction of so many distinguished performers. Feeling no rivalry, and keeping aloof from all theatrical parties, he preserved an even and profitable career, never depending on the unstable support of a few partial friends, whose ill-judged influence he saw daily injuring and destroying those who were weak enough to lose sight of their real friends—THE PUBLIC. We often hear that “honor and shame from no condition rise; act well your part; there all the honor lies.” This wise saying must be received with considerable caution in regard to players. Many performers have tried the most prominent situations in our theatres of America, from the sole circumstance of being bold enough to claim such parts as, in the stage phrase, “play themselves.” In proof of this “Hamlet,” the most intellectual and philosophical of tragedies, is the one in which a large proportion of the worst actors, being stars, have been patiently endured, from the deep and concentrated interest attached to the part. The audience here are enlisted in the cause of Hamlet’s wrongs, and are but moderately interested in the supernatural embassy of the Ghost, the noble friendship of Horatio, or even the sorrows and death of Ophelia. Rolla is one of these self-acting parts, the frequent butchery of which I never recollect to have seen visited by the indignation of an audience. They seemed willing to pardon the actor—or in truth they forgot him—in a love of the character. There is a kindly feeling in our nature which seems to lean to

the virtuous and oppressed, even when neither their merits nor sufferings can be well ascertained. Every actor, I am sure, can recall instances of novices attempting characters, the fine construction of which nearly concealed the incapacity of the unfledged actor. I myself recall a performer, who was perfectly tolerated through a whole night in a principal part, which however protected him, and who on the next evening was hooted from the stage for the no worse delivery of a few unimportant messages.

But returning from our episode. Burroughs in a second course averaged, at Philadelphia, in December, 1825, \$240, with a benefit of \$620. It appears from the receipts which a large number of the second class stars brought to our house, that any little curiosity excited by them was suspended until their own benefit, when it was presumed their best efforts would be made. Their receipts to us frequently fell short of the stock nights, while they were themselves generally much overpaid by the profits of their benefit.

One healthful feature of this season, was the increased amount of the regular actors' benefits, somewhat neglected for several years previous. They averaged on twelve occasions \$581. The "Exile" closed a season of 307 nights.

In November 1825, Mr. and Mrs. Hamblin played six nights as follows: \$196, \$207, \$275, \$162, \$132, and a benefit of \$321. Mrs. Barnes played to an exhausted audience, and with little advantage. Mr. White, an elocutionist, to whom I have already referred, re-appeared in the character of Sir Edward Mortimer. The benefits were feebly supported by the public, as the performers were sadly cramped in their

choice of plays by the illness or absence of Jefferson, Duff, and Francis; these valuable performers were unable to appear through a large proportion of this unusually active season. On Mr. C. Porter's night, Mr. Edwin Forrest was announced "from the theatre at Albany, his first appearance these four years," and acted Jaffier to \$401, and subsequently Rolla twice, much to the surprise and approval of the public. This season extended to 151 nights, ending on the 20th of May, to a nightly average of \$391. Francis had now become so infirm as to force him reluctantly from a stage, which long suffered severely from the loss of so much ability and honest professional zeal. While speaking of Mr. Francis, I may say that his worth was by no means limited to his public service. Childless himself, he became guardian and protector to two orphans, who received from him and his worthy wife all the care and kindness which might be expected from natural parents. Francis, like Jefferson, was the victim of hereditary gout, directly inherited from his mother whom I visited in London, where I found her nearly in an immovable condition from frequent attacks of this cruel disorder. From Francis's lively disposition, and love of cheerful society, people sometimes erroneously confounded him with persons of irregular habits, and intimated not seldom that his sufferings were fairly earned by excess. But this was not true. He was a worthy man, liberal to the poor and suffering, and possessed of "that excellent gift of charity" which was able to forgive those who circulated slanders against his habits and character.

The Baltimore spring season of 1826 began cheerfully, with Miss Kelly's acting eight nights to houses



of \$384, and a benefit of \$631. On this last evening she appeared as Juliet. Kean now arrived to fulfil a contract of eight nights. Some business called me to Philadelphia one or two days previous to his first appearance, one which was doomed to be his last. His late disreputable conduct at Boston was well known, but no suspicion was entertained that for this folly he was to be visited by the indignation of an audience several hundred miles distant from the scene of his misconduct; nor had a whisper of any intended disorder reached Warren or the audience, who flocked eagerly to the theatre to renew the pleasure of witnessing this actor's high talent. The curtain rose, and the play proceeded quietly as usual until the appearance of Gloster, when a violent opposition from persons stationed in various parts of the house rendered all Kean's attempts to be heard hopeless. Some ill-managed efforts were made to address the audience, but he was not allowed to speak. The greatest portion of the female auditors retired in disgust from the disgraceful scene, and the play at length ended in noise and confusion. Warren conducted the ladies of the company through the crowd without molestation; Kean was conveyed through the adjoining house to his lodgings safely, but in extreme terror, as might well be expected; for in some expressions uttered by the rioters, it was fairly inferred that personal violence would be offered by them. The frequent calls for "another tragedian" during the tumult led to a strong and perhaps well founded suspicion that partisan feeling, and a feeling wholly unconnected with Boston, was not without its share of influence in the riot. In any view of the case, the insult offered to the public was

wholly unpardonable; nor did the ill effects of it end with the derangement of all our plans and the destruction of a season which in its beginning promised to us a large profit. The worst result was an apprehension on the part of the female audience of future difficulties, which deterred many from ever visiting the theatre for a long time again. On my return upon the morning succeeding, I found the house closed and a bill posted for "The Dramatist," without further notice of Mr. Kean. The mystery was soon explained by Warren, and after visiting Kean in his distress, we convoked a council of friends, legal and other, our invariable line of conduct in cases of difficulty, to deliberate on the course to be pursued. Several of the most respected and influential citizens soon protested against closing in fear or compliment to a lawless band, who might presume on this concession, and proceed on every occasion to defeat the best planned arrangements for the public amusement. The legal gentlemen were, however, by no means inclined to a bold course, and alleged their knowledge of the feebleness and ill organization of the then existing police, which so divided the power of public protection as to render it nearly useless. Every possible aid which the police laws then in force allowed, was freely offered us, and would have been granted, but was by our full council pronounced valueless in case of extremities. Mr. William Wirt, so well known as an advocate, took a warm interest in the case, and greatly swayed his associates to a final decision in favor of closing. As soon as the bills announced this intention, we received a mass of anonymous communications, to the effect that if the house should be

closed, it would prove useless ever to attempt re-opening it. The above is among the mildest shapes in which the subject was placed.

A few thoughtless or wicked persons, who were enraged at the sudden conclusion of their favorite exploits, threatened secret violence, and in consequence of hints from trustworthy sources as to the safety of the building, an additional watch was now placed. It is worthy of remark, that for a quarter of a century, including the present disturbance, disorderly conduct was invariably confined to the boxes. In this larger and more divided space the unruly could stealthily mingle themselves with the respectable, so as to escape the detection which a more concentrated effort would have endangered. During my long theatrical experience I recollect *only two instances of a necessity to remove disturbers from either the pit or the gallery.* This remark applies to both the theatre of Philadelphia and Baltimore. Our season, which the anxiety to witness Kean's acting for the last time as announced, would have been very lucrative, and which therefore was of the utmost importance to us at this time, was at once brought to a close, and the company returned to Philadelphia, which we had so recently left. In justice to Mr. Kean it must be stated, that although his contract had been thus broken up, he was determined to transfer his labors to our other theatre, as the only remuneration in his power to offer. He was aware that the audience of Philadelphia had been exhausted by his late long engagement, yet he hoped to be allowed to repair our loss as far as possible. All this he proposed in the best spirit and manner, as his last business with the theatre previous to his speedy return

home. We re-opened with him on the 12th of June, 1826; a most unseasonable period for a round of tragedies. His houses produced \$469, \$348, \$255, \$262, \$361, \$347, \$245, \$228, \$314, \$243, and \$226. On his benefit he gave Cardinal Wolsey, in "Henry VIII.," and Sylvester Daggerwood. His performance on these nights were of the most spirited and finished order. Mr. and Mrs. George Barrett followed with moderate success. Edwin Forrest succeeded them, at quite too late a season, yet attracting \$246, \$269, \$141, \$199, and a benefit of \$461; thus closing an unexpected summer season of twenty-five nights.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1826-1827.

A pleasing retrospect of fifteen years of management—The principles on which it was conducted—Order, truth, system and experience at its base—Some notice of Warren—His excellence as actor, manager and man—The author's regard for him—A fair prospect of fortune under our management—The possibility of a fortune being made in such a career—The matter considered—Episode (not irrelative) on the fortunes of theatrical persons—Why we did not go on together—A power behind the throne—Dilletantis and Amateurs—Warren is deluded and becomes their victim—Prospect of trouble—The author retires from a connection with new schemes, now suggested by irresponsible persons, and goes on the stage as an actor—Warren sole manager—Private boxes a feature in his first season—The author's recollections of former views on this subject—Two striking cases—His view on it generally—Warren's receipts—Treasurer's books of first season disappear—No records to be found when wanted—System of imposture begun by the new powers behind—Advice to Warren about it.

MR. WARREN and I had now been engaged for sixteen years in the arduous and responsible business of co-management. While taxing the energies of us both in different ways to the utmost degree, and attended at times with the deepest anxieties, these years had been sixteen years of most agreeable intercourse, personal, professional and social; and by a steady course of good management through so long a term, we had brought the theatre to a regular, well-adjusted and easy course of operation. Our long experience was of itself invaluable in theatrical management. In a course

of so many years, we could calculate exactly what in the theatrical orbit was a regular force, and what might be looked to as a disturbing cause—what was normal and what was exceptional. We had facts to correct fancies, and experience above all argument to control the influence of theoretic delusions, an influence which, even with professional managers, nothing but experience could withstand. We had often paid for our experience, but we had it and were using it. And I may say that, without being either of us, I suppose, profound students of Lord Bacon, or having heard of the studies of Auguste Conte, we had formed in our little sphere of theatrical concerns as complete a system of *Positive Philosophy*, as either of them, in reference to such a subject, could conceive. Warren and I seemed to be very happily adapted as counterparts or correlatives of one another; for while he had great abilities and judgment in laying out a campaign and viewing the season in a sort of abstract way, I found myself always able to execute, which he was never inclined to do, the details incident to his general scheme. Notwithstanding, therefore, our great calamity by fire, the depression by the war, slight occasional losses by languid engagements, or the accidents inevitable with all theatres, we were by this time firmly fixed in the public estimation, and were in a train of systematic operation, and of regular and certain profits. The system and discipline of the theatre had long reached a satisfactory point; and it is my great pleasure to remember, that in a long series of years no difficulty ever occurred with performers of spirit or talent. Some restless or vain persons could not fail to struggle at times against the wholesome regulations by which alone any large community can

be controlled. But these little jarrings invariably ended in a better feeling or in harmless vapping, as is proved by the fact that in no one instance did they ever reach a sufficient importance to involve an appeal, personal or legal, for redress from their employers. Those who were most troublesome and ungovernable while in the service, when once they were put out of it proved the most civil and respectful people in the world, and invariably expressed their desire to return to us; a desire which we believed so well founded that they were frequently restored. With permanent members, such as Bernard, Harwood, Blissett, Jefferson, Francis, Bray, Burke, Barrett, Duff, and others, an unbroken harmony had prevailed during engagements of ten, twenty, or twenty-five years duration. Nor must the ladies be excluded from honorable mention. Much of this quiet comfort was no doubt owing to our custom of defining exactly the duties required of a performer; not only as to the line of business, but in cases of important actors as to the individual parts also, which were always given.\*

I have spoken several times of Warren's forte as a manager. But he occupied besides an extensive and laborious list of characters, (the old men of the stage,) requiring great study and labor. Viewed, indeed, as a comedian generally, his value, highly appreciated as it was by the public, was never too highly estimated. But it was by no means to comedy that his ability was confined. His able performance of Stockwell, Old Downton, Sir Matthew Bramble, Las

\* This could easily be done in all cases where the plays had already been acted, and formed a standard by which to regulate new ones. The rule which rendered the actor free from a play not requiring his services in the parts enumerated in his list, was found very satisfactory, as was fully evidenced by the absence of all litigation.

Casas, Old Norval, Antonio, Owen Glenroy, Captain Bertram, Adam, Baron Wildenheim, with numerous other characters, showed his possession of sterling pathetic powers, while Sciolto, in the "Fair Penitent," and Acasto, in the "Orphan," were ranked as among high efforts in pure tragedy. Having passed his early days in such theatres as those of Bath, York and others like them—those nurseries of the highest class of English performers—his theatrical education was of the soundest kind, and gave to his acting a rare truthfulness and natural simplicity. He loved and respected his profession, and was willing at all times to favor the efforts of deserving novices by freely aiding them with the result of his own experience. Averse to the turmoil of management, he was at the same time one of the most industrious actors I ever knew. As an instance of his versatility as well as of his devotion to the public I may mention his judicious performance of King Henry IV., on the occasion of Cooke's appearance as Falstaff, Warren's most popular character. A perfect freedom from all "entangling alliances" with other theatres was also carefully observed.

Our treasurer's books, kept with as much regularity as the Journal and Ledger of a Bank, show how perfectly well regulated was our scale of receipts and expenditures. We were doing a regular, safe, steady business, and we never failed to pay a single performer of any grade. A well managed theatre is as good a source of fortune as any other profession. Undoubtedly it is a very dangerous profession, and the management must be *good*, or it will end in total bankruptcy. It is a common idea that actors generally are poor, and mostly die so. No doubt there are



actors who live poor; and actors who, having once been fortunate, die in bankruptcy. The same fact is predicable of merchants in a greater degree, of lawyers in some degree, and even of the sacred profession itself. But that theatrical management, or theatrical connections, must necessarily end in bankruptcy, is not true. A short record on this subject shows the exact reverse.

We pass Mr. Garrick, who died, Dr. Johnson tells us, worth £100,000. This, perhaps, was too high an estimate, but it is certain that he left a great fortune. Quin died rich. Smith left £29,000; Moody, £12,000; King, £11,000; Lewis, £44,000; Irish Johnstone, £45,000, (reputed more); Munden, £51,000; Fawcett, £22,000; John Bannister, £40,000; Knight, £21,000; Incedon, 11,000; John Kemble, notwithstanding the conflagration of two theatres, and his loss by the O. P. riots, left, as did Mrs. Siddons, very handsome fortunes. Quick retired a very wealthy man. Wroughton, Mrs. Pope, Hull, Miss Pope, Bensley, Mrs. Mattocks, Dodd, W. Knight, Miss Stevens, (now Lady Essex), Miss O'Neil, Miss Farren (Lady Derby), Fanny Kelly, R. Jones, with others, retired with a genteel competence. Liston gave a fortune of £20,000, a marriage portion, to his daughter, and died wealthy; poor Conway left to his mother \$5000. Charles Young, the tragedian, retired with the acknowledged saving of £30,000, and now lives to enjoy the elegancies of life, with the esteem of all who know him. John Cooper, of Drury Lane, confesses to £20,000. These sums, it is true, were the fruits of great talents, as well as prudence, exercised through periods of from thirty-five to fifty years. Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock returned to England with £5000; Bernard with nearly

£4,000; and these, as well as the following, were not *stars*, but stock actors. Hallam and Henry both left considerable property, as did also Barnes, Dickson, Powell, and Hilson. Mr. and Mrs. Darley enjoyed a neat competence. The world is well aware that Mr. Forrest, by the union of rare talent with prudence, is among the rich. Several others might be mentioned, did I think it necessary to swell the list. Phillips returned to England with £6000; the Woods with double that sum, Bartleys with £4000, Power with £7000, Miss Lydia Kelly with £5000, Matthews with £11,000, (afterwards lost by speculations). Mr. Booth was well-known to possess more than a mere handsome independence; of Mr. Hamblin the same may be said. When we reflect that many of these persons were liable, by their position in society, to large expenditure, in order to maintain their *caste*—that others, (as Munden, Bannister, Lewis, Fawcett, and others,) had large families, on whom they lavished the most costly educations—it is impossible to say that theatrical management cannot be made a source of wealth. Many of the persons I name were managers as well as actors.\*

There was no reason known to me why, if conducted on our former scheme, the theatres of Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore, might not have been made a source of constant and settled revenue, both to Mr. Warren and to me, and there existed no necessity that I can possibly suggest or conceive why, with such a person as Mr. Warren was, when acting in the line of his own judgment, our management might

\* I say nothing of these statistics as an answer to the imputation so often made against the good economy and morals of actors in general. In that view they are striking also.

not have endured as long as our joint lives continued, or as our health supplied the necessary vigor.

I had perceived, however, nearly eighteen months before the time I am now speaking of, the existence of certain disturbing causes external to Mr. Warren's real self. The business of amateur or dilettanti stage-management has always been a very favorite one with a certain class of gentlemen, though never, I believe, without ending in the ruin of the theatre which they undertook to interfere with, the degradation of the dramatic corps, and the pecuniary insolvency of all concerned. The influence I was able to perceive had begun to operate on us. My old friend and partner became very much less a real manager than he had been; and while as an ostensible manager he was still dealing with me, I found that we should certainly have, sooner or later, to encounter all the difficulties arising from want of candor and independence in relations where perfect candor and independence are qualities of capital necessity, and absolutely requisite either to success or comfort. It was impossible for me to be dealing in any way but in one way with my old friend Warren; and that was a direct, candid, and independent one. While he was what he had been—while he could and did act out himself in the spirit and independence of himself—I could go on with him as I always had gone on, not only safely, but also with harmony, pleasure and success. When he was in any way the representative of interests, objects or schemes not really his own, yet presented as his, and so to be treated and considered by me, it was clear that there would be an end, sooner or later, of any harmony at all; and when harmony ceased, not only was success at an end, but

bankruptcy and ruin met us in its place. I had a real regard for Warren, and I was not disposed to follow this thing through what I foresaw would be its uncomfortable history, to what I was sure would be its certain and hostile issue. I therefore told my old friend in the summer of 1825, twelve months prior to the time I am now writing of, that the joint management, if it was about to be conducted on any judgment not his own—irresponsible and unknown to me—must end. I offered to buy him out myself, and so become sole manager. To this he objected, urging that the management had now become a source of certain and settled income, increasing gradually every year, and holding out a safe and comfortable prospect for him and his family in his advancing life. I then told him that he must become sole manager himself, or at any rate that I must retire from the connection; which I informed him I should do at the end of a twelvemonth. Our articles of partnership required this amount of notice. For several months Mr. Warren did not suppose my purpose of retirement real. He “hoped I would reconsider it,” urged his inability to undertake the toilsome details of management, a thing for which he knew I was aware that he had a positive aversion, and which, with his heavy and lethargic figure, would become almost impossible, if from no other cause than from his difficulty of light and active motion. I considered the matter fully. The original influence, of which I have already spoken—not that of a hand unseen, guiding all, controlling all, while another figure was the representative, but that of a hand guiding nothing, and interfering with everything—had become more and more visible, and its effects were more and

more injuriously felt. Harmony of action where there could be neither conference nor concert, was impracticable. I knew, or could perfectly conjecture, the exact sources of influence which proved our trouble; and, for myself, was unwilling to be in any way connected with either it or them. Theatrical management, I knew then as well as I do now, is a profession—a laborious, dangerous, absorbing one; that a manager must be all a manager; and that joint managers must be perfectly confidential, to manage jointly at all. In a different view of the necessities of the case, was the mistake of my copartner, Warren.

Finding me settled in my purpose of retirement, Mr. Warren joined with me in arrangements for our separation. Easy terms were adjusted without difficulty, and in consideration of a sum agreed to be paid to me, a transfer of all my share of property in the different theatres, as well as in the lease of the Philadelphia house, having sixteen remaining years at \$3000 a year, was duly executed. It was a great mistake of mine that I took no mortgage upon this excellent lease. A condition made and insisted on by Warren was, that I should be bound to retain the situations held as actors by Mrs. Wood and myself as long as we continued on the stage of Philadelphia. To this I could make no objection.

Just before our separation, a negotiation was opened by the powers behind the throne, with the New York theatre, to effect such an arrangement as would have rendered our theatre a mere tributary to New York, as it proved to be some years after. The pecuniary part of this affair not being in a sufficiently forward state, it failed like the negotiation of 1821.

Warren himself expressed no regret at the failure of the plan, as he felt an undisguised reluctance at uniting in any enterprise with a man of so bold and speculating a character as the manager at New York, and one of manners so different from his own. I was still so much interested in Mr. Warren's welfare, as to express my views very freely to him, on what I thought the dangers of his case. He said he had "good advice." I knew, however, very well the source of it, and frankly cautioned him against too full a confidence in persons, who, however well-intentioned, were perfectly well known to be addicted to novelty and experiments; all of which, as he and I both knew, had uniformly miscarried. He received my suggestions somewhat coldly, hinting a fear that a personal dislike might have some influence on my judgment. The state of the theatre, he said, was such, that he felt no fear of the result, and as we had struggled on through years of pestilence, war, and commercial distress to a point of safety, he was determined not to abandon the career.

If I have dwelt somewhat strongly on this part of our history, it must be remembered that it was intimately connected with a transaction terminating most fatally to the theatre itself—to the interests for many years of the drama—and to the fortunes and comfort of both managers, as well as nearly all the performers under them. For myself, had the new management been a successful one, a relief from the unceasing labor and anxiety of my old post, in the less responsible duty of an actor merely, would have presented a delightful change; for the labor of management was oppressive, and a steady engagement on the stage, furnished as much employment as I wanted, and enough emolument

for social ambition, no greater than that of my wife and myself.

Having retired therefore from the management which was now under the sole care of Mr. Warren, that gentleman opened the new Washington theatre on the 31st of August, 1826, for a season extending to 6th October. He had several novices and other additions. I may mention here, that Mrs. Wood and myself had now ceased to be a part of the summer company, in consequence of a resolution to try the attraction of stars. These, I knew, would expect a certain remuneration, whether they had proved themselves attractive or not, and as I conceived that so limited a population as that of Washington then was, would not pay them, the nightly expenses, and stock actors beside, I withdrew from this part of the representation. The experiment, as any experienced manager of good judgment might have foreseen, utterly failed. The actors' shares were reduced by nearly one-half, and the scheme led finally to the abandonment of a theatre, which, if not very profitable, was yet, when under proper management, always safe. Among the new acquisitions were Mr. Hosack, from New York, Mrs. Greene, Webb, W. Forrest, and others. Wemyss joined the party at the close of the season. Hackett made his first and only appearance in the first act of "Richard III.," in imitation of Mr. Kean. He also gave "Sketches of Character," viz: Jonathan in New York, with the Yankee story of Uncle Ben; Knickerbocker in Albany, to conclude by imitations of Cooper, Matthews, Hilson, and Barnes; the two latter in "Paul Pry," and "Lock and Key." To all this he added an excellent performance of Mons. Morbleu. Edwin For-

rest appeared for his brother's benefit, as Rolla, and a few nights after as Damon, for a performer's benefit also. The Baltimore house remained closed.

The Philadelphia house opened on 4th December, 1826, when Mr. Warren presented the following large list of performers:—Jefferson, Wood, Warren, Cowell, Wemyss, John Jefferson, Porter, W. Forrest, Heyl, Singleton, Meer, Jones, Wheatley, Webb, Darley, Hallam, Green, Bignall, Hosack, Parker, Murray, Garner, Howard, Klett, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. J. Jefferson (late Burke), Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Darley, Mrs. Cowell, Mrs. Meer, Mrs. Murray, the Misses Hathwell. A collection which, viewed as a body, certainly presented the means of steady, if not of vast attraction. The house opened with the "Stranger," a play which, though always abused, is always attractive. Miss Kelly was the first star, and proved as attractive as ever; indeed, many were of opinion that a softening down of her vivacity added to the charm of her performances. Cooper appeared for several nights, and as usual to good receipts. Miss Kelly acted on the occasion of a benefit for the Greeks. A Mr. Mumford, of New York, appeared for one night as Reuben Glenroy. Mr. McCready now first acted in Philadelphia, and greatly to the satisfaction of the audience. Booth followed with tolerable success, and strengthened his benefit by the aid of Mr. and Mrs. H. Wallack. He also acted in the tragedy of "Sylla" with deserved reputation, and the play was repeated. Mrs. Knight, who united to the charms of a singer the useful and rare combination of an actress, now first appeared here, and proved attractive in no small degree. The "Comedy of



Errors" was produced for the purpose of presenting Jefferson and Cowell as the two Dromios; and notwithstanding their unlikeness to each other, they gave the piece, by good acting, a run of several nights. It was at this time played with the music. E. Forrest acted an engagement of ten nights, during which he greatly added to his reputation by his performance of "King Lear." Mr. McCready followed in a second engagement, in which he was much applauded as "Henry V.," "Fatal Dowry," and "Henry VIII.)\* His acting Romont, in the "Fatal Dowry," has generally been considered his second best part, and only inferior to his Werner. The comedy of "The Foundling" was revived for the purpose of bringing out Miss Warren as Fidelia, who made a most favorable impression, which might have proved advantageous to the treasury if she had been properly nurtured, instead of being next cast to the mawkish part of Mary Thornberry. An impression prevailed that Miss Warren was not a favorite with the ruling power. And after circumstances seemed to favor this opinion, as she seldom appeared, and then in discouraging situations alone. I ventured to request of his real friends, that they would direct Warren's attention to this matter; but I discovered that he had relinquished the power to remedy it. I know not exactly on what grounds it was supposed that Miss Warren was not likely to be attractive, but, strong-minded as Warren had frequently proved himself, up to that time, in essential matters, he always betrayed, even in his best times, the utmost sensitiveness on the subject of anonymous criticisms. No one, perhaps,

\* This engagement was marked by the announcement that it was "positively the last time Mr. McCready will ever appear in Philadelphia.

had ever less reason to complain on that score than he, yet the slightest anonymous hint at disapprobation terrified and distressed him, although he might be, and usually was, aware of its source. This weakness probably increased with age, and aided in his rash relinquishment of all control over his large concerns and property.


