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GARRICK — E. KEAN —  
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# REPRESENTATIVE ACTORS.

A COLLECTION OF  
CRITICISMS, ANECDOTES, PERSONAL DESCRIPTIONS,  
ETC. ETC.

REFERRING TO MANY  
CELEBRATED BRITISH ACTORS FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE  
PRESENT CENTURY ;

*With Notes, Memoirs, and a Short Account of English Acting.*

BY

W. CLARK RUSSELL,  
EDITOR OF "THE BOOK OF AUTHORS."

"The drama's laws the drama's patrons give ;  
And we that live to please, must please—to live."

DR. JOHNSON.

"Let them be well used ; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time."  
HAMLET.

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TO

MISS HELEN FAUCIT

(MRS. THEODORE MARTIN),

WHOSE LOFTY CONCEPTIONS OF THE TRAGIC OR TENDER

CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPEARE,

HAVE IMPERISHABLY ASSOCIATED HER NAME WITH

THE HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE HISTRIONIC ART ;

THIS VOLUME

*Is Inscribed,*

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF ENDURING ADMIRATION.



## P R E F A C E.

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THE reader will not expect to find in this book a complete list of the actors from the early date at which it commences. Twenty volumes might hardly contain the memoirs of all the actors that have "flourished" since A.D. 1580. The intention has been to produce a volume which the reader may dip into as he would into a volume of Table Talk : a volume containing many pleasant criticisms and diverting anecdotes. But if there be many names wanting, it is believed there will also be many names found which will fully bear out the character of the work implied by its title. Of living and recent actors, the information being scanty, the record must be small ; but what could be collected has been set down. Lovers of music will naturally inquire why the names of Santley and Reeves have been omitted from a list that includes those of Beard, Braham, and Bannister ; but it is for the editor, not less than the reader, to lament the omission, particularly when it is affirmed that much industry has been unavailingly exercised to do honour to these splendid singers. Such, however, as the book is—with all its sins of omission upon its head—it is sent forth to find favour among those who may not be displeased at an opportunity to examine without labour the traditions that lift our stage above that of any other country, ancient or modern.



## SHORT NOTICE ON ENGLISH ACTING.

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IN that voluminous history of the stage published by Dibdin in the year 1800, the author, in dealing with the English Drama, descends to so remote a period as the Saxon Heptarchy, and devotes a chapter to "Conjectures concerning the Dramatic Art in Britain before the Norman Conquest." So extensive an inquiry might indeed be found necessary in a work treating of the stage from the days of the Flood; but it will be thought enough if this brief review commences with the age that witnessed the production of the first piece possessing the requisites of a stage-play. Such a piece would mark a variation in the hitherto invariable mode of entertaining the public by those quaint dialogues called Interludes, and those curious exhibitions called "Moralities" and "Mysteries," of which the indecency and profanity are hardly qualified by the obvious artlessness of the authors.

The only dramatist before Shakspeare, to whom can be allowed anything like the genius to give help to the first feeble struggles of the Drama, is Christopher Marlowe. The names of Hoker, Sackville Lord Dorset, John Heywood (who is not to be confounded with his son Jasper, the writer of two hundred and twenty plays), Preston, and Edwards, are unfamiliar. Lyly is better known as the inventor of the word *euphuism* (which is as little employed as the heavy work whence it is derived is read), than as the author of nine colourless plays. The "Spanish Tragedy" of Thomas Kyd was parodied and ridiculed by all capable of distinguishing good sense from nonsense. But Marlowe claims to be considered as the poetical father of Shakspeare, as a writer who, though he is here and there turbulent and bombastic, exhibits in his performances not the gleams, but the hot effulgence of a brilliant genius; and whose

poetry, though sometimes cloying in its syrupy sweetness, is radiant with the lights and graces of the highest order of intellect.

If there be any scruple in commencing the history of the English drama with Shakspeare, there can be no hesitation in commencing with him the history of English acting. It was perhaps a necessary consequence that there should be no great actor until he had written; for it is hard to discover any part in the plays written before his time which could be filled by an actor with advantage to his genius. There were, indeed, mummers, jesters, and fools before Burbage and Alleyn; mummers like Scoggan, who would amuse a dinner-company by dressing up their fists, and making them act; jesters like John Heywood, who were caressed by monarchs and statesmen; and fools like Tarleton, who were privileged to take liberties which would have cost other men their heads.<sup>1</sup> But Shakspeare's demands upon the histrionic genius soon operated. To act well, to act so as to give tangible proportions, to give pulsation and passion to the fancies of the dramatist, evinced powers which were to prove as uncommon as the genius of the poet.