I have spoken of the stock company with which Mr. Warren began, and of the stars which he invited as special objects. There was a new feature in his first season. The theatre opened with the following announcement:—

#### PHILADELPHIA THEATRE.

*Philadelphia, Nov. 28th, 1826.*

The public are most respectfully informed that the Theatre will be opened for the ensuing season, on Monday evening, the 4th of December. During the recess, the whole of the interior has been newly painted, and decorated in the best style by Mr. H. Warren and his assistants; the Pit has been greatly enlarged, and the entrance to it within the house has been greatly improved, and every arrangement has been made for the comfort and convenience of the audience. Mr. Cowell will undertake the duties of Stage Manager, and every performer of talent has been engaged, whose services could be obtained. No exertion or expense has been or will be spared to render the Theatre worthy of the patronage of a liberal public.

W. WARREN, Manager.

 THE THREE BOXES FROM THE STAGE ON EACH SIDE OF THE HOUSE, WILL BE RETAINED *for one hour* on each day after the box book opens, for those who may desire to take a whole Box, after which seats in those Boxes may be taken as in others.

BOX, ONE DOLLAR—PIT, FIFTY CENTS—GALLERY, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

The new order as to letting seats proved a source of daily discontent and great ultimate injury. It originated with the *dilletanti* persons to whom Warren had unhappily surrendered his opinions and his power, as a return for some pecuniary accommodation necessary to the commencement of the year, and to pay cer-

tain instalments at this time duly discharged. In consequence of this surrender of his independence, he was obliged to abandon, in fact, the reins wholly to others, whose utter inexperience of theatrical affairs, and fondness of change, greatly overbalanced any advantages derived from good intentions. The box regulation above announced was unpopular with nine-tenths of the public, who considered it an insulting concession to those who were fortunate enough to collect a party of ten or twelve at the expense of the constant supporters of the drama. Before 12 o'clock, most persons had concluded on their arrangements for the theatre; and in consequence the "SIX FAVORITE BOXES" were not unfrequently uncalled for, and were filled at night by any who chose to occupy them, or more generally not filled at all. The object of this unwise retention till 12 o'clock was, on occasions of great attraction to secure these boxes until after the hour, when crowds at the office had ceased, so as to let them then be taken. Some saw, or professed to see, in this an initiatory step to the introduction of private boxes, aristocratic distinctions, and exclusive privileges. How tenacious the public were of their rights, had been recently shown in the case of the *pit entrance* alone, and it could not fail to surprise the true friends of the house, that the first step of the new manager should be one of so questionable a character. The truth was, it was not his step at all. He disapproved of it, no doubt, though of course it became him to be silent. An irresponsible power governed in the cabinet, and the regulation was continued. In this matter the new management went in direct violation of the best professional sense. The business of PRIVATE

BOXES was not a new subject of consideration at all. It came to us with the very opening of the theatre in 1793, when Mr. Wignell resisted it under circumstances very trying to him, and which nothing but his sense of the indispensable necessity to the permanent interests of the theatre would have induced him to do. Mrs. Bingham, a lady, in her day the chief leader in the fashion of our city, the wife of an early and valued friend of Wignell himself, a lady of great social and family influence, and very extensively connected, proposed for the purchase of a box, AT ANY PRICE TO BE FIXED BY THE MANAGER. She had passed much of her early married life in France and England, where she was uncommonly admired, and being a woman of exclusive and elegant tastes, was desirous to have the privileges which were allowed in the theatres with which she had been familiar abroad. She offered to furnish and decorate the box at her own expense; but it was an absolute condition *that the key should be kept by herself, and no admission to it allowed to any one except on her assent.* Mr. Wignell had many strong inducements to accept this offer. He was undertaking a new enterprise. *He could name his own sum.* It was a certainty. It would gratify an early friend, whose large fortune might prove of great value to him. He knew that it was probably the only condition on which he was likely to have either the presence, or perhaps the very cordial wishes of a fair, elegant, and influential woman, whose house was the rendezvous of the distinguished and really elegant foreigners whom the French revolution had then brought here. Her voice in the small world of fashion which Philadelphia then acknowledged, would be quite potential. He looked

at the matter, however, with much more comprehensive and philosophic regards. He knew that the theatre in a country like ours must depend entirely for permanent success, not upon individuals, however powerful, not upon clubs, cliques, factions, or parties, but upon THE PUBLIC alone. That in a country where the spirit of liberty is so fierce as in ours, such a privilege would excite from an immense class a feeling of positive hostility; and it made no difference in his view that the expression of it might be suppressed, which it was doubtful whether it would be, as the suspicion would be fatal. He saw that it must be a cardinal maxim of any AMERICAN MANAGER to act on the principles of his country's government, and on the recognition of feelings deeply pervading the structure of its society; to hold, in short, all men "free" to come into his house, and "equal" while they continued to be and behave themselves in it. The country he well perceived has not, and cannot have any class which, as a body, possess even the claims to exclusive privileges which exist abroad, and which give a prestige impossible and unfit to be asserted or allowed for an aristocracy here; an aristocracy which, with occasional exceptions, must be one of money merely, the most despicable and poorest of all grounds of distinction. He therefore with great address, and with many expressions of polite regret, declined the offers of his beautiful friend, and stuck steadily to his wisely settled system. The result was just as he anticipated. The lady,\* though not capable

\* It was pleasantly intimated by some persons that Mrs. B. fixed on some occasions of extraordinary benefits at the theatre for evening entertainments at her house. But though exceedingly caressed, she was not an unamiable woman, and as her house was very often open, this coincidence was probably accidental. A further and interesting account of

of resentment, and expressing her acquiescence in his view as a sound one, scarcely ever visited the theatre again; but the theatre itself was filled by a constant and satisfied public.

Another case occurred at a later day. A gentleman of Baltimore, a proprietor in the theatre, and a constant supporter and true lover of the drama, made a proposal nearly in these words, "I wish to secure a box in which I shall always be certain of seats for my family. I will give at once \$3000 for an ownership of this box for the term of my life. No fashionable box is desired. One of those in the second tier, not more than four from the stage, will satisfy me. I will engage that on any day at 12 o'clock, when I may not be able or willing to occupy the box, the key shall be sent to the office, and the box be at the service of any you may choose to accommodate." Nothing could be more liberal than this; nor would anything have been more convenient to us than the receipt of so large a sum as \$3000, at a moment when we were making great expenditures in the opening of our house. A short consideration of the subject settled the answer of the managers, and a few words of explanation satisfied our liberal friend that a compliance with his wish would be injurious to us. He saw the case, and withdrew his proposal with all the kindness and liberality with which he had first offered it. I might multiply instances which I recall in a term of forty-seven years.

this lady, whose maiden name was Anne Willing, will probably be found among other biographies of the women of Washington's Presidency, in the forthcoming volume now expected from the New York press, entitled "The Court of the Republic," a book prepared, it is understood, by Doctors Hawks and Griswold, and which promises to be one of great interest to our country at large.

I give two that were striking. Private boxes and a system of exclusive privileges have always been hankered for by a small class; some, as in the two instances I gave, actuated, no doubt, by a real love of seclusion, but the majority by nothing but the love of ostentatious exhibition. From whatever source arising, every wise manager in America will set his face like a flint against it. But I return to the results of Mr. Warren's new management. It is a matter of regret that the receipts on his first season cannot now be given. On the total break up of the Chestnut street theatre, which occurred not many years after our separation, all the books, records and papers, most carefully collected and preserved many years, suddenly vanished; and to this hour all search and inquiries have proved fruitless. This circumstance causes the breach of a year in the annals, which are otherwise perfect. Not many months since, some question having arisen as to the theatre depending on proprietorship of certain shares, I was applied to in order to show what had become of the transfer of books, but no trace of them was to be obtained. The season certainly appeared quite successful, although, undoubtedly, it was grossly exaggerated from time to time. The receipts were, in some instances, large, but there were many very bad nights; and admitting that our former terms with stars were still maintained, the receipts of their nights could have done little more than repay the losses on the failing ones. A bold misstatement obtained large circulation, published and oral, that "the profits of the season had exceeded seventeen thousand dollars." And this falsehood, repeated in several different papers, was universally suffered to pass without the slightest

contradiction, or even correction. Meeting my old friend Warren in New York, during the summer, I directed his attention to this report, and the injurious effects which, if not true, it might produce upon his character in the case of subsequent disaster. What would his creditors suppose, if he should fail, had become of all the money, he himself being known as a regular man? He seemed little obliged by the suggestion, drily remarking that "few public institutions were likely to suffer injury from a report of their success." I perceived that my old friend was in new hands. He no longer spoke his own sentiments, which I ever found those of integrity and honor. This was the last counsel I ever ventured to offer.

Certain new reinforcements about this time arrived, and the season opened on the 29th of October, 1826, with Southwell as Romeo, to \$638. Things dragged on heavily until Miss Emery's performance of Bianca and Evadne for a short time produced some excitement and some good receipts. Horn and Mrs. Knight acted a short but successful engagement of three nights to an average of nearly \$550, with a joint benefit of \$1055. A Mr. J. Brown appeared in *Virginus*. Horn and Mrs. Knight repeated their engagement with success, when Mrs. Sloman arrived to give a new impetus to the theatre. This excellent and very lady-like actress at once established herself in favor with the audience; her first seven nights nearly reached an average of \$800. Her first benefit produced a receipt of \$1076; the second, \$1168; Mr. Sloman's, \$1056. Here were certainly large receipts. Mrs. Sloman occupied alternate nights with Mrs. Austin, whose houses produced \$312 each, with a benefit



of \$520. Miss George followed with indifferent success, and Miss Kelly acted eight nights to moderate receipts, with a benefit of \$898. Burroughs also reappeared, but without attraction. Miss Clara Fisher acted for ten nights in the following characters: Albina Mandeville, Letitia Hardy, Lady Teazle, Young Norval, Lydia Languish, Shylock, Amelia Wildenheim, Albert Tell, Wandering Boys, Young Widow, Country Girl, Actress of all Work, Mowbrays, Maggy McGilpin, to an average exceeding \$600 nightly, and benefit \$977. Miss Rock and Madame Celeste followed in rapid succession to moderate audiences. I have to state on the best authority that, notwithstanding these large receipts, the first 137 nights barely left to the treasury \$330 per night; yet the "Red Rover," "Gambler's Fate," and some other like pieces produced some profitable houses. The benefits were not good: Jefferson, \$810; Wood, \$620; Southwell, \$563; S. Chapman, \$413; Miss E. Jefferson, \$637; Miss Emery, \$421; Miss Hawthorn, \$570; and others in like proportion. Cooper played a few nights, when he was joined by Forrest. The public were now becoming exhausted, and this engagement disappointed expectation as to receipts. Without intermission, star followed star. Horn, Pearman, and Mrs. Austin combined with no advantage. Even Cooper and Mrs. Sloman acted in the "Honey Moon" to but \$211. Clara Fisher, in a second engagement, reached no more than \$218, including the benefit, and dividing the nights with the splendid spectacle of the "Gnome King," which scarcely repaid its cost. This long protracted season closed on the 21st of June, 1828, leaving, as it was publicly stated, neither profit nor loss to the treasury.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1827—1832.

The author is invited to become manager of a new theatre in Arch street—His doubt and reluctance in accepting this invitation—He is obliged from the prospects under the order of things in Chestnut street to do so—Good receipts at the new house, but a disorderly and ill-assorted company there—The author cannot undertake to govern them, and does not renew his management a second season—A generous offer from a stranger—The management at Chestnut street fails entirely—Warren deserted in his need by his new friends, who turn out remorseless creditors, and is sent adrift by them—An entire break up in theatrical history—The theatre “at sixes and sevens,” irregular, unstable and disconnected—Mr. Warren’s melancholy diary—“It wont do”—Disorder and failure—They try the policy of extermination, and all exterminate each other—Messrs. Lamb and Coyle—Strangers assume the management at Chestnut street—The author goes back there as an actor—A number of stars that do not shine—Play to a loss of about \$150 nightly—A famous letter from Junius Brutus Booth—Calvin Edson appears at the theatre—The Arch street house begins with a new management—Jones, Duff, and W. Forrest—Edwin Forrest appears—Booth—An event—The last appearance of Warren—His failing health, and death soon after—McArran’s Garden—Death of Duff—A new management at the Walnut street house—Maywood, Pratt, and Rowbotham—The Ravel family—The drama for a short time revives—The Kembles recall its former glories—The author changes his parts, and plays with them—Handsome act by Mr. and Miss Kemble on the occasion of the author’s benefit.

THE next principal feature of this amateur management (for there were many minor changes) were arrangements of a very extensive character for fashionable performers from England. The starring system was about, in effect, though not professedly, to be tried in contrast

with the former stock arrangements, of which "Tom and Jerry" had been a not inappropriate finale, as a prelude to this new scheme. A considerable number of our own regular performers were discharged—not from any suggestion of either incompetency or decline, nor from any want of good conduct anywhere, but from the enormous expense which it was said the promised succession of new English performers had involved. These strange proceedings I am sure were not suggested by Warren; who, on the contrary, hardly knew how to announce them to his old friends. My own salary—that is, the promise of it—was greatly increased, and its amount fixed at the large sum formerly received by Mrs. Merry. I saw pretty clearly, however, I thought, that bankruptcy would be the end of these fantastic measures—for in a theatre any violent and sudden change may be called fantastic—and that although I might for a short time receive nominally more than I had expected, yet that in the end I should probably be paid in a way known in the insolvent court as payment by a ticket. Standing in no position of confidence to the management, I was therefore silently looking at the prospect about, around and before me, and expecting either that the theatre itself would sooner or later disappear from under me—or that I might find it necessary to be disengaged from it, if it continued in name to exist—when I learned that a number of gentlemen, dissatisfied by what had already been done, and thinking that they saw a benefit to property about them, had entered upon the scheme of another theatre in Arch street. At this time every one supposed that the Walnut street house, never a good one for theatrical representations, was about to be demolished, and

give way to private houses. The other project, therefore, went on. The stock was rapidly subscribed, and the edifice erected almost before Mr. Warren knew that it was certainly in progress. While debating on some other prospects, I received an invitation from the stockholders of the new building to become the lessee. I had great hesitation in accepting this offer. The whole new enterprise was in a measure irregular, although if, as every one supposed, the Walnut street house was about to be torn down, a new theatre would be requisite. It had, too, somewhat the aspect of a schism from the Chestnut street theatre, though it was so less, perhaps, than was believed. Under any circumstances, I well knew what it was to get a company of new performers into *drill* at short notice. Even good performers require to be familiar with one another before they can play easily and with proper correspondence. The growth of our old theatre had been, as a natural growth commonly is, *gradual*. It had therefore been sure. I knew as yet very imperfectly what company the Arch street theatre was likely to have; and I knew no more of the principal persons by whom the theatre was owned, and would of course in all great matters be controlled. Independent of this, I had, to a great extent, built the Chestnut street theatre. It was a beautiful, convenient and excellent house. I had up to that time many pleasant associations with it, and I felt somewhat as if I was abandoning my own offspring. However, being quite unable to control the new course of operations there—certain that they would not only ultimately, but would very soon, end in failure—uncertain how long, even if I desired to remain, I could find it possible to do so—and not being doubtful that my

retirement would be willingly received whenever offered, I accepted the offer so politely made me from Arch street. Mrs. Wood not long before had of necessity ended her connection with the Chestnut street managers, where her services, though always acceptable to the public, were neither rendered by her nor received by the direction as she could desire. *I entered therefore upon my new management from necessity,* and with feelings of reluctance and great doubt as to the issue. Still, as we were credibly informed that arrangements were in progress for pulling down the Walnut street house—a matter really resolved upon, though afterwards defeated or abandoned—and as it was certain that the Chestnut street theatre, under its new direction, was not likely to prove a formidable rival to us, the prospect was not entirely dark. We had had very numerous applications for engagements, and the prominent situations were filled by persons of good natural capacities. The important line of business formerly done by Warren was entrusted to an actor named Reese, of much ability. S. Chapman, who had quitted Warren from some dissatisfaction about salary, was appointed stage manager and director of the pantomimic and melo-dramatic departments, an office for which he had real ability. An inexperienced judge, however sagacious, would have said that we had in all respects a good theatrical community. But all, and even more than all, the disadvantages I had anticipated from a new and sudden theatrical enterprise were now about to be encountered. In the very outset I was doomed to feel the immense advantage of an old, settled and regulated establishment, as compared with one that was new and suddenly brought to-

gether. The actors had each their own ways. They had come irregularly from different places, where many of them had been superior to the persons about them. They were jealous of one another. They had been trained, so far as trained at all, in different schools of acting. Their internal jars and dissensions were not proper subjects of my management, and if they had been, could not have been controlled by it. There was no unanimity among them. They were all "pulling different ways." Each desired to be *the feature*; and the course of stage business, instead of working smoothly, in correspondence and with ease, was irregular, disturbed and uncomfortable. Many of the performers, as I have intimated, had come from minor establishments, where the absence of system and discipline had bred habits of neglect and insubordination, which were so fixed as to render vain even a hope of reformation. By one of those casualties which happen in the oldest and best communities, but which in them is always provided for, and is capable of being relieved against—one of the principal actors was suddenly taken ill, after all the plans for the season had been fixed. This compelled us to a frequent change of casts, which were greatly injurious to the attractions which we could have otherwise presented. I had no confidence in Mr. S. Chapman's stability, and I knew that the advance of salary, for the want of which he had left Warren, would take him back again. There was nothing left to keep us going at all, but a resort to the starring system; a miserable resort, and one certain to end in the destruction of the drama. Annoyance arose from the frequent and almost incessant offers of advice and suggestions from persons interested in the

edifice and property, but wholly ignorant of its business necessities. One circumstance may be mentioned.

Having proceeded in our new theatre on the plan we had always followed in the old one, of sharing *net* profits with stars, and assuming all the loss where there were no net profits, the receipts in the new house were sufficiently encouraging in spite of an irregular, reluctant, and ill-assorted company. But now, among other unasked-for suggestions, was one for the engagement of J. Wallack, a gentleman for whom, both personally and as an actor, I entertained a high estimation, and whom I certainly had not overlooked, but whom I was compelled to decline on account of his terms. These were fixed at \$200 *certain*, per night, whatever might be the receipts. Under a protest that the engagement was "theirs and not mine," and the assurance that in case of failure "any loss to the theatre would be assumed by them," the contract was formed. Wallack's houses were in no degree inferior to his former engagements, yet they were inadequate to bear the weight of so heavy a charge. The guarantee I received was never realized, and Wallack's payments failed to a large extent. Having satisfactory evidence that some performers were more than inclined to new projects a-foot, I declared my intention to close the house at the end of the third month. This announcement was received with indifference, and an offer to provide situations for several was declined. It is but justice to state, and I do it with pleasure, that several of the gentlemen who established this theatre came forward with liberal offers of pecuniary aid, if necessary, to carry on the enterprise in full confidence of its ultimate success. Among these I must speci-

ally record a worthy and ostentatious person, Mr. Peter Hertzogg, of Philadelphia, who, without the least solicitation, offered me the sum of \$4000, "to be repaid at my convenience," provided I would abandon my proposed relinquishment. After a full conversation with him, in which I showed to him the instability of my company, he reluctantly withdrew his generous proposal. I never ceased to feel the deepest gratitude for an offer thus made to me by a person with whom I had but a slight acquaintance, and on whom I had no claim at all. While the proprietors were considering my proposal to retire, Mr. Chapman, who was very ambitious to try his hand at management, and was violent in his hostility to his late employers, offered to assume the position I was about to vacate, and to continue the season. This proposal met no favor from the direction. It was then resolved to release me from my contract, on condition of my surrendering all the scenery, furniture, and equipments as a full payment of the three months in which I had held the house, and to keep the house closed for the present. These three months in 1827 had averaged \$394 per night, proving satisfactorily that no part of the failure could be attributed to the want of public support.

It was now naturally expected that the close of our house would greatly benefit the other, but the reverse was the case. The truth was, the calamities I had anticipated there were upon it even sooner than I expected. Warren surrendered all his power to others, who became dismayed at the ruin they were bringing about them, snatched what they could for themselves, and departed, leaving poor Warren to remain the victim of their rash and fickle schemes. His season was



brought to a final close a month after mine, notwithstanding the good will which his house had, and the production of several novelties, beside the engagements of Mr. Hunt, Miss Phillips, J. Wallack, Mrs. Duff, Roberts, Miss Lane (now Mrs. Drew,) Mad. Heloise, Mrs. Sandford (late Miss Holman), and others. Cooper, Mrs. Sloman, Mrs. Knight, Herr Cline, Maywood, Miss Placide, Clara Fisher and others sent adrift from his own theatre. And Warren himself found that his recent friends, who had got possession of everything he had, were now his insatiable and remorseless creditors. His fate, poor fellow, was very hard.

The Walnut street theatre was opened early in January, 1828, under the direction of Messrs. Inslee and Blake with varied success, until 14th April, 1828, when it was finally closed. Warren's company had before this proceeded to Baltimore to experience a ruinous season, mainly caused by the exorbitant terms paid to stars, whose demands increased as the public patronage lessened.

Any *history* of the theatre, that is to say, any history of a continuous and regular management now comes to an end. The drama was at sixes and sevens. We must give a piece here and a piece there. There had been a complete *debacle*, or breaking up of everything that had been. I never became lessee again, nor very permanently connected with any theatre as a stock actor. Permanence belonged now to nothing except failure, disorder and bankruptcy. The vitality of the theatre neither was nor can be destroyed, but its action was irregular, spasmodic, and disordered. From this time forward, therefore, my sketches are more desultory, and shift from house to house, being confined very much to Philadelphia. 30\*

On January 1st, 1829, Messrs. Pratt and Wemyss became lessees of the Chestnut street theatre. They opened with moderate spirit, and continued the season to the 28th.

In May, the Walnut street house, where I had been lately engaged, was reopened, under the management of S. Chapman and J. Green. To this house Mrs. Wood and I returned. Warren—now grown feeble and dispirited, and with all his plans defeated, and his former amateur friends now represented by the sheriff in their place—was engaged also as a regular actor. He appeared on the 30th May, acting only occasionally through the summer, with Herr Cline, Barbieri, and Rosalie (dancers). Wm. Chapman and Mr. and Mrs. Rowbotham played on Warren's benefit, and Mrs. Frances, who had left the stage some time before, volunteered as Mrs. Malaprop, I believe, for her last appearance on the stage. Mad. Feron, with Mr. and Mrs. Pearman, sung without attraction, and the "Entire Corps de Ballet" were introduced, consisting of Mademoiselle Louise, Mademoiselle Corby, and Mons. Darisell, with the aid of Mons. Leon, ballet master.

The season ended on July 29th, 1829, with what success I never learned. On 26th October, 1829, the Chestnut street theatre opened with the "Honey Moon," under the management of *Mr. Rowbotham*. An appropriate address, written expressly for the opening of the theatre by a gentleman of this city, was spoken by Mr. Wood. Of all our original performers in this play, which used to be a favorite one here, three only now were on this stage. They were, Duke, *Wood*; Jacques (the first Rolando), *Jefferson*; Zamora, *Mrs. Wood*. The star system still pursued and always fail-

ing, offered the following: Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Pearman, Celeste, and her sister Constance, Mr. and Mrs. Sloman, Mr. Kilner from Boston, and Miss Kelly, who found it necessary on her benefit night to call in the aid of Mr. and Mrs. Sloman, and Mr. and Mrs. Pearman.

J. Howard Payne's translation of the French drama of "Richelieu" was well played, especially the character of Madame Dorival, by Mrs. Sloman, who acted the part originally in London. Jefferson's last benefit in Philadelphia took place on the 23d of December, 1829; and being suddenly announced, failed to attract his old admirers to the house. He was now infirm and in ill spirits from domestic distresses, as well as the breaking up of the old management, and the gloomy professional prospects which that event placed before him. The play, "A School for Grown Children," had originally failed here, (being remarkably local,) and proved a singularly bad choice. Another failing comedian, Dwyer, received a benefit, (without the slightest claim,) and attempted Falstaff, in the "Merry Wives." It was as far from contemptible as from excellent, and produced a very small profit. Booth followed in ten or twelve nights, aided by Pelby; while Madame and Monsieur Furioso attempted in vain to excite admiration by feats on the rope, and by scimitar exercises. Maywood and Forbes also contributed their efforts. Murdock now first appeared at this theatre.

Mr. Pratt now commenced at the Chestnut street house on the 20th of October, 1829, against Phillips and a fair company at the Arch street, Chapman and Green being now at the Walnut street. At this time

the efforts of managers appeared to be that of opposing and injuring their rivals, without a thought whether the measure would benefit or injure themselves. One of the managers, I remember, was infatuated on this subject, and during my short career in Arch street, frequently insisted that the destruction of my old friend Warren's theatre could alone establish my success. In vain I argued with him the point, that with proper management we could both succeed, and without it we must both fail. And I found it impossible to make him understand me when I related the perfect good feeling and kindly habits which subsisted in former days between Holman, Dwyer, and other lessees of other theatres than ours, and to whom we conceded a fair portion of the field, to which we claimed no exclusive right. At later times the temporary companies were often made up chiefly of malcontents going from one house to the other, and equally indifferent to the duties due to the public and their employers.

The Walnut street theatre, on the 28th of August, 1830, again changed its directors for the Chapman family. This year presents little of consequence, beyond the unceasing hostility of weak establishments for the benefit of exorbitant stars. Mr. C. Kean and Master Burke were the luxuries of the season, and purchased at the highest prices—each director seemed ready to outbid his rival, without the thought of how the terms were to be fulfilled. The actors' salaries were frequently neglected for weeks, while the most unattractive "irregulars" swallowed the whole receipts. In fact the theatres frequently, at this time, became the prey of idle or needy adventurers, without talent, capital, or theatrical experience of any kind.

This season may be considered the lowest and most distressful in the Chestnut street history. I have mentioned the loss of all the official papers and registers belonging to our theatre, a circumstance from which I have been unable to present, as I did during the term of my own management, any account of receipts. After a long and fruitless search for these official papers, I applied to Mrs. Marble, daughter of Warren, in order, if possible, to obtain an account of the receipts during his last years, and after our separation. My application was received with true politeness, and an offer of access to her father's private diary, &c., which I knew he kept in our joint times, and which I supposed he had continued in the later and less happy years of his life. It is an affecting record, and affords a sad memorial of his sufferings during his final career. The amateur management to which he had fallen a victim had silently disappeared, and among his entries I find many receipts like these :

Haunted Tower.....	\$61 50
Therese.....	90 00
Apostate.....	98 00

He writes thus, in May, 1829: "Hunt, Miss Phillips, and C. Fisher played together to \$60. On each of these nights two stars were to be paid." In January, 1829, he writes: "The whole amount of this house, \$20 75. Southwell's benefit, \$52 00. Mr. and Mrs. Rowbotham's benefit, \$77 00. Miss E. Jefferson's, \$83 00." These were gross receipts. The regular and necessary expenses were \$300 at least. His diary continues, at a later date, when the theatre had passed to Pratt and Wemyss, "No regular account of the performance this week. I do not keep my

diary regularly at present, being much annoyed with unpleasant circumstances." In April he writes, "I take no note of the houses—they are bad. Here is the Corps de Ballet, at \$200 a night. Hamblin and wife, with James Wallack, as stars—It won't do." The managers were playing, of course, to half the expenses of the house, and as the stars had to be paid, the loss fell on the manager till he became bankrupt, and then on the stock actors.

During this year, the first Italian opera was presented to our audience, and of course involved the managers in considerable loss. One of the remarkable features of these times, was the sudden decline of a star's attraction, without any apparent cause. As an instance, Mrs. Sloman's first eight nights gave an average of nearly \$800 per night, with large benefits. In less than six months her receipts dwindled to one-third of the former ones. Clara Fisher suffered even a greater decline.

During the summer of 1830, several applications were made urging an effort to attempt the revival of our old house. I felt little courage to resume management, since my Arch street experience; and to collect a company which I thought would be acceptable to the Chestnut street audience I found to be impracticable. I therefore declined the effort. Soon after this I was called on to ascertain whether I felt willing to appear as stage manager, in case the house should be let to two persons named Lamb and Coyle. These gentlemen professed to be wholly ignorant of the economy of a theatre, and engaged to leave the direction entirely to me. I soon perceived the business was not under the control of the managers, but of two or three unimportant

actors, who saved me much of the trouble I anticipated, and left me free to attend wholly to my acting duties. During a season of *twenty-five weeks*, the following stars were duly announced and presented, in addition to a numerous and not ineffective company. There was novelty sufficient it must be confessed. Mr. and Mrs. C. Plumer, Miss Kelley, Cooper, Riley, Davis, Mrs. Duff, White, Cuddy, (a famous flute player,) Madame Flaron, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Sharpe, Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Flynn, Booth, Mr. and Mrs. Hackett, Mrs. Lamb, Edwin Forrest, Aiken, Barton, Warren, C. Kean, Dwyer, Madame Austin, Barbieri, Archer, J. Fisher, Rowbotham, Mrs. Gilfert, Villalour, (rope dancer,) A. Adams, and others. All this array left to the managers an average of \$151 per night, to pay \$300, the expenses. "Aladdin" was produced at a great expense for Mrs. Knight. "Metamora" was now first acted in Chestnut street, as was also Mr. D. P. Brown's play of "Sertorius." This last was well acted, as far as the principal character goes, by Booth, and the whole play was well received. The white elephant was employed at a ruinous expense, and that there might be no want of variety, whatever else there was, "the Hall of Industry, exhibiting three distinct manufactories of cotton and woollen cloths, cards, &c., moved altogether by the *power of dogs*," was presented among the dramatic entertainments. "Werner" was first acted here by Mr. Barton. Charles Kean's engagement proved a signal failure, the receipts being \$297, \$130, \$60, \$80, \$41, and benefit, \$107; the expenses still \$300. A summer season succeeded, with Mr. and Mrs. Barrett, W. Chapman, Palmer, and others, with little better success. My entering at first,

and afterwards continuing in so comfortless and distracted an establishment, was a pure matter of necessity. I had relied for my support upon the regular instalments contracted to be paid to me on my sale of the Chestnut street concern to Warren, but I took no mortgage or other lien, as I ought to have done, upon it—the lease for sixteen years at \$3000 being itself very valuable\*—and the whole fell a prey to Warren's friends, who, having first seduced, then betrayed and ruined him. The property was gone; and neither from those to whom I sold it, nor from those who received the benefits of it, could I now obtain anything. The matter was past remedy, and the sole means left me, were the chances of occasional employment in enterprises invariably limited to a season, or even less.

This season of 220 nights closed on 28th July, 1830, having only averaged \$199, the *gross receipts*, from which this host of stars were paid, while the actors, after the first eighty nights, received *occasionally* half salaries. It must be observed, that a large proportion of the stars employed were useful regulars from various theatres, but wholly without individual attraction. I lingered with this falling establishment until the 10th of May (some time before the season ended), in the vain hope of recovering a part of the sum due me, during the time in which I held the nominal management.

While here, Mr. Lamb informed me of a suggestion from persons professing to be Mr. Booth's friends, to the effect that it would be very agreeable to him if he should be invited by us from Baltimore, where he had

\* The rent was afterwards advanced to \$9000 a year; much too large a sum to allow a profit. But it shows how valuable our lease for twenty years, from 1823, really was.



been acting with little profit. In compliance with the spirit of this intimation, I addressed a letter of civil invitation to him, proffering a number of nights on his usual terms, &c.; to this I received the following answer:—

Baltimore, Oct. 28, 1830.

DEAR SIR,—With regard to the Philadelphia engagements, I shall apply when I want them. Until then I shall not want any manager to trouble himself with invitations to me. Wishing you success,

I am yours respectfully,

W. B. WOOD, ESQ.

J. B. BOOTH.

This was rather an excess of the affected eccentricity which amused his idle associates. As no ill feeling, or any other relation than that of business, had ever existed between us, and as he was well known and familiar with Lamb and Coyle, it is probable that this was among the many indications now becoming frequent of the prostration of his health. On our next meeting no reference was made by either party to the incident.

To give some idea of the absurd sums now paid, I must especially mention, on the manager's authority, that C. Kean, on his first engagement at the Arch street theatre, received a clear half of each night's gross receipts, besides being paid full price for half of the stockholders' free admissions, to the amount of \$56 nightly. Such an arrangement could prove safe only in the case of some immensely attractive person, where receipts were sure to be so great that after deducting a gross half of them, the remaining gross half would still pay expenses. Scarcely less extravagant terms were demanded and received by several others. During the two hundred and twenty nights, no less than seventy-seven were devoted to benefits. Of course, from

so many benefits, many must have been for persons or objects having no proper claim to them.

Among many new exhibitions presented to the public this year, "Calvin Edson, the living skeleton," was the strangest. This fleshless picture of skin and bone was announced as having served in our army at the battle of Plattsburg, where, from severe exposure, as was stated, he became by degrees one of the most miserable objects ever shown for money. This walking skeleton was inclosed in a close-fitting, elastic black silk suit, rendering his figure perfectly and painfully distinct. This wretched shadow was not without a spice of vanity, which he indulged on all occasions, by becoming his own historian, and detailing, in a shrill, childish voice, his various services and misadventures. These were, probably, correct enough, and might have passed free, had he not proceeded to an illustration of rather an extravagant character. Having squeaked out his memoirs at no measured length, he proceeded to state, in his own case, the consequences of lying on the ground, to which he attributed the illness which led to his present condition. Retiring for a moment, he returned enveloped in an enormous, strange looking, and very marked military coat, one of the sleeves of which might nearly have received the whole of his skeleton frame, and advancing to the front of the stage, he proceeded as follows: "This, gentlemen and ladies, is the very coat in which I served at Plattsburg, and it then fitted me tight, I do assure you." It so happened, however, that this coat—an old-fashioned piece of German uniform of peculiar character—had been in the theatre almost ever since it was built, and was immediately recognized by many of the

audience, who received the account by a general titter. Whether the coat had been given to him by some wag in the theatre, or was his own choice out of the military wardrobe, I never happened to hear.

Another new management, that of Messrs. Jones, Duffy, and W. Forrest, opened the Arch street house, in 1831, with great spirit. An unusually large and effective company was selected, in addition to almost innumerable stars. Edwin Forrest now established permanently the fame and attraction which more than twenty years have only served to increase. "Metamora" lost none of its popularity by repetition, notwithstanding the meagreness of its language. The "Gladiator" was now first presented, and obtained the fullest approbation—a high estimate being at once placed there upon Forrest's Spartacus, which at this day never fails to attract crowds at every theatre. J. R. Scott, in "Phalaris," gave evidence of much tragic talent. "Caius Marcus" soon followed, with partial success. Warren had now got here as an actor, and among the novelties, I select his appearance, in an address, as Sir John Falstaff. Miss Alexina Fisher came forward the first time here as Young Norval. Master Bowers (six years of age,) delivered Brutus' Oration over the body of Cæsar, and afterwards acted Young Norval to Miss Fisher's Lady Randolph. Cooper made his first attempt here as Sir John Falstaff, which I do not find that he ever repeated. Mr. Haughton, the American fire king, gave his interesting performances, as did also the eccentric George Dixon, Buffo Singer. Booth now revived Mr. D. P. Brown's "Sertorius," with perfect success; he also acted "Sylla," and "Oronooka." A benefit was given to

Victor Pepin, formerly joint manager with Preschard of the circus, afterwards the Walnut street theatre. Mrs. Vincent's first performances here were ranked among the most successful of any novice, and quite equal to many of the stars. Murdock and others here laid the foundation of future reputation. C. Kean acted three nights for performers' benefits, and was followed by Sinclair, of musical celebrity. A troop of equestrians were engaged, and soon after the collection of wild beasts from the menagerie. The "Hunchback" was acted for the first time in America, and with a cast which perfectly satisfied the public. This season lasted from the 29th of August, 1831, to the 18th of June, 1832, and was announced as highly profitable. A public dinner was given to the managers, in acknowledgment of their exertions, when a cup was presented in the usual form. Meanwhile the Walnut street house dragged through a profitless season. The various changes and vicissitudes of the three theatres could only offer additional proof of the impolicy of opposition, and the folly of trying to live by the system of stars, rather than of stock companies.

We revert now, for we are obliged to shift the scenes continually to the Chestnut street house. Nothing discouraged by the late failure there, the managers entered upon another season with great spirit, commencing on 16th September, 1831. The following list of stars appeared: Clara Fisher, Booth, Mrs. Pindar, Mrs. Austin, Sinclair, Finn, Hackett, Master Burke, Warren, C. Kean, Jones, Hamblin, Miss Clifton, Geo. Jones, Miss Hughes, Gouffei, Blanchard, Weiland, Mrs. Mangeon, Mrs. Knight, Barrymore, Roberts, Cooper, Mrs. McClure. This season, pro-

nounced by the managers valedictory as a "severe and disastrous winter," left to the treasury an average of \$179 nightly, or about \$125 less than the outlay. To stars and benefits were paid \$16,625. Cinderella was acted for many nights, but left no profit, except to the stars, Sinclair and Mrs. Austin. Blanchard, of Covent Garden, played four nights to empty benches. Mr. Chaubert, the original "Fire King," was much more successful. "Napoleon" was brought out at a large cost, and well acted to \$218 nightly, as Mr. Pratt informed me. This season of two hundred and seventy-eight nights closed on 28th July, 1832. My old associate, Warren, grown infirm and dispirited, acted three nights to \$210, \$86, and \$90; his benefit reached only \$206, and of course was a pure loss of about \$100. It was a melancholy night to many present, for in the third act of the "Poor Gentleman," while acting Sir Robert Bramble, his memory wholly failed him, and it was with difficulty that the other performers were enabled to support him through the rest of the play. This was, I believe, his last appearance here. His health, as well as spirits, had been rapidly declining. He lingered, however, until 1832, when in Baltimore he gave up a life clouded towards its close by many afflictions and cares.

The Walnut street now offered the course of opposition then lately introduced between the houses, and opened on 13th December, 1831, with the prices of admission reduced to fifty cents, thirty-seven and a-half cents, and twenty-five cents. In March, 1832, Messrs. Pratt and Burton united their forces as lessees of the building, and commenced a season extending to the month of May, when a yet new manager, Mr. Porter, a re-

spectable actor, and very clever man, opened a summer season extending to August. On the 11th of January, 1833, the Walnut street theatre re-commenced, and was aided by Messrs. A. Adams, Proctor, Mr. and Mrs. Flynn, Hadaway, Henkins, J. S. Brown, the Black Minstrels, Booth, and J. R. Scott. Mrs. Charles Buckstone and Mrs. Fitzwilliam played two nights, previous to returning to England. McArran's Garden, in the western part of the town, in Arch street I think, beyond Broad, was also opened for dramatic performances, with Mr. and Mrs. Thayer, Miss Fisher, Mrs. Charles, and others. The "Fantocini," by Brown, was exhibited with much effect, as well as Mr. Ryninger's feat of an ascent on the rope "from the back of the garden to the highest tree, a distance of five hundred feet." A bold and intensely exciting feat! Notwithstanding all these drains upon the purse of the audience, it is not wonderful that none gained and all suffered. Within the few months I have recorded, there was a sufficient body of regular talent to fill up with judgment one strong company, and nearly a second, but no more. These valuable performers were wasted in idle attempts to attract as stars. No audience was like to be indifferent to a company which could number such persons as H. and S. Placide, Burton, C. Cushman, Abbot, Mrs. Sefton, S. Butler, Chippendale, Mrs. Shaw, J. Wallack, Jr., and J. R. Scott. Had it been possible to make a combination of such ability, no minor stars, native or foreign, could have shaken the theatre which these others faithfully supported. I have given a considerable detail of receipts during the joint management of Warren and me, and I have exhibited with a degree of exposure some-

what painful, the failure of them everywhere afterwards. I have been conscious, as I went along, that I might be taxing the patience of my general readers, but these are facts which offer invaluable material for instruction to professional persons. They will see in them beyond a doubt the folly of the competition of stars with good stock actors. The experience of later days has corroborated the old fashioned notions on this subject, and justifies their wisdom. The last two years' in New York especially, have manifested something of a return to the former modes, and give an ample evidence that actors of merit, going into the line of regulars, are better paid and better satisfied than they were in the uncertain reign of large letters on the bill, and small receipts in the treasury.

In this year Mr. John Duff expired, after a long series of sufferings from gout, with which he was a sufferer even in early life. This versatile actor maintained for some years a high estimation with our audience. He did so always, indeed, as long as he held a regular situation. It proved unfortunate for him that he ever abandoned it for the empty eclat of a star, where his value lessened every hour. He was long an esteemed member of our company, greatly respected for his gentle and unassuming manners, and excellent conduct in his domestic relations. Duff was another instance of gravity and reserve in private, while in public he seemed composed of vivacity and spirit. The matured opinion of the public awarded him a higher estimation in comedy than in graver walks. In both, however, he came nearer to the versatility of Elliston than any other actor of our time.

In April, 1832, Messrs. Maywood, Pratt, and Row-

botham assumed the reins at the Walnut street house, and revived "Napoleon," besides presenting as stars Booth, G. Dixon, C. Kean, Gilbert, Gouffei (the man monkey), Mr. and Mrs. Hackett, Miss Lane, Cooper, Mrs. McClure, (announced as the best actress of the day,) Sinclair, T. Rice, Mrs. Duff, J. R. Scott, Master Bowers, &c. The success of this season was never announced. On the 3d of September, the Chestnut street house was opened by the same managers, with Madame Fearon, to indifferent houses. Next appeared, on the 30th of September, for the first time, the truly surprising Ravel family, who at once established a popularity undiminished to this hour. The admirable discipline, system, and exactness of their corps, astonished and delighted quite as much as their rare capabilities. Wholly dependent on their own corps, their performances exhibited a perfection unattainable by those who are compelled to employ uncertain aid from strangers. Miss Vincent played a series of nights with general applause. The "Wanderer," as translated by C. Kemble, was revived in compliment to the author, now announced to appear. The arrival of this gentleman and his gifted daughter, recalled the enthusiasm which Cooke and Kean formerly excited, and their performances amply realized the high expectations of the audience. The receipts were uniformly great throughout two long engagements. I beg leave here to be a little more personal than usual, in acknowledging an act of generous courtesy received from these distinguished actors. Having played with them constantly, and my benefit being at hand, I addressed a note to Mr. Kemble, requesting the aid of himself and daughter on the usual terms of



the managers. He promptly declined acceding to my desire, but on the succeeding morning, expressing a regret that my request was necessarily rejected, begged to propose a substitute. His words were these: "In respect to the labors and character of an old and valued public servant, Miss Kemble and myself will feel gratified in aiding your object, only on one condition—that no remuneration of any kind shall be mentioned or thought of." A delicate allusion was made to the destruction of my pecuniary affairs, and to the cause of it. I was desired to choose a play from their list, and I selected the "School for Scandal," which was presented with great spirit to a crowded and satisfied audience. Mrs. Wood acted Mrs. Candor on this occasion, receiving from the audience gratifying assurances that her long professional services were not forgotten on this, her last appearance before them. By an arrangement with Maywood to let him change my list of parts, I enjoyed the pleasure of acting with Mr. and Miss Kemble in most of their plays, and acted with them the parts of Fazio,\* Ghost, Joseph, Mr. Manly, Col. Briton, Rolando, Major Oakly, Stukely, Banquo, King John, Dionysius, Gratiano, and others. These plays demanded the full exertion of our company. Horn and Miss Phillips appeared in several operas, and James Wallack in a very productive engagement. The season ended on the 31st of December, 1832, when the Walnut street house was opened under the same management, with a large proportion of the foreign talent lately presented, and the addition of Master Burke, the Ravel

\* Mr. Kemble did not play the first night, wishing to appear in a character more prominent than Fazio, with which we opened.

Family, Madame Fearon, Walton, Jim Crow Rice, Hill, Hamblin, Miss Vincent, Booth, Wilkinson, T. Francisco, (the attitudinarian,) Sinclair, Miss Hughes, Mrs. Drake, Barton, Hadaway, Murdock, Mrs. Austin, Black Hawk, and other chiefs. The season was continued at Walnut street to the 29th of July, 1833. Cooper now received a complimentary benefit on the 10th of June, when the Kembles again volunteered. Mr. D. Ingersoll, a young actor of great promise, acted William Tell and other parts with approbation. An odd title, "Vox Populi," was given to this last season, of which the managers at the close returned thanks for the liberal support rendered.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1832—1835.

The death of Joseph Jefferson—A beautiful letter from Chief Justice Gibson, of Pennsylvania, who, with Judge Rogers, erects a monument to his memory—Chief Justice Gibson writes the inscription—The death of Edmund Kean—Some remarks upon him—Anecdotes—A monopoly of the Chestnut street and Arch street houses by Messrs. Maywood, Rowbotham, and Pratt—Succession of shifting or short seasons—Mr. Sheridan Knowles—Well received in private and public—Chas. Mathews appears for the last time—Meets the usual fate given by the world to old and decayed public servants, who have lost their power to serve or amuse them—Kindness of Trelawney to him—Benefit and public dinners to Mr. Knowles.

AN event which deserves special mention took place in 1832. I refer to the death of Joseph Jefferson, an actor so long and so intimately connected with the Chestnut street theatre in its good days, and so well known to all persons who visited it often at the time I speak of, as to be remembered as a very principal personage in everything that we did. This admirable actor was the son of a distinguished cotemporary and fellow actor of Garrick. The name of the father may still be seen in the acting editions of most plays of that day; and he was accounted of sufficient talent and education to be frequently accepted as a substitute for Garrick himself; an evidence, undoubtedly, of his high professional standing. In middle life he became a martyr to gout, which, at a later term, increased to

such a degree as to render him, for twelve or fourteen years before he died, an entire cripple. At the time of his death he was manager of the Plymouth theatre, where an old acquaintance of mine told me he witnessed the ceremony of his final retirement from the stage. For years before this he had been incapable of walking without assistance, and appeared only as Lusignan, in "Zara," an aged dying king, the part of which he performed seated in a chair. It was in this character he appeared on the evening of his retirement. He died soon after, greatly respected. The death of his wife, our Jefferson's mother, was very singular. It is stated in the "Theatrical Biographies" of 1768. She was observing the practice of some comic dance, when a feature of unusual drollery occurred, which threw her into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. Losing the power of recovery, it resulted in convulsions, from which she never for a moment recovered. Jefferson, the subject of our notice, arrived at Boston in 1796, and remained there a short time. He then repaired to New York, where he became a general favorite with the audience; sharing the comic honors till 1803, with Hodgkinson, a showy and distinguished actor. He then became a member of the Philadelphia theatre, and continued so during the whole of his professional life. At an early age he anticipated the inheritance of his father's complaint, and vainly endeavored by a life of the severest care and regimen, to escape its assaults. For many years the attacks were slight, but with increasing age they increased also, and at length became so frequent and violent as to undermine his health and spirits. The decline of Warren's fortunes greatly distressed him. His associates of thirty years

were disappearing from his side, and he retired suddenly from a stage of which, for a quarter of a century, he had been the delight, ornament and boast. Like Warren, he seemed unable to witness a ruin which he felt was inevitable, and he left Philadelphia forever. I am unable to state where he employed himself for two or three years afterwards. When about this time I unexpectedly met him subsequently at Washington City, D. C.; he was engaged, along with John Jefferson, Dwyer, Mills, and Brown, in a temporary establishment, the manager of which had invited Mrs. Wood and myself to a short star engagement. The company was sufficiently strong to present a few plays creditably, but could not have afforded either a suitable recompense or scene for his remarkable and finished powers. On the benefit night of Mrs. Wood and me, our final night at Washington, Jefferson roused himself to an effort which astonished us. Though now grown old and dispirited, and with a theatre very different from the one which had formerly inspired his efforts, his performance of Sir Peter Teazle, in the "School for Scandal," and of Drugget, in "Three weeks after Marriage," was nearly equal to his finest and early efforts. This was the last time we ever met. I understood that after this he became engaged with a company at the town of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and appeared occasionally. Of course, any theatrical company must have been small and very imperfectly established in such a village. Many and severe domestic afflictions were added to his bodily sufferings; and worn out with physical and mental distress, he there closed his pure and blameless life. He was buried in the grounds of the Episcopal church,

to which I suppose it was considered that his early English education and affinities most naturally consigned him. His grave remained for many years unmarked by the slightest memorial. The visitor to those grounds has often since been attracted by a tasteful monument to his memory, without knowing at all, it is likely, the history of its erection.

It is a source of great pleasure for me indeed, to have an opportunity of recording an act of humanity and feeling, which its unostentatious author I am sure never recorded for himself. It will be found in the following letter to me, by the late Chief Justice Gibson of Pennsylvania—a man whose great power of intellect, and whose vast service in the administration of the judicial affairs of Pennsylvania for more than thirty years, have received the homage of the profession everywhere throughout that State, and along with his amiable, winning dispositions in private and social life, have very recently been the subject of one of the most true, beautiful, and eloquent effusions—“warm, pure, and fresh”—by his successor in office, that it has been my happiness to read.\* Chief Justice Gibson’s sensibilities and taste in the whole range of the fine arts, music, architecture, painting, statuary, and the drama, were hardly inferior to his uncommon intellectual parts. He took the most lively interest in dramatic literature, and dramatic representations generally, and as far as the requirements of his high judicial station made it decorous was a patron of our theatrical representations, in those days of propriety and order when the theatre was a place through which even the judicial ermine might pass, without the suspicion of having brought away a soil or spot. His letter is as follows:—

\* See Pennsylvania State Reports, 1853.

Harrisburg, June 25, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR:—My brother, Judge Rogers, and myself design to lay a marble slab over the remains of the late Mr. Jefferson, in the Episcopal churchyard, at this place; and we stand in need of information in respect of one or two particulars. Below you will find a copy of the contemplated inscription sketched by me this morning. Might I request that you would note whatever is amiss in it, and suggest any amendment of which it is susceptible. I think I am accurate in Mr. Jefferson's baptismal name, but I am at a loss for the year of his death. His son, or his daughter, Mrs. Chapman, if she still lives, could supply the deficiency, but I know not where either of them are to be found.

I look back with great pleasure on the days when my relish for theatricals had the freshness of youth, and when the stage was a classic source of its gratification. To the memory of Mr. Jefferson, who, with others, beguiled Judge Rogers, myself, and the play-going public of many a heavy moment, we owe a debt of gratitude which we are anxious to repay. I am aware that he and you were separated in feeling at the close of his life. I am confident, however, that you will aid us with whatever materials you possess.

I shall leave this place on Thursday, and will be thankful for your answer in the meantime.

Very truly, dear sir,

Your friend and servant,

WILLIAM B. WOOD, Esq.

JOHN BANNISTER GIBSON.

BENEATH THIS MARBLE  
ARE DEPOSITED THE ASHES OF  
JOSEPH JEFFERSON,

An actor whose unrivalled powers  
Took in the whole range of comic character,  
From Pathos to soul-shaking Mirth.

His coloring of the part was that of nature, warm, pure, and fresh;

But of nature enriched with the finest conceptions of genius.

He was a member of the Chestnut street theatre, Philadelphia

In its most high and palmy days;

And the compeer

Of Cooper, Wood, Warren, Francis,

And a long list of worthies,

Who,

Like himself,

Are remembered with admiration and praise.

He was a native of England.

With an unblemished reputation as a man,  
 He closed a career of professional success,  
 In calamity and affliction,  
 At this place,  
 In the year 1832.

“I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, and most excellent fancy.”