The influence of Shakspeare upon the stage of his time is illustrated by the fact of no less than seventeen playhouses flourishing during his life; of which the most important were: THE GLOBE, a massive structure, with the pit open to the sky, and in which the acting was by daylight. The scene had no other decoration than wrought tapestry, which hung at some distance from the walls, so as to give room for entrances.<sup>2</sup> THE BLACKFRIARS, which differed from the Globe by being roofed in. The performances here were for the most part during the winter. The pit audience sat upon benches; room was found on the stage for the select portion of the spectators, including the critics.<sup>3</sup> THE SWAN was the most westerly of the theatres, standing close to the water's edge. THE FORTUNE, which stood in Golden Lane, was built by Alleyn, the player, at a cost of 560*l.*, about the year 1600. In 1621

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<sup>1</sup> Tarleton, however, must be mentioned with respect. He was inimitable in such parts as *Lancelot* in the "Merchant of Venice," and *Touchstone* in "As You Like It." Baker in his *Chronicles* says, that "for the clown's part he never had his equal, and never will have."

<sup>2</sup> Schlegel.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Knight's *Shakspeare*.

the interior was destroyed by fire; it was reconstructed, and the company continued to perform there until 1648. The ground on which the Fortune stood was previously occupied by a building used as a nursery for the children of Henry VIII. The editor of the "Londina Illustrata," who surveyed these premises in 1818 or 1819, found the floor of the upper gallery still remaining, with the marks where the seats were fixed. The abrupt declination of this flooring puzzled him to conjecture how it was possible to place any furniture upon it; yet the difficulty had been overcome by the needy lodgers who congregated in the edifice; for he found "that they do by some means contrive to accommodate their wretched beds, &c., to their situation, though it is certainly like living on a flight of stairs." THE RED BULL was a large house, standing on a plot of ground called Red Bull Yard, near the northern end of St. John's Street, Clerkenwell. According to tradition, this was the house at which Shakspeare held gentlemen's horses for hire. It was here, too, that Cox, during the Civil Wars, when the drama was suppressed, represented his Drolls. THE WHITEFRIARS was a small, ancient structure, standing just out of Fleet Street. The company that acted here was called the Prince's Servants. THE COCKPIT was situated in Drury Lane. It was attacked and demolished by a crowd consisting of many thousands; was rebuilt, and was one of the houses that escaped the fury of the fanatics in 1648. THE ROSE was built before 1598, being mentioned by Taylor, the water-poet. The proprietor was Philip Henslowe, and the players were called the Lord Admiral's Servants. Here were produced the dramas of Marlowe. In 1613, the house was closed; but the period of its demolition is unknown. The remaining theatres were: THE HOPE, in Southwark; THE CROSS KEYS, in Gracechurch Street; THE TUNS; THE THEATRE; THE CURTAIN; THE NURSERY, in Barbican; THE PLAY-HOUSE, in Salisbury Court; and two others.

Accustomed as we are now to scenic illustrations, to gorgeous costumes, to the golden and silver splendours of a really high order of decorative art, it is perhaps difficult to repress a smile at the simplicity of the Elizabethan public, who could accept a square of tapestry, or even of coarse canvas, as a fairly illusive substitute for such sumptuous or simple scenery as the drama might demand. But the movement of the reflective mind is rather to admiration than to merriment; for assuming,

as we may, that our ancestors were not more to be cozened in what they saw than ourselves, we are lost in wonder at the excellent genius of the players, to have so wrought upon the fancies and passions of the spectator as to make his own imagination furnish the scenery, and supply the services of the property-man.