I must here correct, with the reader, an idea which a mistaken impression of the Chief Justice gives as to a fact. I did so at once to him. There was never at any time, on any subject, the least estrangement between Mr. Jefferson and myself. On the contrary, our personal not less than our professional intercourse was, for thirty years or more, an unbroken circle of regard and pleasure. It remained so to the end of it. And, as I have already mentioned, on the last occasion I ever saw him, he exerted himself with uncommon and successful interest to serve the benefit night of Mrs. Wood and myself, on our engagement at Washington City, D. C. Nobody of just feelings could know Mr. Jefferson as long and intimately as I knew him, and have any estrangement with him about anything; for he was a man at once just, discreet, unassuming, and amiable. The Chief Justice probably had in his mind my relations with Warren. Undoubtedly, I did think, as Warren himself afterward thought, and unfortunately too well knew, that he made an awful professional mistake in letting the management of his theatre pass from his own hands into that of persons having no knowledge on such subjects, and who, having their heads filled with fantastic and impracticable schemes, which wholly failed in the execution, disbanded not



only the old company, but broke up also the establishment itself. And when I assumed, for the short season I have mentioned, the management of the Arch street house—Warren being still the nominal manager at the other—there was, of course, some aspect of rivalry in our houses, and our professional intercourse of necessity “fell into strangeness.” But the foundations of our regard for each other were never shaken, I believe, at any time. Certainly I never had a hard thought of him. And if I could have had, it would have vanished, when, within a year or so of the termination of our long, difficult, but yet happy partnership of fifteen years—ended by the mistake of which I have spoken—I found Warren and several of his old corps, now my “co-mates in exile,” pitched out of their own theatre—the theatre broken up or closed—and they happy to engage themselves as actors at the deserted and second-rate Walnut street house, or wherever they could get a prospect of their daily bread. Nobody felt, I believe, more sorry than I for the distress that befel poor Warren. He was an honest, honorable, and upright man; and his infirmity, if he had one, was an excess of those tempers which make life amiable and indolent.

As an actor, Jefferson was too well known to need posthumous eulogy. As a citizen, little was known of him. Studious and secluded in his habits, and surrounded by a numerous family, he had neither the wish nor leisure for general society. A few select friends, and the care of his children, occupied the hours hardly snatched from his professional duties. He felt an unconquerable dislike to the degradation of being exhibited as the merry maker of a dinner

party, and sometimes offended by his perseverance on this point. He was frequently heard to observe, that for any dinner entertainments there were plenty of amateur amusers to be found, without exhausting the spirits and powers of actors who felt themselves pledged to reserve their best professional efforts for the public who sustained them. To an excellent ear for music, he added no inconsiderate pretensions as a painter and machinist. Incapable alike of feeling or inspiring enmity, he passed nearly thirty years of theatrical life in harmony and comfort. It is painful to contrast those with the misfortunes of his later years, the result of the miserable schemes of amateur direction in our theatre, which ended in its total breaking up, and in sending upon the world, in their old age, almost the whole body of its long settled and respectable company. We may say with truth—

“Hard was his fate, for he was not to blame;  
There is a destiny in this strange world,  
Which oft decrees an undeserved doom,  
Let schoolmen tell us why.

Another death, which occurred about this time, marks the fact that my theatrical experiences are drawing to a close. I have frequently of late noticed the disappearance of one and another of those whom in the earlier part of my “Recollections” I have presented as “just above the horizon,” or “glittering with splendor and joy.” On the 15th of May, 1833, died at Richmond, Edmund Kean. This great actor has been so frequently a leading feature in these pages, that little space can be found for more than a few remarks about him. With faults and follies not a few, he possessed many amiable and attractive quali-

ties. His great misfortune was the absence of proper guidance and control in youth; an invaluable advantage possessed by the Kembles, Young, Bannister, McCready, Charles Kean and others. Natural qualities, such as his, had they been under the control of judicious protectors in early life, might have rendered him the object of unmixed respect. As it was, wandering and careless associations little prepared him for the change which in an hour transformed him from a needy stroller into the "observed of all observers," the associate of the learned, the noble, and the admired of all. In his profession he had suffered much, but never ceased the study of human character, which he so well knew how to depict.

His striking and complete success as Shylock, Richard, and Sir Giles has led him to be too often classed among the personators of stormy and violent characters alone. This, no doubt, arises from the strong first impression which was always created on every one who ever saw him in these parts of extraordinary power. And as his accustomed introduction to a new audience was usually in his favorite "Richard III.," that was the part which left its indelible impress, and the idea which I refer to, on the public generally. Looking at the matter a good deal myself, I have, however, sometimes questioned whether his fierce characters ever exhibited so high a point of talent as he evinced in those which reached the higher pathetic influence, as Othello, Jaffier, Reuben Glenroy, King Lear, Junius Brutus, Hamlet, Richard II., and others, which mingle the tender with the severe.

As a matter of professional interest and experience, I may here mention that Kean was deeply sensible of

the advantages of being seen occasionally in amiable characters, and invariably discouraged younger actors from the passion of distinguishing themselves in the terrible and the guilty. Like Cooke, he lamented that so much of his fame had been built upon the representation of parts repulsive to a large portion of an audience; and when complimented on his great merit as Iago, replied, "Yes, I wish to show the audience that I had carefully studied both the characters; for I do not conceive that the idea of any equality in Othello and Iago would ever occur to a sensible auditor, even had the two parts been carried out by the author, side by side, to the end of the play." Every one, he said, must feel that Othello holds all the interest of the play, while Iago becomes an offensive cypher after the third act; and he strongly advised a young actor in my hearing not to peril his hold on the sympathies of the audience as Iago, while he can assuredly possess them wholly by only a moderate picture of Othello. It was curious to hear how exactly he coincided with Cooke in discouraging his juniors from volunteering themselves in detestable characters, at least until time and circumstances had rendered them less fit to excite regard and pity. Cooke often said to me, "Sir, I continued to act Othello and Beverly as long as my years and voice allowed me, and I now regret that I ever abandoned them." He spoke of his Stukely, perfect as it was, with contempt and dislike. I have heard Francis, who was long Cooke's fellow actor at Manchester, declare that Cooke's greatest popularity when young was the result of his pathetic powers.

Kean entertained almost a reverence for Garrick, whose widow, at a very advanced age, extended to the

young tragedian a friendly interest. His veneration of Garrick's judgment and taste was unexpectedly startled by my showing him an original play-bill of Drury Lane, in 1774, a short time previous to that great actor's retirement. It was as follows :

BY HIS MAJESTY'S COMPANY.

*At the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,*

This present Friday, December, 2d, 1774,

HAMLET.

WITH ALTERATIONS.

Hamlet,	.....	Mr. Garrick.
King,	.....	Mr. Jefferson
Ghost,	.....	Mr. Bransley.
Horatio,	.....	Mr. Packer.
Polonius,	.....	Mr. Baddeley.
Laertes,	.....	Mr. Aickin.
Rosencrans,	.....	Mr. Davies.
Guildenstern,	.....	Mr. Fawcett.
Marcellus,	.....	Mr. Wrighten.
Player King,	.....	Mr. Keen.
Lucianus,	.....	Mr. Parsons.
Messenger,	.....	Mr. Wright.
Bernardo,	.....	Mr. Griffiths.
Francisco,	.....	Mr. Morris.
Queen,	.....	Mrs. Hopkins.
Player Queen,	.....	Mrs. Johnson.
Ophelia,	.....	Mrs. Smith.

This bill presents Hamlet with Garrick's alterations, which consisted chiefly of the omission of the Grave-digger, and the retention of the whole part of the

\* To playgoers of the present day, who rail with great truth against the injurious system of stars, and the silly announcement of such (great and small) in huge letters, it will appear odd that no less than six of the characters were paraded in type just twice the size of the others—Garrick, however, no larger than his five companions. From his biography, it would appear that his visits to Ireland, &c., were only as a star. There appears, however, no doubt that this system reached only the eminent of the profession.

King. Much critical objection was urged against the absence of the Grave-digger, but it appears that Garrick persisted, as this bill is dated within less than two years previous to his final retirement from the stage.\*

It is not uninteresting to know that Mr. Garrick was at this time sixty years of age—and that the date is subsequent to the death of Powell and Holland, his two favorite pupils, to whom he had assigned his characters of juvenile tragedy, and whose loss probably threw him back upon the performance of his former youthful parts.

The cast of this play was a riddle to Kean, particularly the King and Ghost. The bill presents Jefferson, who was an excellent actor then, and only second to Garrick, as acting the King; and Bransley, an actor of no fame, nor distinguished except by a fine person, the Ghost, a part of great importance. Kean ingeniously suggested that Mr. Garrick might be unwilling to appear throughout the play by the side of a man so tall and imposing as Bransley, and chose to retain Jefferson, whose smaller person was better matched with his own. The great but repulsive scene, in which Hamlet madly meditates the destruction of the King while at his prayers, was retained, with the grand guilty soliloquy. For the omission of the Grave-digger's scene, Kean declared himself unable to account, as he conceived Hamlet's recollections of Yorick, and indeed the whole scene, one of the most

\* It embraces the names of those performers whose children became afterwards well esteemed favorites of the American stage. The Mr. Jefferson was father of our late admirable comedian. Mr. Wrihten was the father of Mrs. Placide, (afterwards Mrs. Lefolle), and grandfather of the excellent actor, Henry Placide; and Mr. Kean was the step-father of the favorite comedian, Mr. Francis.

impressive, and one which, with all auditors, is the best recollected of the play. He assured me he had never before seen this cast, and only dimly recollected the excision of the Grave-digger. This appears strange, yet not more so than a declaration made by Sheridan Knowles to a large literary party, on his attention being directed to the noble speech of Ulysses in the 2d act of "Troilus and Cresida," (on the necessity of order and discipline.) He said that he had never read either that or many other of Shakspeare's plays. Considering that Mr. Knowles had so gracefully modelled his style on that of the writers of Shakspeare's age, and had for years practised as a lecturer on dramatic poetry, it seems scarcely creditable that he could have overlooked a passage of such matchless beauty.

Kean was much amused by a remark of mine, that the play of Hamlet was marked by a recurrence of *advice* to a very curious degree, and beyond the example of any other work of similar character. I cited for proof the first act, which contains the advice of the Ghost to Hamlet, in regard to his conduct towards his uncle and his mother. This is preceded by the advice of Horatio to his comrades of the watch. One scene further is remarkable for the beautiful counsel of Laertes to Ophelia, as to Hamlet's attentions to her—the incomparable advice of Polonius to Laertes; and also his shrewd lecture to his daughter, all this too in one continuous scene. Next we have Hamlet's advice to his players—his wild counsels to Ophelia, in half madness, and finally his great scene of reproach and advice with his mother. Kean expressed a humorous surprise that an actor who had been so unceasing a slave to his trade as I had, could find time

for such fanciful speculations or researches. His time, he said, had been never more devoted to the study of men than of books. Towards Mrs. Siddons also he was proud to acknowledge himself obliged for occasional notices and encouragements in the course of his strange career. He was vain of his excellence as Harlequin even after twenty, remarking that some of the celebrated genteel comedians had formerly been distinguished for acting this part, as examples of which he cited Lee, Lewis, Woodward, Chalmers, and others. He laughingly added that his pantomimic merits were not confined to Harlequin, as his clown was a favorite with many of his provincial admirers, although not in the list of parts he engaged for. It is probable that he therefore retained it as an additional attraction on his benefit night—a bribe (as he stated) to the manager, who allowed him on more than one occasion to figure as Hamlet or Richard in this play, on condition of amusing the less intellectual auditors as the clown in some foolish pantomime. He used to state with much pride the fact of receiving in London, after his fame had become established £50, and on one or two occasions £100, per night, from the same theatres where less than two years before his services had been considered well repaid at a salary of one guinea a week. Of John Kemble he always spoke with admiration and respect, but refused to Talma any higher rank than a third-rate performer. It must be recollected, however, that Talma acted in a language unfamiliar to Kean, who nevertheless sometimes betrayed a weak desire to be thought a man of letters.\*

\* I give an odd instance. While acting in Baltimore, a party of distinguished military and other gentlemen desired me to accompany them



The season of 1834, or rather the series of seasons which occurred at this time, was remarkable in several respects. First, as showing the managers, Maywood, Rowbotham, and Pratt, in possession of very nearly a monopoly of theatres, for they held both the Chestnut and Arch street theatres. The latter opening on the 23d of August, introduced Miss Pelham, Miss Elphinstone, Diavolo Antonio, and other strangers. Burton now first appeared as Ollapod and Wormwood, in both of which he obtained general approbation. He was advertised "from the Pavilion theatre, London." Hunt and Mrs. Austin followed. Power also played in a farewell engagement. James Wallack acted a very successful round of parts. The season ended on the 11th of October, when the Chestnut street house commenced a winter campaign. It began on the 13th of October, and extended to the 22d of January. The managers then returned to the Arch street on the 23d, and remained there until the 4th of April. On the 8th they re-commenced at the Chestnut street, which continued open until the 4th of July. Among the leading novelties of this protracted and shifting scene of stars was Miss Phillips, who acted successfully with Wallack the parts of Mrs. Beverly, the Wife, and other leading characters. Mr. Sheridan Knowles, the author of the "Hunchback," "William Tell," "Virginius," and other pieces, now appeared

on a morning call at Kean's lodgings. My business prevented me from compliance, but not from hinting something of Kean's uncertainty of manner towards strangers. They however resolved on the visit, and on ringing at the door were informed by the servant that "Mr. Kean was at that time engaged in the study of Gibbon, and could not be disturbed." They received this queer announcement with perfect good humor, but never repeated their visit.

on our boards in the capacity of an actor. It has been always believed that a temporary necessity forced Mr. Knowles upon the London stage, and that he went upon the boards to supply the want of a proper representative of his well known character of Master Walter. Mr. Macready, the man of all others best suited to this peculiar character, it was supposed was not inclined to perform it. An experienced English actor assigns as a reason that this gentleman now rising in fame would probably have considered Master Walter inferior to Julia, and have therefore declined it as a secondary part. Mr. Knowles, it has also been suggested, might have imagined that his own display of the conception in which he had written so unattractive a part, would prove more favorable to its success than a representation of it by another. Mr. Knowles, however, did not think it necessary to recommend himself to a new audience in his most favorite production, but ventured his histrionic fame in one of his earlier efforts, "Virginus." It is not strange that he should be proud of this excellent play, now so worn and so often ill acted, and yet, when played with even moderate advantages, always performed to the delight of every sensible or sensitive audience. He also acted Macbeth, William Tell, St. Pierre, Jacques, and several other parts.

Mr. Knowles' plays, as a part of dramatic literature, are known, of course, to most elegant scholars. On our audience was left a favorable judgment of his acting, and on many private friends a high estimation of his cheerful intelligence, candor, and of a rare simplicity of character.

Next in order this season was a wreck—the wreck

of Charles Matthews, who, after an absence of several years, returned to take little more than a farewell of an audience whom he had previously charmed not only with his talents, but by the unusual channel into which he had directed them. He began his last efforts in Philadelphia on the 10th of November, 1834, with his "At Home;" but he was evidently sinking. It was said, truly I believe, that his declension was caused by the effects of an injury sustained by a fall from a carriage many years previous. He still satisfied with his versatility those who had witnessed him in earlier years, and still more those to whom his peculiar performances were fresh. In private he was now silent and dispirited, unlike the gaiety of former years, fancying that the audience felt indifferent towards him, notwithstanding his houses were well attended. He spoke with pain, and with some bitterness, of neglect by some of his American friends of former years. Many of these, who had partaken of his hospitality, and had even shared his roof, now contented themselves with a formal call, or a ceremonious invitation. This was no error of his imagination, his decay of health, or loss of spirits; but a sad and veritable fact. Any man would have felt this cold and chilling change after living in the warm atmosphere of adulation which years had made so natural to Matthews. His quick nature felt it keenly, and he required all the kindness and attention of his real friends to solace him in his disappointment. Among these appeared conspicuously Mr. Trelawney, the well-known friend of Lord Byron. This gentleman, then on a visit here, seemed unremitting in his attentions to the invalid, who struggled through his

engagement with much effort, and under the severest depression. His last appearance here took place on the 3d of December, 1830. He afterwards embarked for his home in England, and expired at Plymouth in 1835. Not the least of Matthews' sufferings arose, as he stated to me, from the circumstance of his having greatly diminished his means by some ill-advised investments. Matthews would frequently revert, with much seeming pleasure, to his early days of wandering and privation, in which Cooper more than once was a fellow sufferer. Cooper's performance of "Penraddock," in Wales, while a youth not eighteen years of age, was often named by Matthews as the best juvenile attempt he had ever witnessed. It was a strange whim of his that he could never be prevailed on to witness Cooper's acting in America; perhaps from a nervous fear of frequently being asked for his opinion, and having his remarks unfairly reported. Another reason may have been that he considered John Kemble the sole great actor of tragedy in his day.

Miss Fanny Jarman (Mrs. Ternan) greatly delighted the public by the variety and excellence of her performances. Latham, and Miss S. Phillips, a vocalist, failed to attract large audiences. Miss Watson appeared with general approbation. Miss Emma Wheatley (pupil of Mr. Knowles,) presented a wonderful resemblance to Miss Kemble, whom she evidently chose for her model. Madame Celeste (from Covent Garden,) acted during this season a number of nights to closely crowded auditors. The season closed on the 22d of January, 1835, with Mrs. Austin, Miss E. Riddle, and Mrs. Maeder, lately Miss Clara Fisher. The same management now re-commenced at the Arch

street house, and made a short season, running to the 4th of April, then returning again to Chestnut street, and giving Power in a farewell engagement before returning to Europe. This favorite actor performed for the last time on the 9th of May, 1835, and greatly increased his reputation by his whole engagement. J. B. Booth's tragedy of "Ugolino" was now produced. Mr. Slows, an amateur, acted Sheva and several other parts with much promise. A splendid benefit was given to Mr. Knowles, on which occasion an address written by Dr. McHenry was eloquently spoken by Miss Priscilla Cooper. Mark Antony's oration was delivered by Mr. Oxley, a young Philadelphian, who at another time acted Hamlet, Brutus, and Reuben Glenroy very satisfactorily. On the occasion of his benefit the prices were raised. One or two public dinner parties about this time testified the admiration of the public for Mr. Knowles' genius and worth. Celeste now resumed her extraordinary attraction. Booth acted seven nights very carelessly, and on the eighth announced for his benefit the part of Othello. He failed to attend, and the character was performed by Mr. Oxley, who acquitted himself much to the satisfaction of Booth's friends. On the 4th of July this extraordinary locomotive season closed with a valedictory, in which the managers thanked the public "for a support far exceeding their most sanguine expectations." This season has generally been considered the most productive experienced by the triumvirate of managers. I must here remark that from want of authentic information I have omitted all attempt to record the progress of the various rival management, confining myself chiefly to the Chestnut

street house and its conductors. From the period of relinquishing management at the Arch street theatre, I continued my acting profession throughout succeeding years, following with much labor, and frequently with uncertain remuneration, the falling fortunes of the drama.

## CHAPTER XX.

1835—1836.

Stars in the zenith—History of stars—Difference between taking money and making money—Herr Cline—J. Wallack—Miss Phillips—Cooper and his daughter—Miss Emma Wheatley, now Mrs. Mason—Celeste—Balls—Mr. and Miss Watson—John Reeve—Mr. and Mrs. Wood, singers—Brough—Burton announces a pleasing piece of intelligence—A grand benefit for the author—It proves a most gratifying expression of public regard—Bihin, the Belgian giant—Hervio Nano, the Man-fly—The death of Mrs. Juliana Wood.

THE breaking up of the great English theatres—a season of general inflation and excitement in all things, (brought about, I suppose, by a commercial season of great excess, and, as was then supposed, of high prosperity)—a spirit of locomotiveness hitherto unexampled, and incident, I suppose, to our feeling, as we then first fairly did, that we could annihilate time and space by the use of steam vessels across the Atlantic, and railroads over our continent—the total break up with Warren of the old management and of its system, in short a spirit of change—of exhilaration—of excitement, incident to an end of an old order of things, and the advent of some new and undefined ones—all these, with some other causes, had now made the system of stars the order of 1835. That system was now in its height; the regular actors no longer forming a joint stock company, but being reduced to the condition of

mere ministers or servants upon some principal performer, whose attractions it was now their sole and chief duty to increase, illustrate, or set off. This system is one into which the theatre is likely from time to time to fall. The bankruptcy of the manager, and the degradation of the stage will always be the end of it; and having gone through the experience, the drama will revive again, as it is now reviving, on the true principle of stock companies. It is therefore a matter of interest in any philosophic, or even any practical view of the theatre, and a short history of starring may here justify a short digression.

The employment of eminent actors, for a limited period, on large terms, we are told began with the famous Mrs. Oldfield, and was next known in Garrick's and Macklin's cases; from this time its progress was slow, and confined to actors of peculiar talent. In America, the first star we know was Mrs. Henry; then followed Fennell (in 1796) for a short time, when Cooper resolved in 1803 to try the experiment, and succeeded so well, as to relinquish the labors of a stock actor ever after. While confined to himself and Fennell, the plan was of no injury, but was rather a convenience to the theatre. A certain number of principal characters, as Hamlet, Richard, Othello, Lear, Macbeth, and others, were not likely to find fit representatives in the stock actors, however valuable they might be in their proper positions; neither were these plays required by the public, at this time, more than once or twice in a season; when, if properly supported, they never failed to produce large receipts. Thus appropriated to adequate representatives, they preserved a freshness which rendered them welcome. The attractiveness of those two tragedians created no jealous



feeling in the regular performers, who as yet retained undisturbed possession of their proper characters. In course of time, however, the utter failure of the London as well as provincial theatres, with Cooke's success, led to an invasion of our theatres by the discontented, obscure, or ambitious of every grade, who seemed, one and all, determined to fill the void occasioned by the death of the great tragedian, Cooke. The extraordinary pretensions of some of these was provokingly amusing. Denied the privilege of murdering the first parts, they ranged through all the other most inviting pieces, elbowing out persons of real and approved ability, and disappointing the few who ventured on witnessing their weak efforts. The regular actors finding themselves hourly displaced by persons wholly unattractive (except on their benefit nights,) became restless, discontented, and indifferent. The few parts in which they had faithfully gained public approval, became the prey of every presuming adventurer from abroad or at home; and this made it necessary for many to commence the business of starr-ing, merely to escape utter obscurity.\* For many years previous to 1826, the uniform system of sharing the profits (our receipts after expenses paid, instead of gross receipts,) discouraged a repetition of the visits of these smaller stars, and might have checked the folly, but that a multiplication of theatres now opened wide the doors to all pretenders. The statement of receipts which I have given so faithfully, though not, perhaps, so interestingly to all my readers, show satisfactorily the estimation in which each performer was held by the public, and how long that estimation lasted.

\* I speak hereafter more particularly on this matter.

When an actor like Cooke, or Edmund Kean, possessed the power to draw a large audience together, the theatre was still a gainer, though sharing the profits of his attraction. It might have even shared gross receipts, and still left the theatre rich; but the evil was what came subsequently to pass with the increase of theatres, and their foolish rivalry—that small stars asked half gross receipts instead of half net ones or profits. If, therefore, on any night the gross receipts failed to be double the expenses of the house, the theatre lost, while the actor got his half share. The benefit night, when the best effort was expected from strangers of no professional reputation, went of course to the actor himself. By degrees the demand of stars became too exorbitant for easy belief—the cases of C. Kean, Master Burk and others, as stated by the English managers since the destruction of the patent theatres, appears little short of madness. Mr. Bunn, the late manager of Covent Garden theatre, having been censured for not securing the best talent now existing, makes the following explanation: “I offered Miss Helen Fawcett £25 per week, the highest salary given to that delightful actress Miss O’Neill, when she was drawing all the world after her; but Miss Fawcett demanded £15 per night, which is £90 a week. I should have been ready to give Mrs. Nisbett the salary of such actresses as Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Davison, etc., viz: £25 per week; but I was scared by her intimation that she had recently been in the receipt of £60, and was exempt from playing in after-pieces, in which class of entertainments both these actresses so enchanted the town. I was prepared to give Mr. Anderson £20 per week (higher terms than he had

with Mr. Macready at Drury Lane,) but he required £10 per night (£60 per week,) with certain other drolleries, quite *bijoux* in their way—and recollecting that *the* Kean had £25 per week, in the plenitude of his attraction, I felt called upon to decline the difference. I am old fashioned enough to think the histrionic talent we possess is by no means equal to what we have lost; that English performers neither improve nor attract by emigrating to America; that the public are not to be blamed for continuing their patronage to first-rate instead of second-rate artistes, and that a director cannot justly be condemned for refusing to give the latter about three times the salaries, on an average, that were given to the former.”

The hit at America evidently alludes to the failure of Madame Vestris, Dowton, Reeve, Blanchard, Mrs. Alsop, and many others, who visited us, and the diminished attraction of Mrs. Bartley, Dowton, Philips, Matthews, and others, on their return to England. This document shows the absurd demands of some modern actors, and the rates paid in a regular way to first class talent only a few years previous. I have myself a letter of Incledon's before me, which states the terms on which he starred, while the stars yet moved in proper orbits, and satellites had not usurped their planets' sphere. “I shared the profits in Dublin, after deducting £70 as the nightly expenses; with the clear receipts of one night, and playing gratuitously one night for the manager. At Bath I shared after £50; in Edinburgh after £40; Norwich after £30.” These were his terms while yet his powers and reputation were undiminished. At Liverpool, in 1803, even such actors as Fawcett, J. Johnston, Emery, Simmons, and

Mrs. Glover appeared together for six to ten nights, receiving each, as a sole remuneration, half of the gross receipts on their benefit nights. If any one suggests, in reply to my remarks, the large sums paid to musical stars in London from an early date, I reply that these funds were not supplied by the public, but by large individual subscriptions, or the private resources of gentlemen who uniformly beggared themselves by this hazardous speculation.\* With us theatrical control has generally been assumed by persons of moderate means, and the large sums lavished on stars have too often been derived from the rightful claims of the actors.

Nothing can be more deceptive to the public, in regard to the prosperity of the theatre, than this system. They see that the house is crowded night after night, and hence they infer that the manager grows rich. But wise people know that there is a great difference between *taking* money and *making* money. They know that the account book has two sides to it; one called a receipt, or debtor side, the other an expense or credit side; and that after an enormous list of items on both, there is but one item which concerns the manager, and that is one, at the end of all, called "Balance." Everybody has heard of the attractiveness of Fanny Ellsler. Thousands saw her houses crowded to the dome. Nearly as many thousands, perhaps, were turned away and could see nothing. Hence all inferred that she must have been profitable

\* A very recent case, in the English Court of Bankruptcy, of a young gentleman who, by a connection with a musical enterprise in the theatre, spent in a term incredible short, a fortune of I think £100,000, shows the absurdity of attempting any conduct of operas with benefit to the manager on the principle of stars alone.

to the management, when in truth she broke it. They all could understand that she brought much money to the house, while none, except the manager and her banker, knew how much she took away. There was a reason why Spain with all her Indies never could grow rich; and it was that her outgoes were greater than her income. The following figures may illustrate the same apothegm by another instance. Miss Ellsler actually received more in ten nights here than she did during a whole season in Paris. Her account was very nearly thus:

<i>Receipts.</i>		<i>Expenses.*</i>	
1st night,.....	\$1262 00	Paid Ellsler, on ordinary	
2d " .....	1091 00	nights,	\$4550 00
3d " .....	1111 00	Paid Ellsler, benefit	
4th " .....	901 75	(clear,)	1325 00
5th " .....	1114 00	Paid Ellsler, (half man-	
6th " .....	543 75	agers)	561 00
7th " .....	720 25	Paid Sylvain, her dan-	
8th " .....	886 50	cer,	750 00
9th " .....	791 00	Paid Desjardius,	150 00
Benefit, .....	1325 00	Paid Parsloe,	90 00
Managers, (half to her,) 1123 00		Ballet, say for the 11	
		nights, \$100 a night,	1100 00
	<hr/>	Ordinary expenses of	
	\$10,869 25	the house, 11 nights	3300 00
			<hr/>
			\$11,826 00

or a loss to the manager of about \$1000 on a most attractive engagement. Compare these terms, or those which Mr. Bunn mentions that he offered minor stars, with those paid to the eminent actors of Drury Lane, in the last century, while the theatre was in its

\* The receipts above given I have from the manager's books, and the sums paid Ellsler and her dancers on ordinary nights. The others were publicly known, I believe, and are probably understated. Her loss to the management was indisputable and ruinous.

glory there. Garrick, a salary of £2 15s. 6d. per night; Yates and wife, £3 6s. 8d.; Palmer and wife, £2; King, £1 6s. 8d.; Parsons, 6s. 8d.; Mrs. Cibber, £2 10s. 6d.; Mrs. Pritchard, £2 6s. 8d.; Mrs. Clive, £1 15s.; Miss Pope, 13s. 4d.; Guestinello, chief singer, £1; Slingsby, dancer, 10s.; Grimaldi and wife, £1; Popes, (hair dresser,) 4d. per night; the sinking fund drew £1 15s., and 3s. per night to charity. Without meaning to intimate that the rates of 1762 were fit rates for 1835, I may yet safely ask if the ruin of so many managers in our own day can be any matter of wonder.

Coming back again to the point from which I digressed, in giving some note of the history of stars, the reader must keep in mind that stars were now everywhere in the zenith, or on their course thither from the horizon. As yet none had begun to culminate, and we had no other lights. I speak of 1835-'36.

Herr Cline, one of the most agreeable and graceful of rope performers, J. Wallack and Miss Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Ternan (late Miss Jarman), who was deemed less successful than her excellence merited, were prominent at this period. Cooper and Miss Cooper acted an engagement, and appeared in "Wives as they were," "Othello," "Damon and Pythias," "Honey Moon," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Rule a Wife." Cooper was now announced as the "*Veteran Tragedian.*" Abbot from Covent Garden, a useful but not attractive performer, acted an engagement with Miss Emma Wheatley with moderate success. Celeste performed several engagements with increasing attraction, in spite of the want of variety in the pieces she produced.

With all her talents, her immediate success must ever be counted among the wonders of the drama. Balls, from Drury Lane, gave several light comedy characters with more vivacity than attraction, and even ventured on a revival of "A bold stroke for a Wife," distinguished under the title of "Win her and wear her." Mrs. and Miss Watson sung with much applause in several operas. John Reeve, a comedian, whose irregularity too often obscured his genius, failed on his first appearance to realize the expectations of the audience as Acres, a part of more consequence abroad, I think, than here, no one having ever produced an extraordinary effect in it. Some of Mr. Reeve's coarser representations were certainly highly comic, but failed of attraction. Two eminent English singers, Mr. and Mrs. Wood, performed a long series of operatic nights to enthusiastic and crowded audiences, utterly eclipsing the efforts of all their predecessors. These favorite vocalists, with Celeste's long run, occupied the greatest part of the season. The opera of "La Sonnambula" alone was performed more than twenty nights. The Woods produced also "The Maid of Judah" and "Mountain Sylph," with the most extraordinary success. Brough, as a singer, shared largely in the public admiration. Reeve attempted a second series of parts, among which was Jerry, in the drama of "Tom and Jerry," as originally played by him in London, but he excited no attention, as the piece had been long withdrawn. So numerous were the stars, that on some nights three and even four appeared together—of course, at no small cost. A benefit was offered "in aid of the oppressed people in Texas." The Woods and Wallack each appeared in a *farewell*

*benefit* previous to returning to Europe, and this active season extended to 11th July, 1835. Though some of the stars—the Woods especially—drew immensely, and the season was remarkably profitable to them, it was not known how far it was a successful one to the managers. As, notwithstanding their great enterprise and efforts, they were not able to go on, the belief was that the stars had taken to themselves the lion's share of everything. This was the order of that system, and the cause, as I have already stated at large, why, in my opinion, it can never prevail without breaking up the theatre, and the cause, therefore, why it can never prevail long.

I must apologise for the mention here of a circumstance purely personal, which proved one of the most gratifying events of my life. During the month of December, 1835, while acting in Chestnut street, Burton called me aside between the acts, and with an expression of great pleasure informed me that a meeting for the purpose of giving me a grand benefit had just adjourned, after completing the necessary arrangements. This was the first hint I ever had of this intention. The object was at once carried into effect, and on the 11th January, 1836, I was honored by the presence of one of the most brilliant audiences ever assembled. On this occasion the pit was furnished appropriately, and devoted wholly to the ladies, presenting a sight as novel as it was beautiful. None but an actor can appreciate a scene like this was, which in a moment throws into oblivion all recollections of anxieties, toils, and mortifications inseparable from a profession like ours. The following entertainment was offered:—"Three and Deuce," two acts of "Venice.



Preserved," "John of Paris," "Antony's Oration," and a new song, and "How to die for Love." I was favored in these pieces with the valuable aid of Mr. Balls, Mr. J. Wallack, Mr. Abbot, Mrs. and Miss Watson, Mr. Wemyss, and Mr. Burton.

While the Chestnut street managers were thus employed, occupying the season, however, chiefly with music and pantomime, those of Walnut street were by no means inactive. Dramas of show and spectacle were produced in a truly magnificent style, while stars of the highest and lowest degrees were engaged upon the more legitimate plays. The managerial opposition gave a glorious opportunity for stars to obtain terms of such a character as could only have been profitable to the house had a perfect monopoly existed. As it was, three (the Arch street theatre being included,) divided the audience, and ruined the directors.

The Walnut street house for several succeeding years was conducted with much spirit, and the best talent frequently produced. Among the "Wandering Stars," were Monsieur Bihin, the Belgian giant, the beautiful Albiness, and last, though not least, Hervio Nano, the Man-fly. This extraordinary being, whose real name was Harvey Leech, and who was an American by birth, was, perhaps, even a more disgusting picture of perverted humanity than Calvin Edson, whom I have described on a preceding page. The dwarf Nano presented to the waist the bust and body of a large sized man, while his lower limbs, strangely deformed, scarcely exceeded those of a child of eight years. Yet this strange being possessed an amazing degree of strength, which enabled him, in a dress intended to give the appearance of a huge green fly, to

creep around the edge of the upper boxes of the theatre, and even across the proscenium, more to the terror than amusement of his spectators. This man, though thus deformed, was not without a large share of vanity, and he delighted to exhibit himself on a very tall horse to the wonder of those who frequented Chestnut street. When seated at a table, he presented to one placed opposite, the figure of a large athletic man, with a face of the most regular and even handsome features; but when shuffling along on his deformed stumps, his appearance was horrible. Yet he had been employed with success as an equestrian at Franconi's circus in Paris.

During the season now alluded to the Walnut street prices were reduced still lower than they had been, and were now 25 cents to the boxes and pit, and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents to the gallery.

On the 12th of November, 1836, died Mrs. Juliana Wood, wife of William B. Wood, after an active theatrical service of thirty-five years.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1836—1838.

Great attractions—Crowds and gross receipts—Singers, dancers and players—Miss Morgan—Celeste—Forrest—Power—The latter most successful in parts written for him—Not so good in others—The American theatre—Booth had become unattractive and fails of success—A good benefit to Mr. Wemyss—Adrian—Murdock—Augusta—Mrs. Bailey—None attract just now—Nichol's equestrian troop—Miss Ellen Tree now appears, and is greatly and justly admired—Wallack, Power, and Celeste make adieus at the Arch street prior to going to Europe—Continued rivalry between the houses in 1837-38—Stars, pageantry and opera—The system fails—Dinner to Forrest—C. Matthews and Madame Vestris arrive, but strange to say fail to attract an audience—Celeste and the Bedouin Arabs more popular, and much followed—Hazard, a dancing master who attempts ballet, fails—Power successful—Sketch of Cooper, who about this time retires in effect from the stage.

THE season of 1836-37 may be considered, so far as gross receipts are concerned, as one of the most splendid seasons ever known in Philadelphia. While the Walnut street managers presented every variety of show and pageantry, with little regard to expense, their rivals of Chestnut street held out the following temptations to the public. The regular company was increased by the arrival of Hamilton, Lindsay, Brunton, and Miss Morgan, singers; and of Mrs. Broad, Miss A. Fisher, and others, as stars. Mrs. Shaw, and Miss Phillips re-appeared, the former acting Hamlet for her benefit. Edwin Forrest, previous to embark-

ing for Europe, played a very productive engagement, during which the orchestra was thrown open, and additional space given to the pit. A benefit was offered in aid of the widows and children of persons killed in Texas, then just establishing its independence. Celeste continued her extraordinary attraction, renewing her engagement again and again throughout the season. The receipts were enormous. Power still improved upon the audience in the characters written expressly for him, but he failed comparatively in the legitimate drama; in such pieces, I mean, as "The Rivals," "West Indian," "John Bull," and "Wild Oats." He was re-engaged twice, and closed with increased reputation. Mr. and Mrs. Keely acted two long engagements with loud applause, but with less profit than was expected from their fame and talents. A still worse fate attended Downton, one of the first English comedians of his day. Although his former abilities were somewhat diminished, he still gave us Sir Robert Bramble, Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Peter Teazle, Falstaff, Old Dornton, and Dr. Cantwell, to small audiences, but with spirit and ability. Like Blanchard he had held high rank as a regular in the great London company, but now failed in starring. Celeste, with Madame Areline, and Monsieur and Madame Checkini, filled the theatre for fifteen nights to the "Maid of Cashmere," while the Ravels nightly increased in attraction. Mrs. Gibbs (late Miss Gradden,) was received with much favor, as a singer. Miss Grove, Hackett, Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Bailey, Plumer, Balls, J. Wallack, and Miss Clifton appeared in turn with varied success. Master Luke, the musical wonder, excited some enthusiasm by his performances,

while his sister appeared as Richard III., and as Ariel, in the "Tempest."

The Walnut street house, now called "The American Theatre," commenced in November, 1837, a season which, according to public and private report, but ill repaid the managers' exertions. Booth had now become wholly unattractive, and the splendor of spectacle was repeatedly lavished in vain. In consideration of his exertions and losses, a complimentary benefit was offered to Mr. Wemyss, and produced a large receipt. Cooke's amphitheatre at Baltimore was at this time destroyed by fire, and all his valuable horses, with much other property totally lost. A benefit was got up for him in Philadelphia, but proved only partially successful. The American then closed for a short term, re-opening in June with little better fortune than before, notwithstanding the engagement of Monsieur Adrien, D. Marble, Murdock, Madame Augusta, with Mrs. Bailey, Bishop, and Archer to aid her. The opera of "Amelie" was produced with great care and expense to large loss. Opera in Walnut street had proved rarely a safe experiment. Nichols, with his equestrian troop, succeeded well for a few nights, when Bannister surprised the audience by an alteration of "Titus Andronicus." Mrs. Shaw, Burton, and Mr. Whitney (the lecturer) also appeared now, the latter acting Richard III. The Ravel family, Carter, (the lion king,) Chippendale, and others of merit failed to redeem this unfortunate season, which extending considerably beyond a year, concluded in September or October 1838.

One of the principal features of this remarkable season was the first appearance and brilliant success

of Miss Ellen Tree (since Mrs. Charles Kean,) who continued for several seasons highly attractive. During her visit "Twelfth Night" and "Ion" were produced with much care and advantage. The season closed on the 29th of April, 1837, with undiminished prosperity, at least as far as could be judged from the numbers which crowded the houses, and from what were apparently the gross receipts. The company now removed on the 2d of May, for a short season, to Arch street, where the same costly stars were produced, and with little less attraction. J. Wallack, Power, and Celeste took the usual farewells previous to leaving America. In February 1837, Mr. Rowbotham, a joint manager of the Chestnut street, died after a lingering illness. He was an actor of solid sense and merit, without any seeming fondness for his profession. In melo-drama of the first class he possessed rare merit, but carefully avoided as much as possible the drudgery of this laborious branch of his art. By a share of the partial success of some preceding seasons and a judicious economy he was enabled to leave to his widow a respectable competence, which must have been wholly sacrificed had he lived to continue the direction with his less fortunate associates.

The season of 1837-38 continued the same struggle between the theatres, the same wild expenditure for stars, pageantry, and opera, all tending to the same inevitable end—ruin and bankruptcy. Maywood and Pratt offered during the season Miss Horton, J. S. Browne from Drury Lane, Vandenhoff, (the elder,) E. Forrest, Rice, Miss Turpin, Miss Clifton, Mary Ann Lee, Madame Le Compte, Caradori Allen, Madame

Otto, Brough, Miss Davenport, (who appeared as Richard III.,) with many more of various pretensions. Both daughters of Maywood were now presented to the audience; Miss Mary Maywood on the 14th of April, 1838, and her sister Augusta on the 30th of December previous. On the appearance of the latter quite a rivalry was excited by the friends of Miss Lee, and continued with much spirit, but with little advantage to the parties most interested.

The star system, after having been carried out so fully, now plainly showed, at both houses, symptoms of a decline. The New York theatre also became hopelessly embarrassed from the same cause, but unwisely persisted in its course. Largely increased rents added to the weight under which all were sinking. During this season the citizens of Philadelphia honored their distinguished townsman, E. Forrest, with a splendid dinner, under circumstances which must have proved highly gratifying to him. This doubtful season closed on the 9th of July, 1838.

I have been particular in giving a list of eminent performers engaged by the rival managers at this period. It will be apparent from it, I think, that the destruction of the managers' hopes did not proceed from want of either talent or enterprise, but was caused by the rivalry of houses, and the consequent extravagant terms of those occasionally engaged. Two and sometimes three theatres contended for an audience which could at no time have supported very profitably more than one. The stock company this season was, in truth, more effective than it had been for several years, but from the great number of stars employed sunk into a mere band of auxiliaries. The en-

agement of C. Matthews and Madame Vestris, from which great profits were expected, proved a singular failure, for which it would be difficult to account satisfactorily. Objections were urged against the domestic arrangements previously existing between the parties, and a silly story prevailed of some discourteous remarks on the American character by one or both. There was also a good deal of unworthy gossip. This might have been expected to excite curiosity from at least a class whom nothing better attracts, but the first night clearly proved that they were doomed, not to hostility or scandal, but to neglect, far more fatal than either. On the 9th of October they appeared in three short pieces, which, although admirably acted, were received with a degree of coldness so strongly contrasted with the enthusiasm of a London audience, as to discourage, if not disgust, the lady throughout her whole career, now made a short one. "Know your own Mind" was the only five act piece attempted during their stay. That a portion of the audience were sensible of the lady's great talent was certain. It was equally clear that Matthews proved altogether the greatest favorite and object of attraction. Power expressed the utmost astonishment at Madame Vestris' failure in attractiveness before an audience so well qualified to estimate the peculiar delicacy of her genteel comedy. They left us disappointed and chagrined to the utmost. Miss Sheriff and Mr. Wilson performed a very profitable engagement to the delight of the patrons of music. Celeste, now in the height of her popularity, attracted crowds through many nights of the season. Madame Stephan, with a new corps de ballet, introduced by P. H. Hazard, a



dancing master, brought over by one or two persons from France, eminently failed, while the Bedouin Arabs were eagerly followed. The Seguins now began a career of musical success which rather increased than diminished through succeeding years. Power, as usual, played a long engagement to very large audiences. The opera of "Amelie," previously produced at the Walnut street, was now revived with great care and expense, to be again neglected. A heavy loss to the theatre was the consequence. Mr. and Mrs. Sloman, after a long absence, re-appeared to find the distinguished and excellent acting of the lady, and the comic songs of the gentleman, both formerly much admired, totally forgotten. An interesting little French drama, called "Gaspardo," translated by Mr. John Butler, was acted this season with general approbation.

During the forty years of dramatic history which precede, I have had very frequent occasions to present the name of Cooper. No actor in our country ever had so long and so admired a career. I speak not of Mr. Forrest, for that actor is still in the midst of his laborious life. Cooper belonged to the past generation, and was the chief dramatic feature which marked it in America. The simple length of his service gives him a place and prominence which distinguishes him from other actors. I have mentioned him so frequently, and in mentioning him have so constantly introduced the recollection of some incident which the occasion of introducing him recalled, that his dramatic life has been partially written in my sketches of the American drama in these parts. Mr. Cooper is, however, entitled to a more particular and

personal record. Such a one I hope may not be uninteresting even though presented by a pen no better than my own.

THOMAS APTHORP COOPER, was born in London, in the year 1776, and received the advantages of an excellent English education at a principal seminary. In his early years he lost his father, an officer in the naval service, and became the ward of Messrs. Holcroft and Godwin—names too well known in British literature and politics to need any farther notice here. A schoolboy exploit at this time gave indication of a dauntless nature, which afterwards ripened into exertion and sufferance known to few. Standing on the river-bank with a companion (since known as a British government agent here) one of the party quoted the passage, "Darest thou, Cassius," &c., from "Julius Cæsar," which the other considering as a challenge, boldly dashed into the stream, and was followed in safety by the other to the opposite side, a considerable distance from the starting-place. For this bold imitation of Cæsar and Cassius, and the consequent soaked state of their clothes, a severe drubbing from their master was their reward.

It has not been ascertained whether inclination or necessity first led his thoughts to the stage; yet, from his early sufferings and privations, it might safely be inferred that choice alone did not impel him to a pursuit, in which he was destined to form so splendid a feature. Certain it is, that his early performances were of the most inferior parts, in obscure provincial theatres, where, as he stated to the writer, he encountered some of the severest privations that ever fell to

the lot of a future hero. He often spoke with pride of the approbation bestowed on his performance of some very inferior characters, and the courage which a night's success gave him to labor on and hope. After strolling about for two years or more, his guardians, whose discernment discovered in him the dawning of ability, determined on affording him the most liberal theatrical education; and it will readily be supposed that a duller pupil would have improved under such tutors. Fencing, dancing, and other accomplishments necessary to give personal grace, were freely afforded; and at nineteen years of age it was determined to bring him before the ordeal of a London audience, familiar with the excellences of Kemble, Henderson, and Palmer. Holman and Pope, too, at Covent Garden, were young actors of great merit, but never equalling in after days the promises of their juvenile efforts. His reception in Hamlet was flattering in the extreme; and Macbeth following, gave evidence of extraordinary talent in a lad of nineteen. A circumstance connected with this part may be mentioned, as leading finally to his emigration to America. Mrs. Merry, of whom I have often already spoken as Mrs. Warren, had recently married Merry, the poet, and retired, as she believed, for ever from the stage. During Cooper's first performance, she was passing some time on a visit to her father, then resident at Bath, where she received a letter from Mr. Merry telling her that "a most extraordinary lad of nineteen, named Cooper, said to be a ward of Godwin or Holcroft, has created much sensation by his admirable performance of Hamlet, but more of Macbeth;" and desiring her to come to town forthwith, assuring her she would be repaid for the journey by the per-

formance. She came to London, and the impression Cooper made at that time was a pleasurable recollection in after years, when chance brought them together so often, and greatly to the delight of many now living. The success of the young tragedian was far more satisfactory to his friends and the public, than to his theatrical rivals, or the political foes of his two guardians, who, it will be recollected, were at this time objects of distrust to the government, with whose persecution one or both was afterwards favored. Attacks of the most bitter kind were showered upon the luckless young actor, who was charged with being the protégé of "a most ferocious duumvirate of *disorganizing Jacobins*." So feverish was public feeling at this time, that the million forgot the merits of the boy in the unpopularity of his guardians, and whether from want of judgment or from ill intention in the managers, he was thrust into the part of Lothario, in "The Fair Penitent"—a character requiring the utmost ease, polish of manner, and familiarity with the stage. He often declared to the writer, that from the first moment he appeared, before he had uttered one word, he was assailed by a degree of disapprobation (so cruel a contrast to his former greetings) as for a time wholly to paralyse exertion, and which he resented by an indignant manner, which completed this unexpected failure. He fled from this scene with a feeling of resentment towards his countrymen which no time had the power to soften. On a *very* small annuity he possessed, he retired to a remote town in Wales, where like Penruddock, he could indulge his misanthropy and resentful feelings in solitude. Cooper, in his seclusion, did not, however, forget his studies but labored incessantly upon Shakspeare, Ot-

way, &c., feeling that he possessed powers far beyond those of many successful rivals, and placing his defeat very sensibly to the account of political prejudice.

While he was thus dividing his time between sulks and studies, Mr. Wignell was in England busily engaging talent for the Chestnut street theatre: for which the unsettled character of Fennell, and the declining health of Moreton, his two leading actors, made it necessary to provide some one of power to support the pieces in which Mrs. Merry was to appear. Disappointed, at a late period of his stay, in some engagements he had counted upon, he chanced to express his embarrassment to Merry, who at once mentioned Cooper's performance of Macbeth. He had neither seen nor heard of him since his failure, but after some inquiries it was ascertained that he was in Wales, and unemployed. Upon the judgment of Mr. and Mrs. Merry, Wignell at once wrote to Cooper, offering him a first class engagement of salary and position, but on the conditions that he should instantly hasten to London, from whence the ship was to sail in a very few days. The answer to this proposal was the appearance of the young hero, who arrived half dead with fatigue from the journey, only a few hours before the sailing of the ship. The party soon reached Philadelphia, and proceeded to Baltimore for a short season, where Cooper and Mrs. Merry were received with an enthusiasm which abated little during the many years they repeated their visits. In private, too, they experienced the elegant hospitalities which the Maryland people know so well how to dispense. A few weeks brought the company to Philadelphia, where Cooper's reception in Macbeth, Penruddock, Horatio, in the "Fair Peni-

tent," and other parts, was as far as the audience was concerned beyond his best hopes. At this time several persons of education condescended to notice the actors and plays. With most of these, Fennell and Moreton had won a high estimation, and Cooper's debut seemed likely to darken the fame of the old favorites. Their fame and attraction continued however to increase to the latest period of their acting.

A mistaken notion prevailed, that Cooper was a man of harsh, unkind nature ; but nothing could be further from the truth. Undeserved persecutions in his youthful days, no doubt greatly soured his temper, and gave an austere reserve to his manner, which sometimes amounted to roughness. Cooper is not the only instance we remember, where early neglect and unfair opposition tended to render a disposition naturally kind, cold and repulsive. He avoided general society, and firmly withstood all attempts to exhibit him at parties as an artist, or an object of social curiosity. The few persons who shared his friendship, can bear noble testimony to his frank generosity, truthfulness, and unostentatious benevolence, sometimes bestowed with a reserve which was greatly misunderstood. His rigid observance of punctuality in all matters of business, forms an interesting feature in his character. No sacrifice of comfort was ever regarded, to fulfil all contracts. During a long series of years, two instances only of disappointment to the public occurred, and both were occasioned by the same unavoidable cause ; the first by an ice flood in the Susquehanna, which set at defiance all efforts to cross for several hours ; the other, to which I have alluded further back, from a similar flood in the North River, where the ac-

cumulation of ice forbade all attempts to reach Jersey City.

During his first season, Cooper's services were not frequently required; and when the benefits were arranged, Cooper announced the piece which he had taken as his selection. By the terms of contract, Mr. Wignell insured to him a certain profit on his night. But the day previous, his box sheet presented so meagre a promise, that he felt assured his liberal manager must be a considerable loser. This he felt unwilling should be the case; and observing that an elephant was on exhibition, it occurred to him that this Asiatic auxiliary might save the manager, and relieve him from the mortification of a beggarly house. He therefore issued an extra bill, adding the great animal attraction; and was gratified in consequence by a large and fashionable audience. I have mentioned, if I remember, this incident already. I have also mentioned one or two singular blunders which he made in the words of his text. It must be owned that at this time he frequently endangered his reputation by such incorrectness, especially in some inferior parts, which he properly conceived unworthy of him. On the occasion of performers' benefits, his good nature too frequently led him to undertake several new characters in one week, each of which demanded much more time and attention. His name was of consequence in a bill, and he was reluctant to refuse his aid, although sometimes at the expense of his fame.