The Shakspearian theatre was indeed the school for great actors. On the naked stage, unaided by the adventitious help which, having long encroached upon the art of the player, has in our own day become the chief, and often the sole attraction of the playhouse, the actor of those times was taught to rely upon his own performance for all the effect the spectacle was to produce. If it was a formidable, it was an efficacious test of his capacity. We should know what to think of an actor who, from a bare platform, dressed in his every-day habiliments, by the mere force of his gesture and his declamation of the language of *Hamlet* or *Coriolanus*, transports us (with a closer identification of our feelings with the spot, than were we confronted with the highest triumphs of pictorial skill) to the solemn scenery of Elsinore, or to the busy market-place of ancient Rome.

To the hypothesis of the greatness of the players of that period it may be objected that the dramatic art was in its infancy; and that as there were no precedents from which to filch the materials with which greatness is reared, their performances must have been rude, exaggerated, and exuberant; that the audiences they were called upon to please were wholly destitute of critical taste, demonstrated by their capacity for enjoying the monstrous absurdities of their "mysteries," and the awkward fooling of their courtyard mimes. But if dramatic history proves anything at all, it proves that precedents are not necessary to good acting. The numerous schools which have been formed, and which have been shown inadequate by the easy manner in which they have been exploded, all point to this. Betterton's school was exploded by Garrick. Spranger Barry's school was exploded by Kemble. Kemble's school was exploded by Kean. The very term school, indeed, illustrates a deficiency, for Nature has no school. Yet in speaking of schools of acting let us be careful to discriminate between the founders and their imitators. When we smile at the school of Betterton and Quin, we certainly do not smile at the greatest *Hamlet* and *Falstaff* of their age, but at



the mouthing, paving, solemn race of coxcombs that tried to reproduce them: at Mossop's gasp; at Macklin's tediousness; at Davis's mumbling; and at Sheridan's ponderosity of movement. Every testimony of his period concurs in proving Kemble a great actor; yet were it possible for any actor of the day to embody in his personations the traditions of Kemble's excellences—the majestic stalk, the classic severity, the black-browed frown of the noble Roman, would it be easy to conceive any spectacle more likely to move our mirth, or provoke our contempt?

But to revert to our earlier actors: it has been said that Burbage, who was the original *Richard III.*, Lowin the first *Hamlet* and *Henry VIII.*, and Kempe, who was inimitable in the clown's parts, as much surpassed the school of Hart, Lacy, and Mohun, as that school surpassed that of Betterton. To judge from what has been written of him, Richard Burbage was the greatest actor the English stage has ever known, except Garrick. "He is a man famous as our English Roscius," said the Earl of Southampton, "one who fitteth the action to the word, the word to the action, most admirably." Sir Richard Baker pronounced him such, as an actor "as no age must ever look to see the like." Alleyn takes rank after Burbage. Ben Jonson celebrated him as possessing at once the eloquence of Roscius, and the gravity of Æsop. He was called by Heywood the best of players, and was commended by Fuller for his sweet elocution, and the stateliness of his port and aspect. Taylor was also another great actor; and the genius of Lowin, Kempe, Condel, Mason, Hemmings, and Field, has been recorded by every writer on the Shakspearian theatre. Whether, then, we question the superiority of Hart and Lacy over Betterton and Quin, we are compelled to accept the superiority of Burbage and Alleyn over Hart and his fellows; nay, to feel convinced in this, we have only to remember that this very school of Burbage, acted under the eye and inspiration of Shakspeare, the creator of those astonishing characters in which they excelled.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It need not be doubted that Shakspeare instructed the actors in his plays, for Chetwood in his "History of the Stage," quotes an author who wrote about the year 1720, to the effect that he remembered "having seen Mr. Taylor of the Black-Friars Play-House act this part—i. e., *Hamlet* (who was instructed by the author, Shakspear)."

No reign was ever more propitious to the dramatic art than that of Elizabeth. Many causes conspired to refine and exalt the standard of our national tastes and manners. The nations were beginning to recognise an empire populated by a race who, with the hardiness, the bravery, and the honesty of the North, combined the sympathies, the tenderness, and the graces of the South. The age of chivalry in England, heightened by the homage exacted by Elizabeth, and held to be due both by the sovereign and the subject not more to the monarch than the woman, was at its meridian. Philosophy, purified from the cobwebs of the schools, was dictating eternal laws to the world from an English throne. Poetry was idealizing the conceptions of a rough and sturdy time by giving sweetness and delicacy to the rude traditions of the heroic ages. In that reign the history of the Drama in England commences, for from that reign it drew its splendid inspirations, its lofty chivalry, its chaste and exquisite conceptions of womanhood, its tone of easy, high-bred, courtierly dignity. To the year 1647 the history of the stage presents such a spectacle as the heavens thick-strown with stars, with one great orb shining in sovereign splendour amid them all. But there came a change. Charles I. was a fugitive, or a martyr. The Puritans were piloting the State. Praise-God-Barebones and his confrères, judging the theatre to be lewd and iniquitous, issued ordinances by which all stage-plays were absolutely forbidden; stages, seats, and galleries were ordered to be pulled down, and the players to be punished as rogues and vagabonds. In addition to this the money received at the doors of such theatres as might escape the enactment was ordered to be given to the poor of the parish, together with a fine of five shillings on every spectator of a play.<sup>1</sup>