In the year 1797, Mr. Wignell was encouraged to make a summer season at New York, and availed himself of this opportunity to exhibit to our neighbors the first full and efficient company ever collected in Ame-

rica. Cooper, by his performance of Hamlet, Iago, Lothario, Chamont, Sir E. Mortimer, and other characters, established a reputation on which his future fame and fortunes were built. He returned to Philadelphia, delighted with his New York reception, when an accidental lameness preventing his appearing, he obtained leave of absence for a few days, and while in New York, was imprudently induced to perform one night for another house in his halting state. This act violating his contract with Mr. Wignell, a suit was commenced for the penalty—two thousand dollars. The sum was instantly furnished by a few of Cooper's friends, and tendered to Mr. Wignell. As it was Cooper's services Mr. Wignell wished, and not the penalty, which must have proved a heavy clog to Cooper, the manager made a very generous proposition, that Cooper should remain in Philadelphia, and as a set-off to the forfeiture, he should consent to act the part of Alexander the Great, in the tragedy at that time in preparation with great splendor and expense, as it was then being acted at Drury Lane by John Kemble. Cooper had up to this time a decided dislike to this character, and stipulated in his contract that he should never be called upon to enact Alexander or George Barnwell; but the noble liberality of Mr. Wignell was too strong for Cooper's idle objection, and he gratefully accepted the offer, and applied himself so successfully to the study of Alexander, that the success of the play not only retrieved him from his penalty, but recruited the exhausted treasury with a much larger sum than the forfeiture afforded. Thus ended the lawsuit, and all unfriendly feelings between the manager and actor. The New York manager had



felt Cooper's value, and at the close of his contract, induced him to establish himself at that theatre, with the privilege of occasionally playing a night or two at Philadelphia.

Cooper, though patient enough under criticism, was sensitive enough of outrage or insult. Upon one occasion, Bernard, Darley, Sr., and himself, were invited to give an entertainment of recitations and songs, comic and serious, at Richmond, where a very brilliant assemblage welcomed them. Among the company was a gentleman, who, by a flying visit to Europe, conceived himself qualified to dissent from the liberal applause bestowed on the performance of Cooper. At the close of his beautiful delivery of Mark Antony's oration over the body of Cæsar, while the audience were complimenting him by the most rapturous applause, the gentleman made himself conspicuous by hissing very loudly—an expression little known on the occasion of this sort of entertaining recitations in a concert room. The audience renewed the applause, the critic his hisses, until he felt himself fairly beaten. At the close of the performance, Cooper addressed a note to the gentleman, enclosing the price of his ticket, and expressing his unwillingness to receive a reward for services so unsatisfactory to a person of unquestionable taste. The style of the note, as may be supposed, was of a nature not to be mistaken by the gentleman, a professed duellist. Cooper also intimated by a friend, of the first consequence in Richmond, that any answer to the note would reach him, as he intended to remain through the next day. No reply was sent, and the critical gentleman gained

nothing by the affair except some sneers from his friends.

In 1800, Cooper had the honor of acting upon the first theatre ever opened in the city of Washington. The parts in "Venice Preserved," on this occasion, were filled thus: Jaffier, Wignell; Pierre, Cooper; Priuli, Warren; Belvidera, Mrs. Merry.

About the year 1802 he entered upon a career of starring, finding it less laborious, and far more profitable than the drudgery of a stock actor. He saw Fennell, who was declining in power and estimation, yet receiving, in six or eight nights, a larger remuneration than repaid him for three months' regular service. His first visit to the South established for him a reputation which no time nor rivalry could ever shake. At the eastward, too, he retained an unusually lengthened popularity. His journeys, for a long series of years, were performed in a large gig, expressly constructed for these perilous adventures, in which he drove tandem. How well he managed the whip may be guessed from the fact that no accident was ever known to have befallen him, in all his journeys from New Orleans to Boston, travelling by night and day, through such roads as then were the only highways of our country.

It was not unusual with Cooper to act on alternate nights in Philadelphia and New York, making the passage by the gig. Indeed, on four occasions, he arrived in time for dinner, and by his own horses.\*

He visited England in 1803, and made no great

\* Cooper's powers of locomotion, however, were sometimes independent of animal aid; for we find that, in 1802, he undertook to walk to Baltimore, 104 miles, in less time than a friend could ride there without

impression upon the London audience, who, nevertheless, received him well. On his benefit night, at Drury Lane, he was allowed the advantage of Cooke's aid, who played Iago for him. I have mentioned this incident elsewhere, as well as the catastrophe to Mrs. Pope, the Desdemona, who was seized during the performance with an illness which, in a few hours, brought her to the grave. The evening was a memorable one. At Liverpool and Manchester he played several nights alternately with Kemble, Cooke, Young, and the other eminents of the time. During his engagement at Liverpool, it happened that the character of Richard III. was enacted within a few days by Kemble, Cooke, and Cooper. The accomplished Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, author of "Life of Leo X.," occasionally favored the public and the players with critical remarks on the most deserving performances, among which, probably, the efforts of the three tragedians afforded him the best opportunity of showing his judgment, as well as liberality. In reviewing each actor carefully, he awarded fairly to each his superiority in several scenes. Kemble, he conceived, was inaccessible in dignity, duplicity, and finish. Cooke he lauded for rough spirit and untiring energy. To Cooper he gave the palm for his exhibition of despair and guilty ravings. The whole of his fifth act Roscoe pronounced superior to his rivals, but concluded by saying, "Mr. Cooper, the young Richard, gave some admirable acting in several scenes besides; and we hope he will be satisfied, if, for the present, we feel

change of horse. This wager he won with little exertion, arriving in fit condition to act that evening. It is probable that he owed much of his uncommon health to his frequent journeys and change of air.

compelled to rank him Richard the *third*." Cooper often declared that he considered this criticism the highest compliment he had ever received.

His Richard did not always fare so well as at the hands of the elegant Roscoe; for, some days after the above, he made his bow to the Manchester audience, selecting the character for his first appearance. Of all actors, Cooke had long been the first favorite, particularly in Richard—a part suited to rather a rough audience, who had coldly received Kemble, and were not disposed to favor a young American actor (which Cooper always claimed to be)—a title at that time far from being a recommendation. The determination was formed to oppose any actor in Cooke's great part, when Cooper unconsciously selected it. Upon his appearance, a large audience greeted the stranger with every kind of noise and insult. He was soon, however, made fully aware of the cause and motive of the attack, by yells for "Cooke! Cooke!" "No Yankee actors!" "Off with him!" and other more offensive cries; but, summoning his accustomed fortitude, he acted with his best ability through three entire acts, without seeming conscious that not one word of his speaking could be heard. Whether from fatigue, arising from their brutal exertions, or respect for the constancy which no outrage could shake, they suffered the fourth act to commence in comparative silence; when Cooper, taking advantage of the momentary lull, played his part so well, that the act was scarcely disturbed in its progress, and its conclusion marked by a long-continued applause, lasting nearly to the commencement of the fifth, which began and ended in a tumult of applause. He frequently adverted to this

triumph over unfair opposition, as one of the brightest scenes of his life. It was a realization of the players of Rome, thus eulogized by Brutus in "Julius Cæsar,"

"Look fresh and merrily :  
Let not your *looks* put on your purposes,  
But *bear* it—as our Roman actors do—  
With untired spirits, and formal constancy !"

He was at this time joint manager of the New York theatre with Mr. S. Price, a New Yorker, to whom I have frequently alluded, and who was at one time manager of the Drury Lane theatre, London. Price and Cooper concluded an engagement with Cooke, to the great delight of all who could appreciate true talent. It was supposed that the advent of Cooke would cause the inevitable eclipse of Cooper; but the receipts to Cooper's acting, after Cooke's arrival, suffered no diminution, while their playing together brought to the treasury large receipts. It must not be forgotten that it was many years after Cooke's death that Cooper achieved his high reputation as William Tell, Virginius, Damon, Ordoneo in "Remorse," as well as in several parts of comedy—Charles Surface, The Liar, Petruchio, Leon, Duke Aranza, and others.

A strong proof of his skilful firmness occurred during his New York management, on an occasion of producing the pantomime of Cinderella. Much labor and expense were lavished upon this beautiful dumb piece, which relying solely on music and action combined, demanded nicety and care. The band, however, had, on several occasions exhibited the most insolent neglect of the rehearsals, and Cooper placed a notice in

the music-room, to the effect, that all absentees from rehearsal would in future suffer such fines and forfeits as were designated by the orchestra rules and their several contracts. The notice was in vain; the fines were exacted, and a conspiracy determined on. On the "first night of Cinderella," an audience, forming a receipt of fifteen hundred dollars, was assembled, and on ringing the orchestra bell for the overture, Mr. Hewitt, the leader, was informed by the ringleader, that the whole orchestra was determined not to play a note until the whole sum forfeited by their absence should be refunded. Here was a situation! He rushed almost speechless to Cooper's room, and unfolded the plot. Cooper coolly asked, "Can you play the music?" "Why yes, sir; I have been practising it before your eyes for three weeks; but how am I to get through a pantomime without aid?" "We shall see," said Cooper. He at once went before the audience, stated the full particulars, with much regret at the position in which the theatre was placed. He then frankly proposed two alternatives for the decision of the audience: the first to receive back their entrance money, if desired; the next—and a droll one it was—that as there was so large an audience, and many, doubtless, were unwilling to be deprived of their amusement by the freaks of underlings, he offered to them "Cinderella," led and played solely by Mr. Hewitt, with the assurance that on its next representation, the orchestra should be full and certain. This proposal caused a momentary titter, but was followed by a good-natured acquiescence on the part of the public. He also promised the dismissal of all the offenders, and rigidly fulfilled it. The piece was then

withdrawn for two or three days, and reproduced, with a splendid band, to a long series of full houses. Few instances can be found of more tact and propriety, or of the performance of a musical piece with one violin, and that satisfactorily to the audience.

From the moment of his last return from England, although cherished as usual by the public, it was evident that Cooper felt his power declining, and decided on retiring from the stage. After several splendid benefits in New York, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Boston, he made his last bow to the audience. His destiny, however, seemed to be public to the last. The marriage of his amiable and accomplished daughter to Mr. Robert Tyler, a son of President Tyler, afforded him the advantage of presidential patronage, and in November, 1841, he was appointed military storekeeper to the arsenal, Frankford, Pa., with the pay and perquisites of a captain of infantry. The office was soon after discontinued as unnecessary, but Cooper was amply compensated by the lucrative place of surveyor of the port of Philadelphia. At the close of this appointment he was made one of the inspectors, first at Philadelphia, and afterwards at New York, a situation he held until a short time before his death, which took place at Bristol, under all the affectionate care and attention of Mrs. Tyler. It would be unjust to the memory of Mr. Cooper, to omit the creditable fact, that, in all his official situations, he evinced the same pure devotion to his duties, as marked his dramatic career. Punctuality and rigid correctness pervaded his whole life.

Mr. Cooper possessed the advantage of a remarkably fine person. He was not quite six feet high,

but his proportion and form was beautiful. He constantly recalled to those of us who saw his figure undressed, the remark of a quick observer in regard to another noble looking man of Philadelphia, now deceased, "His figure was free from all imposture."



## CHAPTER XXII.

1839—1840.

Theatrical things coming to a close—Great attractions and receipts, but no profits—Mr. Maywood fails and retires—Pratt his co-partner drags along heavily for a short time, but closes in disaster—An epoch—The writer makes numerous short engagements, for which he is compensated—Ridiculous scene in Rolla—The supernumeraries, receiving 25 cents per night, rebel for unpaid arrears—Four children and a blind man and boy, repulse invading legions—Revival of Shakspeare and his original text not found practicable, and in fact not done where professed to be done.

THEATRICAL affairs were now (1839) rapidly drawing to a crisis. The crisis which came by the close of the year 1840, was hastened by the enormous expenditures made in numerous and costly engagements entered into with distinguished singers and dancers, as well as other "artists," in violation of all older experience, both here and abroad. Music divided the seasons with the drama, or rather made the drama merely auxiliary to itself. Miss Sheriff, Mr. Wilson, Sig. Giubilei, Mr. and Mrs. Martin, (the last formerly Miss Inverarity) Mr. Brough, Mr. Plumer, and many other musical performers appeared, and I need not say with a heavy charge upon the treasury. The new opera of "Fidelio" was produced with care and talent, but without success as to receipts. Mademoiselle Celeste, appeared as usual to large audiences, but, as I supposed,

to the positive drain of the treasury. Mr. C. Kean, Miss M. Maywood, Mr. J. R. Scott, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Ranger, Miss Susan Cushman, Hervio Nano, (the Man Fly of whom I have already spoken,) Mr. Fleming, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Mossop, Mr. Hackett, and Herr Cline appeared in rapid succession with varied success. Mrs. Fitzwilliam, one of the most favorite actresses of the London stage, performed several engagements to the delight of that portion of the public which were so fortunate as to witness her able efforts. The number however, was small; and it was remarked that the lady performers in general had excited but little attention for several years. Mrs. Bartley, Miss F. Jarman, Miss Rock, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Mrs. Duff, and others who had acted to receipts wholly unworthy of their merits, were cited in just illustration of the fact. Mr. and Miss Vandenhoff gave great satisfaction, but failed to aid the treasury, although Mr. Vandenhoff played "Richelieu" for seven nights to considerable houses. Miss Elizabeth Wood appeared on the 16th of December, 1839, as "Amanthis," in the "Child of Nature." On the 11th of January, Finn, who was then passing through Philadelphia, on his way home from the West, remained a day to play for Mademoiselle Celeste's benefit. The next day he embarked on board the Lexington, and perished with the other passengers, in the loss of that ill-fated steamer. On the 10th of February, only a month afterwards, a benefit was given in aid of his family. Finn was a general loss. As a comedian he possessed rare ability, while in his domestic circle his loss was irreparable.\* A small pantomime troop attempted

\* Many of the visitors to Newport, R. I., will recall a tasteful cottage on the south side of Prospect Hill below South Touro, adorned

a representation of the once famous "Mother Goose," a piece once very popular abroad, but which is said to have owed its attractiveness more to the merit of Grimaldi, clown of the pantomime, than to other causes.

On the 9th of March, 1840, Mr. Maywood announced his relinquishment of the Chestnut street house in the following card.

MR. MAYWOOD,

With great deference and respect, begs leave to announce that his benefit *and farewell to the scenes of his many years' labor*, will take place on Monday, March 9th, 1840; on which occasion he hopes that this last appeal to the suffrage of long tried and valued friends will not be in vain.

However untoward may be the circumstances in which he is at present placed, he may, without fear or shame, say boldly, that he has ever honestly discharged the duties of his office, and catered for the amusement of the public with the best intentions, and to the best of his ability. The celebrated vocalists, Miss Sheriff, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Giubisei have kindly volunteered their aid.

The performances were "The Somnambula" and "Cramund Brig." This was the first clear proof, outside, of the entire decline of the Chestnut street house, commonly called with a kind of affection by the title of "Old Drury." The enormous sums paid within three years to eminent singers, to Celeste as well as to numerous unattractive stars, together with the heavy expenses incident to a voyage to England, which was annually made by Maywood, had made an aggregate of loss, which, with an increase of the rent, now raised ruinously high, and forbidding all hope of retrieving late losses, showed him conclusively the hopelessness of his condition. Pratt, his late partner, on whom the man- with pretty vines climbing about its trellised portico. Its seclusion and unambitious neatness might lead the passer-by to fancy that it was some poet's residence. It was built by poor Finn, who probably looked forward to this spot as a peaceful hermitage for his wearied age.

agement devolved, dragged on until June, but dragged heavily and without a ray of hope. He attempted a benefit with the announcement of "Der Freyschutz," by a company of German vocalists in their native language. This opera from its first production had always proved a failure, and it now failed again. "The Swiss Family" was also given in German without attraction. Mrs. Sharpe, a valuable actress, now finally retired from the stage. The greatest feature of the season was the unequalled attraction and unequalled terms which more than counterbalanced it—of Mademoiselle Fanny Ellsler, who closed this disastrous season. I have already stated her receipts and costs.\* The retirement of Maywood was speedily followed by Wemyss' abandonment of the Walnut street house, after an industrious but hopeless struggle of several years. This seemed for a while to be the end of all things theatrical. It was a complete break up of the stage, a *punctum stans* of actors and managers.

Up to this time, although retired from anything like management, I continued to act steadily throughout the different seasons, almost without intermission. In seasons subsequent to the one I speak of, the limited state of the companies frequently required occasional aid in characters of less than first class; and it was no uncommon circumstance for me to receive an invitation to act for a single night. Employment was necessary to me every way; and I generally received a liberal and just compensation for such services.

The theatre at this time furnished some droll yet mortifying passages. One of them I witnessed in performing a single engagement, such as I have spoken

\* Ante page 397.

of. An actor of considerable ability passing from the south, played a short term in Chestnut street. On his benefit night, when he was announced to the public for Rolla, the company could offer no Pizarro, and as usual I was called upon and engaged to represent this character. The first act passed off with no marked applause or discontent, and the second being called for in the green-room order, an alarming intimation was received that the *supernumeraries* (the mute persons employed in procession,) had revolted in consequence of certain arrears of pay,\* which if not cancelled at once, would assuredly prevent their appearing on this occasion when their presence was "*indispensable.*" This necessity, however, was rather mistaken by the claimants, who discovered the consolatory or unconsolatory truth that "*any body can be done without.*" The manager was resolved that the play should proceed, and the great scene in the Temple of the Sun was in its course produced. The original intention was to introduce a grand procession of the Peruvian chiefs and soldiers, whom Rolla addresses in his celebrated patriotic speech. Instead, however, of this numerous host, accompanied by a large train of Virgins of the Sun and other characters, the concourse was represented by four little girls, Orano, (a character in the piece,) a flying messenger, with the old blind man and his boy. To the valor and patriotism of these eight persons—or eight half-persons—did Rolla pour forth his stirring appeal, and his assurance of their power as well as will to resist the invading army of Pizarro. A more ridiculous scene was probably never

\* The pay of supernumeraries was usually from a quarter to a half dollar per night.

exhibited in any earlier time upon the stage. But so accustomed and so indifferent had the public lately become to such scenes, natural and common in the now wretched state of the stage, that no notice was taken by the audience of their violation of all effect, nor any inquiry into the real cause of it. This degrading exhibition occurred on the same boards where Cooper, Merry, Jefferson, Warren, Cooke, Kean, Ellen Tree and the Kembles had in succession trod, and in the once well ordered, regular and effective Chestnut street theatre of Philadelphia.

At the same house about this time Sheridan Knowles' favorite play of "Love" was first produced on a benefit night. According to the custom of those days it had been only partially read in the green-room, and *once* regularly rehearsed. As an inevitable consequence, it failed with disgrace, and was for some time utterly neglected by the public.

Among other evidences of an absence of dramatic knowledge—or to speak more exactly, an absence of knowledge in *dramatic effects*, I may refer to more than one attempt about this time to "revive Shakspeare," by playing his pieces (as was said) from their "original text." This attempt was not exactly *new* with the year I speak of. It had been suggested and tried before in England, and has been since suggested here. But it has generally been by men professedly literary—having no experimental knowledge of the 'acted' as distinguished from the 'written' or 'unacted' drama, or by men whose literary zeal or desire for literary reputation was willing to be gratified, even at the expense of their credit for practical acting. In the instances I am speaking of about this time it

arose with men merely practical, and from a desire to present some novelty. They were quite ignorant that men at least as fond of Shakspeare as themselves, and in proper places much more in the habit of following it—Betterton, Garrick, Cibber, and Kemble, among the players, together with a long list of distinguished authors—considered some material alterations, excisions and transpositions, absolutely necessary, in order to render these plays acceptable to later audiences. Many of the passages which we are informed charmed the Court of the Virgin Queen, have long since been ejected from every theatre. The same change of manners has nearly banished from our libraries the works of Smollett, and if the proscription were extended to some of Lord Byron's and Bulwer's works, the cause of moral propriety would not be materially injured. Independent, however, of the old-fashioned coarseness of some of Shakspeare's scenes, a strong objection may be urged, that the acting effect is injuriously lessened. Who can remember the exhibition made some time since in our country, of the *so called original* Richard III., without a recollection of its lamentable failure; notwithstanding its gorgeous armors, appropriate scenery, banners, &c., presented, it must be granted, at a large expense and forming a fine field of show, but by no means contributing to the enjoyment of the play. But even this announced restoration of Shakspeare was a mere fable. Many of the passages written by Cibber, or extracted by him from "Henry V." and inserted into "Richard III.," were found *indispensable*, and were retained, and passed upon the audience for Shakspeare. Mr. McCready's version, produced in 1821, boasts that it has discarded 800 lines of Cib-

ber's alteration, *only retaining* 200. This then is a question of *amount* of alteration, and 200 lines in one play certainly destroys the literary identity which the revivers profess to restore. This boasted restoration of "*the text*" was therefore a mere fallacy, while the acting effect was obviously lessened by the omission of the character of King Henry, and the introduction of a long scolding scene of the two Queens, immediately followed by a similar berating from Lady Anne. Cibber's knowledge of stage effect made few alterations not judicious, and to it we are indebted for many excellent plays altered from Beaumont and Fletcher, which in the original would be wholly unbearable by modern audiences. The ordinary reader is perhaps scarcely aware when he sees "Coriolanus," "Measure for Measure," and "The Winter's Tale" announced, that John Kemble claims the lasting gratitude of the scholar for his adaptations of these plays to representation, without which they would scarcely be represented at all. Other productions of the great Bard also received Mr. Kemble's careful revision, and were for several years restored to the stage, from whence they have only been driven by absence of superior tragic, as well as comic talent. We allude to "Love's Labor Lost," "All's Well that Ends Well," "Two Gentlemen of Verona," &c., &c. The revival of the *original* "Romeo and Juliet" had lately been announced with restorations which every judicious auditor must regret. For why should passages be retained upon the stage, which no well-bred man would venture to read to his sister, daughter, or female visitor. The death-scene in the fifth act Garrick found so devoid of interest, that he ventured upon a change, which has been sanctioned by the most



intelligent managers, actors, and audiences for the last 70 years. His alterations, in which he introduced an interesting funeral procession of Juliet's body, with some exquisite music, serves to break the abruptness of passing too rapidly the scene from Verona to Mantua.

Who does not agree with Dr. Johnson that the dying scene in "King Lear" is too painful for exhibition, and rejoice to be relieved by the rescue and restoration of the suffering old monarch? Antony and Cleopatra, as written, required such material alterations to fit it for the stage, that Dryden undertook to re-write it, and gave it the name of "All for Love," or the "World Well Lost." Shakspeare himself, in his historical plays particularly, had no hesitation in taking an ill-written published play, adopting whole scenes and passages, and producing it as his own. Ample evidences of this fact exists in the cases of "King John," "Henry V." and "Henry VI.," "Measure for Measure," "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," and many others.\*

I am by no means unaware that in what I here approve I may appear to some and perhaps to most literary men a mere barbarian. But the subject is one which I hope I may be excused for thinking that any actor and manager of experience even much less than mine can judge more truly than the professors of many universities. In their libraries, I suppose that most actors read the plays of Shakspeare in the original text with the highest delight, I can scarcely think

\* We must, however, protest against *Dryden's* alteration of the "Tempest." There seems no possible necessity for the introduction of such characters as he added; characters puerile and indecent, and marring the beautiful simplicity of Shakspeare's most instructive drama.

with much less delight than the man of poetic genius and literary perfection ; and if I drew my conclusions from nothing but from the students' or the professors' experience of what gives pleasure, I probably should agree with him as to the vandalism of the players. "Trust every man in his own art, is however a wise maxim of the law ; and the *experience of the stage* for a good part of two centuries, specially testified to by the acts of such men as Garrick and Kemble, is evidence of the highest kind of what is found to be necessary in dramatic representation of the plays of our old dramatists.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1840—1846.

The star system considered—Its inevitable tendency to destroy the acted drama entirely—The manner in which it does so explained—A reference to the excellent labors of Mr. Burton, to whom the first credit is due for an endeavor to re-establish stock companies, and also to the labors of Mr. Wallack in that city: and to those of Messrs. Wheatley and Drew in Philadelphia—Some incidental suggestions in conclusion, without much order, to young managers.

I HAVE now reached my promised extent of these records, which I might have been tempted to continue, so far at least as to include the progress of Forrest, the return of Macready and of Mr. and Mrs. C. Kean, the enterprise so well commenced by Burton at the late National theatre,\* with the reign of female management by Miss Maywood and Miss C. Cushman, but the want of authentic documents, with other considerations, oblige me to leave these times to younger and abler pens.

In presenting the dramatic history of the forty years which I have attempted to record, I have necessarily, by my statement of facts, receipts, and actual changes in theatrical men and matters, opened to the mind of intelligent readers a view of the effects of the star system as distinguished from that of stock companies. To

\* This building, with the immense structure in the rear of it called the Chinese Museum, is in flames as I write these lines, on the evening of July 5th, 1854. The total loss of both is certain.

the substitution of the former in the place and on the ruins of the latter, I attribute in a capital degree the miserable condition to which the drama, at the time of which I am now writing, say from 1840 to 1846, had finally arrived. I have also from time to time, as I went along, explained in the incidental way which the subject prompted, the manner in which the star system operates upon theatrical companies, and how it necessarily destroys them, and with them the acted drama.\* This matter deserves, however, to be somewhat exfoliated. Let me here remark, that I am happy to see of late times—I mean within the last few years—that the pernicious system of which I speak, by carrying itself fairly out, and by so breaking up all sound stock companies, has finally destroyed itself. The evil has worked in a degree, or is working, I hope, entirely its own cure. And so after a quarter of a century of experiments and of irregular management, ending in total ruin to actors, managers, and the drama, we are likely to find ourselves in a position where we can again at least see the place from which we departed, and by great efforts, and retracing our steps, get ourselves safely brought up to it again. This result is not entirely new in the history of Revolutions. To that intelligent manager, Mr. Burton, the first credit is due. He has been striving for a number of years in New York, as he had been doing here in Philadelphia, to bring his theatre to a proper system, based on the principles of common sense and experience. With talents of his own equalled by few stars, he has preferred to ascertain whether the public could not be better attracted by a good stock company of combined talent,

\* See particularly ante p. 392—94.

and every New Yorker knows with what excellent effect he has labored. His success, I am happy to learn, has amply confirmed his reputation for dramatic judgment. Mr. Wallack, an actor of full fame and talent, has embarked in a similar enterprise, and I believe with equal success. I am not surprised therefore to learn that in New York there are now two theatres at least (there may be others with which I am unacquainted—I speak without disparagement to any,) which are considered proper resorts for those who seek a rational and pleasing amusement; to which families go—not to see every evening any “tremendous attraction;” not to be the witnesses or no witnesses, of the manager’s “unparalleled success”—not to see every other night in the year some new performer who is still, with every change, “the greatest performer of this or any age,” but to enjoy themselves for an hour or two with the representation of some good piece, either of past or present writers, well got up, well studied, well rehearsed, and well performed throughout; and afterwards, at a reasonable hour, and before both body, mind and spirits are absolutely exhausted, to retire contented to their homes—to renew the gratification on some subsequent evening, when there happens to be no positive attraction at home or elsewhere. If I am rightly informed the theatre is thus becoming in that city something like a stated and fixed department of social organization; and is a source of sure, settled, and liberal income to its intelligent proprietors. The recent efforts of Messrs. Wheatley and Drew in Philadelphia have been tending to the same point.

When the theatre is such an establishment, it will be what it ought to be. It will be a branch of public

affairs, but it will be conducted in a quiet, decent, orderly, and unobtrusive way. Every individual in it, from the highest performer to the least, may be, and ought to be, and, so far as the system tends, must be perfectly respectable. It need by no means discourage or set itself in conflict with occasional high dramatic talent. Far from it. Performers of very rare gifts are by no means of every day occurrence. When they do appear, they are in no danger of neglect. On the contrary, they will be needed, and have their proper and exceptional place. They will afford that rare, extraordinary, and high gratification which neither is intended to be, ought to be, nor can be other than a special privilege; and when they do come, they will move in proper regard to the larger sphere of their traverse, and not destroy the control and harmony of the system through which, in regulated reference to humbler bodies, they are expected to make their transit.

This is the true and normal state of the theatre. It cannot exist even for a short time respectably, harmoniously, and with complete effect in any other state. And for any considerable time it cannot exist in any other state at all. When it ceases to be respectable—when its performers are no longer at harmony—when its amusements are neither rational, moral, nor refined—the public support will be withdrawn, and will destroy it; and if society fails in its duty, the legislature of the State, sooner or later, will come up to theirs, and in the attempt to discharge it, will probably go beyond the requirement of sense or morals, and attempt the vain effort of destroying the theatre entirely.\*

\* I say the vain, and might say the unwise effort, because no legislative enactments can prevent dramatic representations under some form,

This state of the theatre, as I have said, can exist only under stock management; and to exhibit briefly

and the effect of prohibitory laws is to produce fraudulent and low representations. The true policy is to legalize but to regulate severely. The legislature of Pennsylvania had hardly passed its laws preventing, under penalties, theatrical exhibitions of all kinds, before the manager of the old theatre avoided its enactments by a resort to a new name; and a complete theatrical representation was effected, if not by him, at least by his successors, in the face of a legal opinion which he himself had taken upon the subject. The case and opinion to which I refer is curious in a professional as well as in a political and dramatic point of view. I therefore insert it.

## CASE.

Mr. Hallam proposes to convert the building, formerly used as a theatre, into a lecture room, and there to deliver lectures upon heads and other subjects, as the groundwork of a public entertainment. He means to repeat a poetical address to the audience, and to exhibit various imitations of the most celebrated comedians, so adapted to the lecture that they may seem to be a part of it. It will be necessary to illuminate and decorate the place of performance. Music will be introduced, and as it is intended for the conveniency of the audience, to preserve the distinctions of box, pit, and gallery, the prices to be proportionably regulated.

Your opinion is requested whether, in the execution of the whole or any part of Mr. Hallam's plan as above stated, he will violate and incur the penalty of any law or laws of this commonwealth. And should you be of opinion that it is partially and not entirely repugnant to the law, you will please to point out those parts which you shall deem to be unexceptional.

LOUIS HALLAM.

## OPINION.

I am of opinion that a lecture upon heads or other subjects is not prohibited by any Act of Assembly of the State of Pennsylvania; nor do I conceive the place of such lecture to be material, whether a play-house or elsewhere. Music and decorations, as well as the price, are additional circumstances, which do not at all vary the nature of the transaction.

I should imagine that imitations of comedians, although so adapted to the lecture that they may seem to be a part of it, would be construed an offence against the law which directs that no part of a play be exhibited.

J. INGERSOLL.

*Philadelphia, March 3d, 1784.*

some of the minor ways in which the star system has operated, by breaking up these stock arrangements, to destroy the theatre itself, was the purpose of these concluding remarks. I add to them, in a rambling way, one or two suggestions to the junior portion of my friends about to engage in theatrical management.

The perfect representation of dramatic pieces is a matter requiring great time and practice. It is an immense business—pieces, casts, rehearsals, stage-business, stage-scenery, stage effect, final performance, and with all this the regulation of a band of people in their nature somewhat unsettled, exposed to great temptations, and every way impatient of control. When the actors are a permanent body, and the manager a permanent person, everything can be pre-arranged. I have already stated how admirably Warren used to project his season. It was one secret of our success. We knew what our power and resources were, and we knew also wherein we were weak or deficient, and we arranged things accordingly. But when a season is made up of a rapid succession of numerous stars, the first effect is that nothing can be arranged ahead. The star is the light of everything; the centre about which all must move. He has his own times, his own pieces, his own plan of business, and his own preferences of every sort. One star is very tall, and will play with no person of diminutive stature. The company must be changed to suit him. The next is very short, and will play with no one of ordinary height. Everything has again to be unsettled. One star brings half a company with him, and the stock actors thus displaced, retire in disappointment. The next looks to us for all his support, and the manager



must get them all back in the best way he can. The result is that when the star does come everything is to be done *impromptu*. What the effect of this is in many departments, let the reader a little while consider; and first, for example, its effect on

*The important matter of rehearsal.*—A star arrives from England with some new pieces of his own, manuscript perhaps, and written probably for himself alone. No one of the company with which he is to play has ever seen them. The star begins his transit. The piece is to be performed at once. But how is it possible for the principal actors to study, each of them, a long part, and then to rehearse it with the star in time for the performance. The star will probably not come at all till the very afternoon of the day on which he is to perform. The rehearsal is impossible, and therefore is not attempted.

It has not been unfrequently the case of late that an actor has been expected to learn from three to five hundred lines (sometimes much more) within twenty-four hours, during which he must also appear in the play for the evening. This was a subversion of all former requirement. For a number of years our actors were not bound to study more than eighty-four lines of tragedy, or one hundred and sixty-eight of comedy within twenty-four hours, then acting only three or four times a week. While in London, Mr. Pope was entitled to a month for the study of Mordent, in the "Deserted Daughter," a very long and difficult part no doubt; and he was a very busy actor. Time, therefore, is not, or when I left the stage was not, given even to learn so much as the language of the author. Even where the words were caught for the

hour, yet being learned in haste, confusion and anxiety, with no reference at all to its meaning or effect, the memory cannot retain them, and an effort nearly equal to the former is required every time the piece is performed. It is a fact well known to me, that during the reign of the star system many pieces which in London occupied the study and labor of the best and most practised actors for weeks, have been produced here after a study of as many days, and sometimes of no more than as many hours. As for the meaning, to say nothing of refinement and shades of meaning, the matter was not once thought of. An audience would scarcely credit the fact, that many pieces (manuscripts chiefly) were acted which the performers who played in them never had a chance of even hearing read, nor any means of knowing the drift or object of the story, beyond the scene in which their own parts lay. It was by no means an uncommon thing when I left the theatre, to hear an actor inquire of another during the performance, "What is this play about?"

The rehearsals, therefore, so indispensable towards the production of entertainments worthy of an audience, became the strangest exhibitions that can well be conceived. Instead of a quiet and orderly exercise of memory and judgment, and a careful observation of the effects, trial of power, situations and machinery, preparatory to the performance of the piece, it was not uncommon to hear even the principal parts *read* for the first time on the very day of performance, amid the noise of supernumeraries and other idle inferiors, lounging about and picking up what they chose or could for their duties in the evening. The star of the night, if present at all, sitting at the prompter's

table, either writing or affecting to write letters of vast importance, or gossiping with some visitor, to the utter destruction of silence and discipline. Of course when the piece came to be performed, blunders and delays marked it from the beginning to the end of the performance, and the result was that on the first representation—the representation always formerly considered the most attractive—no audience could be got together at all. In regard to those actors who by extraordinary exertions learned their parts, the thing was still unfair and cruel. Would the young painter be called upon to begin and finish a portrait or landscape, on which his professional reputation might depend, within twelve or fifteen hours? Certainly not; yet it requires quite as much time to form an idea or outline of a principal character of passion, as to draw the outline of a face or landscape. Then when the actor's idea is formed, the filling up and finish are to come as a separate and subsequent labor. Nor is there any opportunity for correcting at the performer's leisure. He lives but while he is seen in the act before the house, and can leave no image of his mind or manner other than he then makes. If a bad one it is fatal.

I need not, I think, endeavor, by further remarks, to show how injuriously in this respect the star system operates, not only on the reputation of both the author and body of actors in the piece, but how it necessarily tends to destroy the effect of the whole representation, and so to destroy the drama itself. Let the reader next consider how unavoidably the system must lead to the destructive result of

*Bad casting.*—In stock companies settled from year

to year, improved by additions as wanted, regulated in their composition and changes by the necessities of the play, and the general character of the public taste, a bad cast of a piece is a matter which certainly need occur but seldom. Indeed, with a good manager it will hardly occur at all. The reason is that these pre-arrangements can be made. Almost every contingency can be foreseen and provided for. The manager knows his company's ability, tempers, tastes and distastes, fancies, aversions, dependability, and everything about them. He can cast the performer to the part for which he is especially qualified. If his company cannot perform a piece well, or will not perform it willingly, he will not perform it at all, or perform it, perhaps, but seldom. But the star comes, and must perform in a particular piece—which has never been produced at this theatre before—or he can perform in nothing. He is no star when seen by any light but his own. Even if it is a piece well known, there may be reasons in the structure of the immediate company why it is not in the list. The result is that everything is matter of experiment. Casts have to be made with very imperfect regard to the capacity of the actor to perform the parts, often in plain defiance of that capacity. One person is not able to represent the part. But it is a long one: he has a great memory, and can learn the words, which a person of more genius and capability, (if he had time,) to play the part, could not do in the short space of twenty-four hours, which is all the time that can be allotted. There can be no delay. The purpose of the star is to exhibit *himself*. *He* is as well prepared as he cares to be; and the piece is played at once, regardless of the cast of it at

all. Unless the drama is a monologue the effect is obvious.

Among the minor results of this system we must count the gross disregard often seen of late in

*The scenic department.*—I am far from meaning to uphold the propriety of excessive attention to mere scenic effect. On the contrary, I shall speak directly of the outlays of money on this department as one of the great mistakes of modern management. Put a company of good actors into a barn, and of poor ones on the most gorgeous stage that money can construct in a theatre, and it will soon be seen where the drama is. Still, scenic arrangement is a very important thing. If good, it adds greatly to illusion and effect; if bad, it is worse than none. I need hardly say that this is a matter which must all be arranged. It never can be when, as under the system of stars, the order of things is unknown, uncertain, shifting, or changed. The result has been that the scenic department has received no attention until the matter became so glaring as to cause too much attention to it, and to cause stage decoration to be mistaken for the drama itself. The contempt of all propriety in the scenic department was so frequent as to cause no surprise in the audience, even when *Virginius* was arraigned on Ludgate Hill, and that spot presented to them night after night as the well-known residence of *Brabantio*, the Venetian, of *Damon*, the *Syracusan*, and of all the foreigners of every nation and ages whom the drama ever had occasion to make known to them.

On a late representation of *Virginius*, the Roman Centurion received his friends, *Dentatius* and *Icilius*, in a chamber, the walls of which were ornamented with

pictures of various events in the history of England, and among the rest with an excellent copy of Charles Leslie's well-known "Murder of Young Rutland." All this was originally the result of haste. It afterwards became a chronic affair. The audience allowed it, and the manager having troubles enough of other kinds, gave himself no uneasiness about it.

These were some of the primary effects of the system. The matter of scenic absurdity I mention, of course, only incidentally, and as a very small affair.

In immediate result from the effects I have mentioned, and from the labors and positions into which the regular members of the stock companies were thrown by the advent of numerous stars, came certain secondary consequences vastly more obvious to the public, and which ended in the total prostration and ruin of the drama. When the performance of great leading parts were claimed by Cooke or Kean as stars, the regulars never, in my experience, showed dissatisfaction. In taking a place above all the actors around them, such men seemed to be asserting nothing more than their natural position in the drama. They were such real masters too of their profession that they understood the necessities of it in all departments; and though starring entirely, such was the order and adjustment of all they did, and so well was it known what they would do, that no practical loss was produced. I have often spoken of Cooper. He was in truth a star, but his starring was so regular, so dependable, and so long continued, that it was reduced to all the advantages of stock acting. He was in truth in many aspects of the case a stock actor; a stock actor attached to several companies; perma-

nently, in fact, to all of them, though not in form and in their structure to any. His relation with all was a perfect illustration of the extent to which starrng is not only allowable, but absolutely beneficial and almost indispensable, by enriching the season with variety. The same remark is true of John Kemble's starrng, and also of Forrest's in the United States. But when with the break up of the London theatres at the termination of their monopolies—with the facilities of locomotion and some other causes which I have already alluded to\*—we had cast upon us, as stars, the whole body of London actors of all grades, the case became widely different. The companies here found, night after night, some new person they had never before heard of, announced in big letters—all their own plans deranged, themselves forced into extraordinary and severe study, and their whole time absorbed, and their powers over-worked—merely that they might act as subsidiaries, or, perhaps, as foils to some foreign adventurer, who possessed no merit half so great as their own; while he took away in one night twice as much as they could earn as their whole weekly wages. Of course such a state of things would not be endured by them long, and accordingly men who, up to this time, had been perfectly contented with their wages, and with their home reputation of clever stock actors, which they really deserved, now abandoned that safe position for the attractive honors of the star. The example being propagated downward, the necessary effect was that in a little while the dramatic corps or body was a corps or body no longer, but was disintegrated, and all its members converted into stars.

\* Ante p. 391.

Abandoning the path of systematic labor and quiet study, and persuading themselves that an imitation of some eminent actor would not fail to charm an audience, the young men of the theatre begin where they should be proud to find themselves at the end of seven years, and make their debut in possession of leading characters. Under the delusion that they will thus reach real eminence, they have wasted the first few years of their professional lives in a silly dream of success, and until the audience are provoked into an expression of discontent, or entirely abandon them, flatter themselves that they have obtained, by a sort of magic, that which actors of the greatest natural genius required years of intense study and labor to achieve. Such men would, by proper effort and by time, have made most useful, respectable, and often eminent actors in a proper position, and by good habits and economy in a regular company, have secured the means of comfortably living as respectable members of a settled community. And this is reputation and success enough for them or for most men. As it is, they have ended in some public exposure, and in many grievous private experiences of their miserable mistake. In all this, let me say, however, the young actor is less to blame than the manager and the system. There was no proper place for him reputationally to occupy.

I need not, of course, now ask what sort of a theatre that will be from which every actor, capable of doing anything above the humblest part, has been splintered off, exploded, or expelled in the office of a star. It contains, of course, and can contain no stock company at all. There is nobody to support the star.



Pieces are performed by him, such as he is, alone. All the minor parts are given of necessity to performers wholly incapable and totally uneducated, who think, of course, if they think at all, that stage directions, manner, department, dressing, and even the first rules of grammar concern no one but the performer. The messenger or guard dashes unbonneted into the presence of his king with the freedom of an equal; he bawls out that he done this, seen that, and come as soon as called; and even if the merits of the star were of the highest kind, the violations of all propriety in the underparts would destroy the effect of them, and dissipate all illusion. When the theatre arrives at such a condition that it has no stock company at all, of course the drama is at an end.\*

In immediate connection with the conversion of all the actors into stars follows another evil, itself productive of further injury; I mean the

*Excessive number of benefits.*—Under the management of Wignell and his immediate successors, and indeed in all managements everywhere till those of the

\* I have in a former part of this book spoken of the mistake which non-professional friends of the drama, and very intelligent ones, sometimes make in thinking that a vast effect would be produced if a first-rate performer could be put in every part. I meant all that I there said. But of course I did not mean that the minor parts are best performed by a company of ignoramuses, or persons incompetent to do them. What I meant was that such parts can be performed by actors who may be unable to fill first-rate characters; and that putting these last in the former parts would be a waste of strength with no good result. Commodore Perry could marshal a fleet and lead his ships into action and to victory in a way that has received the homage of the nation. He could probably have spliced a rope or reefed a sail no better than any one of his common sailors, if as well. Who would have thought it an addition to General Taylor's fame that he was the best drill sergeant in his own army?

star ascendancy, it was usual to allow those stock actors who were of good talents, industrious habits, and of fair character, and who had earned some title to one by a faithful and satisfactory discharge of all their duties throughout a season, the privilege, towards its close, of a benefit night. It was a custom both useful and graceful. It was a merited tribute of respect and encouragement given both by the public, the managers, and his fellow actors to a performer whose merits all were acquainted with, without any special blazoning of them when the night arrived. The performances were much the same as on ordinary occasions, and neither previous nor subsequent nights were allowed by the manager to be sacrificed to them. The same privilege was allowed to the very few performers who appeared as stars. Being really eminent, or at least very well known performers, the tribute was always deserved. The public knew perfectly well that the performance, like all the others of that person, would be interesting; and the announcement of the benefit was all that was needed to attract the auditors. At all times, however, the matter of benefits was one held with a pretty tight hand. They were not allowed to be very frequent. The stars had them of course. But this made but few benefits; and as regarded stock actors, they were never allowed to obscure actors, to irregular ones, or to those who from the shortness of their connection with the company, or from other causes deserved no such privilege. When, however, all the stock actors were converted into stars, then the case became different. The immense number of stars, and the want of attractiveness in most of them from anything but novelty, necessarily makes

short engagements. And when each star has a benefit, and the season is composed of nothing but a rapid succession of stars, the effect at once is to convert every night or two into a benefit night. The star, of course, has no concern in the permanent interests of the season, nor in the interests of the management at all, further than as concerns his own engagement. On his benefit night he takes, perhaps, a clear benefit, or the whole gross receipts, while on other nights he takes but a portion of them. The result is it is expected that he will hold back his best efforts till his benefit night. Then his friends, if he has any, and the public, if they go at all, will certainly turn out. The night is forced as much as possible, and the manager's nights, before and after, are reduced to empty boxes. Of course, when the manager is thus ruined, the stars must follow him, and the very star system itself is broken up, not by an immediate restoration of the stock companies, but primarily by the entire prostration of the drama itself. Thus it is, in one way, as I have said, that the star system has destroyed itself, and so been working a revival of the drama.\* Another consequence, destructive of the drama, of this system, by which every actor is made a star, is the

*Newspaper and bill puffing and lying*, and every other possible sort of vaunting, swaggering, and imposition which it necessarily engenders. Of course when nearly all the members of the theatrical profession are seeking a livelihood as stars, the largest portion of

\* So completely had this come to be a result of the system that in many cases it was indispensable falsely to advertise benefits to get people into the house at all. This got to be found out—as lies generally do, and always do if often told—and hence the star himself was injured in the end by the very system intended for his advantage.

those stars cannot possibly possess any high degree of merit. They are therefore obscure, though they are stars. They have never gained, nor indeed have sought to gain, a reputation founded on time, study, and labor, and an exhibition of their talents. Such a reputation, even where high merit exists, is necessarily slow in every profession. In the theatrical profession, even where great dramatic genius is found, there is so much of an actor's duty which can be acquired by practice alone, that the greater opportunities which, in comparison with other professions, he has for showing his merits, is counterbalanced, perhaps, by the greater necessity of practical experience. How then, they naturally get to thinking, are the public to be attracted? In no way, they think, but through the press and by the hand-bills. Every species of lie is resorted to. Hand-bills, flaming in every color of paper and type, and proclaiming the name of the star in display letters a foot or a yard long, epithets of every kind—"distinguished," "popular," "unrivalled," "unparalleled," "immensely successful," "the great American," "the great English," "the wonder of two hemispheres"—are set forth with profuse and lying ostentation. A regular system of newspaper puffing is supposed indispensable to any success, and a connection with the press is the first object now sought. With the editors—a body too honorable and too politic thus to be used—an intercourse is not easy. The resort is to the underlings of the press; and the effort is by suppers, dinners, tickets, loans of money never returned, a contingent interest in the result of the night, and every sort of poor bribe, to engage this humble and amiable class. Services of plate, cups,

books, rings, and all sorts of things are presented, and all sorts of fooleries gone through (at the actor's own cost,) simply that a grand account may appear of them in the morning's paper. Vast quantities of tickets are undersold, that it may be reported that the house was full. A correspondence, offering dinners and benefits, or entreating the actor's portrait, is got up, not with a view of having any dinner, or by paying anything for a benefit or a portrait, but simply with a view of having the correspondence published.\* And what does all this come to? For a little while it did very well. People had not as yet got used to such things. But they found out, of course, very soon that it was a system of imposture merely, and therefore gave no more heed to the report of all that was written, said or done, than they did to anything else that they knew to be a paid for puff, or to speak in plainer English, a paid for

\* In speaking as I have occasion to do somewhat harshly of the modern practices in my own profession, let me not be supposed to assert that these disgraceful resorts are confined to them. I know that of late times they are not. A vast deal of this foolery of correspondence, presentations of plate, taking of portraits and the like, and publication of it all, has had as much and no more foundation in reality with some other professions. Is the bar all that it was thirty years ago? Have no reputations—poor reputations they are and will be—been made by servile and low address to court reporters? and by unworthy and degrading heralding to the public of the advocate's name in every suit he is engaged in, and in many more than he is paid for? Has no physician ever paid for the service of plate which every paper announces has just been presented by his grateful class? The business of contingent fees, which convert the advocate into the party, with all the passions, motives, and interests of the party, and with all his inducements to perjury, are not, I believe, recognized anywhere but in one place, in form. But are they not now rather common with one class—certainly not the most respected—of professional men of the Philadelphia and New York bars? The poor actors and penny-a-liners are not all alone in the degradation of their power to the purposes of their own pockets, and are far behind some other professions in the extent of the mischief thus produced.

lie. Nobody could be puffed into the house. If this had ended with the immediate actor concerned, it would have been comparatively unimportant. What I am speaking of more particularly was or is its effects on the theatre or drama in general. Managers and actors come to be regarded as no better than showmen, quacks, swaggerers and imposters. The public believe that they can give no credit to anything announced. The whole pursuit and connection is disgraced, and if such practices belong to it, is rightly disgraced. And when it is thus disgraced it is ruined. Its effects, however, upon individual actors have been highly injurious. I am not speaking of those actors possessed of talents, such as may be called fair, and whom it has ruined by having led to look to other means of success than the only true ones, such as their own study, observation and labor; nor of its effects on the whole body of stock actors, who are rendered envious and discontented by being thus disparaged; but I am speaking of another effect, or want of effect, on young actors of positive high genius and merit, who have quite too much honor and sense to resort to such poor modes of publication. They have, perhaps, received through the press legitimately, fair, well-earned and discriminating praise, such as in former days would have been of real service to them. But the old story of "The False Alarm" has been revived in application to them. The public has been so often deceived by theatrical criticisms, they have so often tested their utter worthlessness as exponents of either merit or opinion, they have come, in short, so much to regard them as all paid for and as interested, exaggerated or wholly false, that they now very seldom

read, and never at all believed in them. I appeal to every man of sense and education, who cares for the theatre at all, if such is not his experience. The result of it is, that some of the very best actors who have appeared lately have never been fairly seen.

Another way in which, without any of this gross fraud, the star system is injurious to the drama, will readily present itself to the reader's mind in

*The inability to afford variety.*—There are few general actors—I mean by this term “general,” actors capable of acting many and various parts, and in performing both tragic, comic, and melo-dramatic pieces. There are no general stars. The system is at variance with general acting. It must be the great tragedian or the great comedian, and which ever line they adopt they confine themselves to a few characters in it. The result is, that there is a want of that constant though regulated variety in the performances which every manager knows is necessary to sustain the public interest. Even with Mr. Cooke and Mr. Kean to perform them, the public would grow weary of an eternal succession of this same dozen pieces night after night without relief. Yet this is exactly what the star system engenders and brings upon us, with this exception only, that the pieces, instead of being performed by Mr. Cooke and Mr. Kean, are done by all sorts of adventurers, usually English ones (secondary performers) from minor theatres, and without talent, manners, education, or a single requisite for the part in which they audaciously assume to exhibit themselves before the American public.

Particular conditions of society, the great over-tradings of 1834 '5 '6, and the bankruptcy of the

trading classes which took place in 1837, the stagnation of affairs for some years afterwards, and especially in 1841, '2, and thereabouts, had something to do with the ruin about the latter time of the drama; but it was the star system which really broke it down, and that system will break it down just as often as ever the system itself gets the ascendant. It is that which has upon it "the primal eldest curse." With the prostration of managers and the repulsion of auditors, it has come, or, I hope, for the sake of the drama, is coming to an end itself. Not, however, until it does come to an end entirely, shall we ever see the drama reputedly revived.

The people will not be without amusements of some sort. That all parties, police, philosophers, moralists, and clergy may depend upon. When the regular drama broke down, ballet dancers, model artists, Hollick lecturers, negro singers, Ethiopian serenaders, and such like entertainments were the ones which took their place publicly for one portion of the community, as the Italian and French opera, with *Don Juan* and *Lucrezia Borgia*, for subjects, did for another—that other including the young women of the country, the gratification of whose taste in music was, perhaps, the least excitement of the house. For those who cared for neither negro singers, nor Italian ones, for dancing girls, nor posture women, new resorts have been multiplied in gaming houses, which are now found in every part of every large American city in number, splendor of appointments, and successful result to the manager who carries misery to so many happy homes, entirely transcending all that the growth of our cities, and the depravity incident to cities could make natu-



ral. Whether these amusements are less innocent than those offered by a well regulated theatre, in which the productions of Addison, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Young, Goldsmith, and Cumberland are presented as stated attractions, it is hardly necessary to discuss.

To the revival of the drama, generally, I look forward with hope and entire confidence—though, of course, I shall not myself be the witness of its restoration. I have already spoken of the excellent and successful efforts of Mr. Burton, Mr. Wallack, and, in our own city, of the creditable aspirations and efforts of the youthful managers, Messrs. Wheatley and Drew. Undoubtedly these gentlemen are all in the right course. To persons of so much experience, sagacity, and comprehensive observation as the elder gentlemen above named, I presume not to make a suggestion. They have no need of it. They are up to, and much in advance of all I could suggest. Nor do I to anybody, individually, offer an idea. But I may venture one or two hints, perhaps, to future managers, or to those contemplating management. The stock system, they may depend upon it, is the only one—and their only policy is in a stern adherence to it. They must set their face steadily against any other. A considerable class of stars will be happy to make regular members of any settled establishment, conducted upon principles of integrity, decorum, and honesty. Sensible actors and wisely ambitious aspirants will be happy to find a home, where the managers and the public are their guardians and protectors. They will soon seek, in the settled form of stock establishments, to escape from the degradation and uncertainty to which they have been of late so much and so painfully exposed

under the other system, and by the allurements of evanescent and unprincipled speculators in acting, wholly ignorant alike of theatrical economy, the true principles of success in any pursuit, and the public taste and wishes in this. Let the theatre have nothing to do with operas. That is a different department. The people who belong to it, the regulations which govern it, the necessities which are inseparable from it, and the auditors who support it—all are different from what are predicable of any theatre. Opera is a *specialité*, a department by itself, and to succeed at all must be managed by itself. The same is true of rope-dancers, negro exhibitions, and such affairs. They all are very well in their proper place. The opera's is a high one. But none belong to the drama proper, nor to the temple of the drama proper.

With a good measure of attention to scenery and costume, let scenery and costume never be mistaken as the essence of the drama.

The large sums expended upon the size of bills might be greatly reduced, much to the reputation as well as profit of the theatre. The name of Garrick, as I have already mentioned, was very little larger than those of the inferior actors. The invidious distinction made in the style of printing the bills, is a source of great discontent in the theatre. The maxim that "Union is Strength," is equally applicable to the drama as to politics, and nearly as inseparable. All possible care, therefore, should be taken to repress the natural restlessness so universally found in these large unsettled communities, where a few intriguing sycophants and adventurers can often succeed in raising little feuds and jealousies, which though little

every way, are often very troublesome to manage and to managers. The public are too often, and most unjustly, made to feel the consequences of them.

One mistake of the late management I think has been the waste of money on extravagant and unnecessary stage furniture, costly sofas, tables, and chairs, dresses, music, &c. Most of these too have been got for pieces merely ephemeral. The excess of these expenditures would frequently have purchased the services of two or three good actors. Madame Vestris, during her managerial rule, carried this prodigality to an extent fatal to her theatre. It is not necessary that the stage appointments should equal those found in the houses of the wealthy. A good imitation is all that is required, and will produce as good an effect as the most real and costly. So also in regard to costume. Imitated jewels suffice for all purposes of the stage, as well as the real gems sometimes so ostentatiously worn. The imitation, which after all is the object of the stage, allows the opportunity of offering a variety which the cost of the real utterly forbids.

Let the manager avoid all attempts of attracting audiences by announcements of his extraordinary success, by attempts to puff his performers into notice, or by any resort whatever of that kind. A successful establishment is in no need of puffs, and common sense would dictate that an ostentatious show of great success would lead to exorbitant demands from actors, proprietors, and others, as well as invite competition, a matter of all things the most to be dreaded in a theatre. No successful merchant, after a fortunate voyage, would run to the exchange and trumpet forth the news of it in order to invite rival traders into the

same venture, and so overdo it. It is the failing trader only that has resort to such a scheme. A really prosperous manager is generally silent on his success. One result of lying, of course, will be a rise of rent above what the house can stand. I am well acquainted with two theatres, the rents of which were greatly augmented on the very reasonable plea that the manager's statements proved their ability to bear the additional pressures without difficulty. The vain-glorious lessees submitted with the best grace they could, while the fact was that these establishments, said to be realizing princely profits, were paying to the actors only about two-thirds of their promised income, while large arrears were already due to them, besides thousands of dollars left unpaid to stars of all sizes and qualities. Of course a ruin of the theatre was at the end of such a system.

Well founded complaints are made of the occasional revival of plays which, however acceptable to our grandfathers, are out of keeping with the present taste. Nor can the comedies which Addison and Warburton delighted to witness, be so pruned as to be now endurable by the excision of a few of the most exceptionable passages. Mere coarseness or indelicacy of language is not the great fault, but the general frame of the piece. Many expressions in the works of Addison and Steele could not be read before a party of ladies, any more than those of Smollet or Fielding, who certainly were not in their day considered indecent writers. Pieces have often been produced containing improper allusions, local, political, and even personal, and often producing much disapprobation from their audience by the profaneness and indelicacy

of them. Some of Power's pieces were liable to this objection.

Let our managers avoid a very common error, which their effort to present a "tremendous and unparalleled attraction" has proved a serious inconvenience—I mean mistaking quantity for attractiveness—by attempting to crowd into one evening a variety which only wearies. A good entertainment at a principal theatre requires only a bill moderate in amount. The lateness of hours has formed a very serious subject of complaint from families, who are compelled either to keep the younger visitors up to an improper hour, or to retire from an unfinished performance. In defence of this ill habit, it has been urged that the performances in London are usually protracted far beyond midnight. But owing to the difference of degree the natural evening begins there much later than with us, and it should be remembered that the population of London is not stirring until two or three hours later than ours. But even in London it is certain than an infringement of the Sabbath, which it is notorious has occurred in this city on a shameful number of occasions, where the curtain has not fallen on the performance until long after Sunday morning, would be visited with severe censure, if not with a withdrawal of a license to play at all. This indecency has arisen from crowding a third, and fourth, or fifth piece into the evening's entertainment, when if the manager would look around the house he would not fail to see that he was exhibiting it only to the straggling occupants of the highest tier, and a few loungers, who probably had no lodgings for the night, or meant not, if they had, to profit by them. Besides

the gross outrage on the laws of the land, and the usages of society, the disregard of the Sabbath, as an example to the young, must be frightfully apparent; while the poor actors are wasted and worn out in an attempt necessarily vain, to persuade the lingering audience that there is no real difference between quality and amount.

A matter which I think that every American manager should aim at is the encouragement of *Native Genius*. This is a subject which many think very difficult to approach, yet it is certainly a very proper one for discussion. Without entering on the abstruse and unsettled question of the value of home productions, surely every American auditor should be possessed of sufficient self-respect to give to a native actor or artist of any branch, as fair and generous a reception and remuneration as to a foreigner.

The excuse often urged for the gross follies committed by our English friends towards foreigners of very questionable ability, as well as towards those of great talent, in the monstrous and laughable overpayments they receive to the amusement of all Europe, cannot be urged here.

The reigning powers in England are, and long have been foreigners, surrounded by foreign influences, speaking very generally a foreign language, and but little accustomed to the power and value of English writers. There is nothing strange in a German prince's preference of a German concert, with the aid of great Italian singers and dancers, to a drama of Shakspeare, even though it were performed by a Siddons and a Kemble. The early taste of most of these persons is formed upon the habits of their own coun-

try, and very naturally so. But no one can doubt of the unfortunate effect it has had in chilling and discouraging talent of English growth, which with equal cherishing, as Braham, Billington, and Incedon prove, might reach equal excellence. But what hope can sustain a gifted and high-minded English performer, who sees on every side the degrading necessity of some of the cleverest artists, adopting the foreign titles of Signor and Signora, in order to fix fashionable attention. Why we should play the ape to this poor folly, I cannot guess. We affect independence in taste as well as in government, but we do not act up to our profession and our rights. We pet the bold, impudent pretender, who comes amongst us with a paid-for newspaper passport for a few nights. We then discover our folly, quarrel with the impostor, and welcome the next as warmly as ever we did him. Instances of this folly need not to be recited here. I hope the present and next generation of managers will reform it altogether.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1846.

The author resolves at the age of seventy to take his final leave of the stage—His reflections on that subject prior to this resolution—Visits Baltimore to take leave there, and receives great kindness from many old friends—Comes back to Philadelphia where arrangements are made—Plays for the last time on Wednesday the 18th of November, 1846, in the “Maid of Croissy or The Last of the Old Guard”—Then takes leave—List of characters.

IN the chapters which precede the reflections and suggestions contained in the last chapter, I have completed, according to the measure of an ability much below my wish, as it also is below my conception of what a better pen might accomplish, but still as well as I am myself able to present them—the dramatic annals of the forty years which it was my purpose to record. The five years between the time when they end, and the occasion of which I am now about to speak, were passed by me in connections, more or less permanent, with the theatres of Philadelphia. The drama proceeded of course, sometimes reviving for a considerable time, and at others sinking into a state of the utmost prostration. Its best action, however, was flickering, irregular, uncertain, and not at all like the established routine of former days, nor had it that position of a settled element of social enjoyment which in earlier times it possessed. After one of these intervals of depression it re-appeared in a most primitive state of simplicity at Mr. Peale’s Mu-



seum, where the stage and scenery were less elaborate than they had been, I suppose, in the first establishment of the theatre one hundred and twenty-five years before. Plays were done also in other places not theatres, the regular houses being either entirely closed or delivered over to jugglers, negro singers, and the managers of such objects of low interest. About the year 1846, however, the prospects of the theatre had begun to brighten, and to afford some indications of the much better condition which has since marked it. A few friends, without my knowledge of it until lately, were about addressing me in reference to a season in a neighboring city, and in my own I had my share of the prospects of advantages common to others in the return of a more prosperous state. But I had now filled the term of years allotted to man, and though I had been thus far unusually blessed in health and vigor, and had felt few or none of the physical inconveniences of advancing life, I could not tell how long these privileges would be continued to me. In the nature of things I could not expect at the age of seventy a much longer allowance of them. Though, too, the prospect was brightening, it obviously would yet be a long time before the theatrical corps was likely to become, if indeed it would become again at all in my time, a settled community, such as it had been, and such alone as it would have been agreeable to me, in my advanced life especially, to belong to. Most of my contemporaries had departed from around me. Many whom I once wished to please had sunk into the grave, the remaining few had mostly withdrawn from scenes of gaiety; and while I certainly could not say that success and miscarriage were empty sounds,

nor dismiss the subject with frigid tranquillity, and with little to hope or fear from censure or from praise, the season seemed calculated to arrest the course of ordinary thoughts and motives, and to invite to other meditations.

At the close of a theatrical career of half a century, I might naturally feel, if I could ever feel at all,

“That time creeps on, and higher duties crave  
Some space between the theatre and grave.  
That like the Roman in the capitol,  
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall,  
My life’s brief act in public service flown,  
The last, the closing scene must be MY OWN.”

On having now, therefore, to decide between any new engagement and a final retirement from the stage, I communicated the course of my meditations to the few friends whom in such personal matters I might properly confide in. They were kind enough—the younger portion of them especially—to dissuade me strongly from this resolve which I was inclined to make, urging with some force, as I myself felt, that the residue of my life, passed, as all its other part had been, in the constant engagements of an absorbing profession, would languish for want of sufficient interests to engage me. Some prospects of occasional occupation in private life were at that time, however, partially open to me, and deciding in accordance with what it seemed to me that the proprieties of advancing life made proper, I determined to ask from the public my final dismissal. With a view therefore to take a farewell benefit at Baltimore, I made a visit to that city, a city full of delightful recollections to me, and from whose people I had received for thirty years of my theatrical life the most generous individual support,

as well as every office of refined hospitality. Nothing could be kinder than the reception of these persons still was. Some, indeed, whom I had formerly known as my friends, were now no longer here. But the survivors of a numerous band gave me many proofs that the moralist sometimes errs when he urges too strongly the instability of human friendships. After playing to a house distinguished alike for its numbers and its quality, and receiving many marks of generous hospitality during a considerable stay, which their courtesies prolonged, I left Baltimore, for the last time, on my way to Philadelphia.

My purpose of retirement being known at home, soon after my arrival there I was requested by a friend, to whom I had communicated in a general way my design, to give myself no further trouble in that matter than to select my piece of performance, and I received from him a kind intimation that it was the purpose of my friends, already expressed to each other, to make the occasion of my last appearance such an one as it was hoped would gratify me. I accordingly gave myself no further concern in the arrangements. Several preparatory meetings of my friends were held, as I afterwards understood, at the United States hotel, where they were invited by a special card.

A very efficient committee of business procured, by consent of Mr. Collins, who was then performing an engagement here, the use of the Walnut street theatre for the evening of Wednesday, November 18, 1846, Mr. Collins himself not only ceding the use of the house for the night, but consenting in a kind manner to perform in one of his popular pieces for an after-part. The announcement was as follows :

MR. WOOD'S FAREWELL TO THE STAGE.

The friends of MR. WOOD take leave to announce that the evening fixed by him for this interesting event, is that of WEDNESDAY, the 18th inst., at the WALNUT STREET THEATRE. The entertainments will commence with an interesting Drama from the French, called

THE MAID OF CROISSY,

OR THE LAST OF THE OLD GUARD!

After which the Comedy of

THE IRISH AMBASSADOR,

in which Mr. COLLINS, the celebrated Irish Comedian, who has volunteered his valuable services, will appear as

SIR PATRICK O'PLENIPO,

with two favorite Irish Songs.

After the Comedy,

MR. WOOD

will have the honor of making his Farewell Address to the Philadelphia audience, on this, the last occasion of his appearance upon the Stage. The whole to conclude with the petit Comedy of

MY SISTER KATE,

in which Mr. Ritchings, Mr. Chapman, and Miss Fisher will appear. Every arrangement has been made to render the occasion worthy of an event so striking in the history of the American Theatre. Tickets to all parts of the house \$1, to be procured at Hogan & Thompson's, Chestnut above Third; John Pennington's book store, Chestnut above Fifth; A. D. K. Moore's, Chestnut above Sixth; at the principal hotels, and of Andrew McMakin, Esq., Treasurer of the Fund, No. 97 Chestnut street, above Third. Box book now open. On this interesting occasion, in obedience to numerous requests at the Box Office and of the Committee, the Pit of the theatre will be altered into a Parquette, the seats being backed and covered, and an entrance made from the Boxes, in addition to the usual avenues.

By order of the Committee.

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 Dr. Alex. Wilcocks,

When I arrived at the theatre on the evening of the performance, I found that by the efficient and judicious arrangement of the business committee, the house was very tastefully and conveniently disposed; an entrance having been made through the boxes to the parquet, which was specially fitted and refreshed for the reception of lady auditors. It was impossible, indeed, for the mechanical arrangements to be more perfectly accomplished. The cards of the evening were thus:

FAREWELL BENEFIT  
TO  
WILLIAM B. WOOD,  
TENDERED BY HIS FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS,  
*Philadelphia, Wednesday Evening, November 18th, 1846,*  
AT THE WALNUT STREET THEATRE.

The character of the audience was even more gratifying to me than its numbers. A friend remarked "that he had never seen such an assemblage in any theatre. They had come," as he observed, "manifestly for no purpose of mere amusement." Before the curtain rose, an uncommon and almost painful stillness was observed to pervade the house. A great number of elderly persons, both men and women, interspersed with younger people, gave a beautiful "shading" to the amphitheatric picture, as it was seen both from the stage and boxes. Quite ready as I was to believe that this audience had been brought out, in a large degree, by the retirement of an old, and I hope not unfaithful, public servant, whom many of them probably remembered as long as they could remember anything, I could not fail to perceive from the faces of many whom I recognized as the especial friends of other members of our old company, that it was, at the same time, a tribute

of respect to the character of that company which for so many years was identified with the Chestnut street theatre. Of them and of it I now, twenty years after the dispersion of the one and the declension of the other, stood before the audience as the sole surviving representative. The piece was in keeping too. I was "The Last of the Old Guard" in a sense much more affecting than that which the drama could present; and I believe we all felt that on this night the curtain would finally be let down on "Old Drury." In this view of the case—as the last tribute of respect which the public could pay to my early friend Wignell, to Moreton, Mr. and Mrs. Merry, Jefferson, Cooper, Warren, Mrs. Wood, and to the long management, and harmonious and happy company of our old house, some of whom, less fortunate than I, had closed a life of vicissitude away from home, still toiling under adverse circumstances in the discharge of their professional duties—I was scarcely less gratified than if I could have regarded the manifestation as one designed *entirely* for myself.

The performance passed off to my satisfaction, and apparently to that of the house; and after Mr. Collins had closed in the after-piece, I came forward to make my promised adieu. For fifty years I had been accustomed to the delivery of prologues, epilogues, and formal addresses of every kind. But I found that this occasion disarmed all ability for anything prepared. I was no actor here. I saw before me the intimate friends of my whole life, and the presence of others, now departed, was recalled by the faces of their sons on this occasion before me. I found it impossible to express myself in a mode other than one

quite without form, and such as the occasion prompted. I did this in a few words, giving utterance in a general way to the sentiments which I have already expressed in parts of this chapter, and thanking my friends for all their kindness during my long professional life. I retired with mingled feelings which the kind and continued expressions of the audience called forth, but in which it would be difficult for me to declare whether pride or sadness most prevailed.

This night ended my mimic life. A learned and distinguished friend remarked to me on the next morning, "Wood, you may consider the exhibition last evening as an unanimous certificate of good character from the citizens of Philadelphia." Such I must ever think it.

I now conclude these Recollections. Should it be thought by any that I have made myself too prominent, I pray that it may be kindly remembered that it occurs in describing scenes and events

"All of which I saw, and part  
Of which I was."

For the rest I have in the very outset stated so fully the deep sense I have of my literary inabilities, that I need not here again apologize for whatever in that line, and I am sure it must be much, which needs correction. Many inaccuracies of style and diction which escaped me as I wrote, are obvious enough as I have read the printed sheets in their concluded and continuous form, the only form in which I have found sight just now to read them at all. Certainly I may say with Cumberland, "If I know that man who thinks more humbly of my efforts than I do, I will take up his opinion and forego my own."



## A LIST OF CHARACTERS

Performed by me, is inserted partly in compliance with the wish of several friends, and partly in order to dissipate a delusion prevalent among many well-meaning but mistaken persons, that an actor's life is one of ease and leisure, if not of absolute idleness. It by no means embraces anything like a complete list. A large number of plays are omitted, which were produced at different times, with insufficient success to warrant their continuance on the stage; these are now generally forgotten. An infinite number, too, of melo-dramas, operas, pantomimes, and minor pieces, would easily have swelled the number of parts to some hundreds, most of which were acted while the writer's mind was divided between study and frequent ill health.

<p>RICHARD III. Tressell. Richmond. Buckingham. HAMLET. Guildenstern. Marcellus. Horatio. Ghost. HENRY IV. Sheriff. Poins. Westmoreland. Worcester. Sir R. Vernon. Sir W. Blount. Prince of Wales. Hotspur. Henry IV. GAMESTER. Bates. Stukely. Beverly. ROMEO AND JULIET. Balthazar. Paris. Benvolio.</p>	<p>Tibalt. Mercutio. Romeo. ISABELLA. Belford. Villeroy Carlos. Biron. VENICE PRESERVED. Spinosa. Bedamar. Renault. Jaffier. Pierre. GRECIAN DAUGHTER. Greek Herald. Phocion. Dyonisius. PIZARRO. Valverde. Ataliba. Rolla. Pizarro. SURRENDER OF CALAIS. Ribemont. King Edward. Eustace St. Pierre.</p>	<p>WHEEL OF FORTUNE. Woodville's Servant. Henry. Sydenham. Penruddock. CHILD OF NATURE. Count. Marquis. Old Peasant. JEALOUS WIFE. Charles. Major. Oakly. JOHN BULL. Tom Shuffleton. Peregrine. STRANGER. Wintersen. Baron. Francis. Stranger. MERCHANT OF VENICE. Salarino. Gratiano. Bassanio. ROAD TO RUIN. Hosier.</p>
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Smith.	SPEED THE PLOUGH.	BELLE'S STRATAGEM.
Milford.	Bob Handy.	Saville.
Harry.	Sir P. Blandford.	Courtall.
Mr. Dornton.	ADELGITHA.	Doricourt.
OTHELLO.	Guiscard.	EVERY ONE HAS HIS
Montano	Michael Ducas.	FAULT.
Cassio.	KING JOHN.	Placid.
Iago.	The Dauphin.	Sir Robert Ramble.
Othello.	King John.	Cap. Irwin.
MACBETH.	Falconbridge.	COLUMBUS.
Lenox.	WILD OATS.	Roldan.
Malcolm.	Harry.	H. Herbert.
Banquo.	Rover.	Columbus.
Macbeth.	THE WILL.	DESERTED DAUGHTER.
MERRY WIVES.	Veritas.	Clement.
Mr. Fenton.	Howard.	Lennox.
Mr. Page.	SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.	Cheveril.
Mr. Ford.	Frankly.	Mordent.
JANE SHORE.	Ranger.	TEARS AND SMILES.
Catesby.	PROVOKED HUSBAND.	Rangely.
Belmour.	Manly.	POOR GENTLEMAN.
Hastings.	Lord Townly.	Sir Charles.
Dumont.	SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.	Frederick.
DOUGLAS.	Joseph Surface.	Lieut. Worthington.
Lord Randolph.	Charles.	SAILOR'S DAUGHTER.
Glenalvon.	Sir Peter Teazle.	Cap. Santamour.
CORIOLANUS.	RIVALS.	DUCHESS DE VALIERE.
Cominius.	Fag.	Bragelone.
T. Aufidius.	Faulkland.	DAMON AND PYTHIAS.
Coriolanus.	WONDER.	Damon.
ALEXANDER THE GREAT.	Don Felix.	BROKER OF BOGOTA.
Lysimachus.	Col. Briton.	Antonio de Cabricra.
Cassander.	HONEY MOON.	HUNCHBACK.
Alexander.	Duke Aranza.	Master Walter.
Clytus.	Rolando.	JEW.
KING LEAR.	DRAMATIST.	Frederick.
Albany.	Neville.	Charles.
Edmund.	Ennui.	IRON CHEST.
Edgar.	Vapid.	Sir Edward.
LOVER'S VOWS.	WAY TO GET MARRIED.	Rawbold.
Anhalt.	Tangent.	BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.
Count Cassel.	Cap. Faulkner.	Ravenswood.
Baron Wildenhaim.		Bucklaw.

HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN.  
Duke of Argyle.

HENRI QUATRE.  
King Henri.  
Eugene.  
Moustache.

SPY.  
Col. Singleton.

PIRATE.  
Mordant.

LAW OF SAVA.  
Hans Gayvelt.  
SHE WOULD AND SHE  
WOULD NOT.  
Octavio.

Philip.  
DURAZZO.  
Alonzo.

EAST INDIAN.  
Beauchamp.  
Modish.

ALASCO.  
Walsingham.

WOMAN NEVER VEXT.  
Stephen Foster.

HENRY II.  
Henry II.

ADRIAN AND ONILLA.  
Prince Altenberg.

FOUNDLING OF THE  
FOREST.  
De Valmont.

ADELMORN.  
Cyprian.

Ulric.  
DOUBTFUL SON.  
Marquis Lerida.

TEKELI.  
The Count.

EXILE.  
Daran.

LONDON ASSURANCE.  
Max Harkaway.

WHAT WILL THE WORLD  
SAY?  
Mr. Warner.

THE DEFORMED.  
Brazzo.

DUC DE RICHELIEU.  
The Duke.

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SCHOOL OF REFORM.  
Ferment.

SUCH THINGS ARE.  
Sultan.  
Mr. Haswell.

MARRY OR NOT.  
Mr. Lavensforth.

LADY OF THE LAKE.  
Fitzjames.

WM. TELL.  
Tell.

CARMELITE.  
St. Valori.

SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER.  
Frank Heartall.

SECRETS WORTH KNOW-  
ING.

Plethora.  
Rostrum.  
Edgerton.

PAIR PENITENT.  
Altamont.  
Lothario.

Horatio.

MUCH ADO.  
Claudio.  
Benedick.

JULIUS CÆSAR.  
Octavius.

Brutus.  
Cassius.

POINT OF HONOR.  
Valcour.  
St. Franc.

HE WOULD BE A SOLDIER  
Mandeville.  
Cap. Crevelt.  
Col. Talbot.

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Henry.  
Dick Dowlas.

CURFEW.  
Fitzharding.  
Robert.

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Ataliba.  
Don Juan.  
Rolla.

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ACHE.

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Bronze.  
Y. Rapid.

APOSTATE.  
Hemeya.  
Malec.

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Young Sadboy.  
Spatterdash.

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Isaac of York.  
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Mahomet.  
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Wallace.

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Isaac of York.

FATE OF CALAS.  
Calas.

MAN OF 10,000.  
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ION.  
Adrastus.

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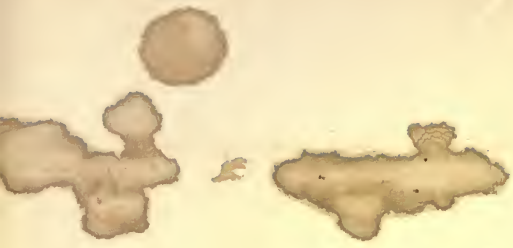
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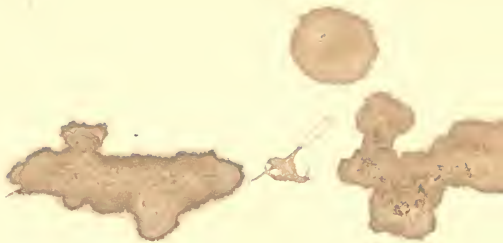
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