The players finding their occupation gone took arms in the Royal cause. To that cause they were, probably impelled less from sympathy with their suffering king than from hatred of his persecutors, who were also their own. Mohun, a famous actor, of whom little is known but the tradition of his greatness,

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<sup>1</sup> I would refer the reader who might desire more information on this subject to the short but exhaustive essay, *The History of the Theatre during its Suppression*, in Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature," a book which he will probably have at hand. Those who desire a more elaborate review will turn to Malone or Dibdin.

had command of a company and was made a major. Hart, an eminent tragedian and an early lover of Nell Gwynne, had a troop of horse in Prince Rupert's regiment. Burt, who though a good actor voluntarily yielded to the superior powers of Hart, was a cornet in the same troop. Allen, of the Cockpit, was a quartermaster-general. A large number of the actors fell in defence of Royalism; the few that survived contrived to get possession of the Cockpit, where they acted by stealth. For a time they were undisturbed, but information being given against them, they were broken in on whilst acting a piece called "The Bloody Brother," and carried to Hatton House, detained during a mock trial, stripped and turned loose, thankful for having escaped with their ears. Some of them now made shift to earn a living by shopkeeping. Others printed old editions of plays, which were purchased by those who sympathized with the king's cause and lamented the misfortunes of his adherents. Some starved and died. But another change was at hand. The restoration of Charles II. was the restoration of the players. The nation, long oppressed by the fanatical rule of the Puritans, now that the nasal chant was stilled and the crooked head low, clamoured for amusement. The Cockpit was taken and peopled. So was the Red Bull. And with this was inaugurated a new epoch of theatrical entertainments.

No monarch ever seemed to favour more the conditions under which the stage might reach a brilliant maturity than Charles II. He had dramatists for his friends, actresses for his mistresses, and players for his companions. He was constant in his attendance at the theatres. Gratitude made no portion of this king's character, or it might be thought his advocacy of the theatre was in recognition of the services the actors had rendered his father. His advocacy might have done good had the stage been moral; but the stage being immoral it did incalculable harm. It may be safely asserted that no reign was ever more unpropitious to the drama than that of Charles II. In its vaulting ambition to be happy our country overleaped itself. It encouraged all kinds and degrees of vice from the Continent under the impression that it was trafficking in pleasure. The stage, true to its vocation, became the mirror of the general depravity. Impurities were liberally bandied. The foul satyr leered through every scene. Women mockingly vizarded themselves to conceal the only blushes

their cheeks could exhibit—that of the paint-pot. The pious, with a horror that was quite genuine, ran to and fro with lifted hands and white eyeballs. It was not enough that Wycherley, Mrs. Behn, Dryden, Sedley, and Davenant were writing for the public pollution; females were now supplying the place of boys; and the most wanton, the most corrupt, the most unspeakable sentiments were being musically lilted by the red lips of beautiful women.<sup>1</sup> The “tiring-room” was little better than an infamous house where Moll Common was to be seen preparing potions for rival courtezans to insure the disgust of royalty, and where Doll Tearsheet was to be heard swearing at Sir Plume or Sir Fopling, for not giving her more pieces.

In English comedy little purity is discernible before the time of the elder Colman. Cibber, the last of the wits of the Stuart epoch, repeats the obscene song of the comic muse, though the equivocal lies rather in the situations than in the sentiments of his plays. From Colman dates a succession of performances, which while they are irreproachable enough in their morals, taken collectively, may fairly compare in wit with the best comedies of the Restoration.

Acting, from the time of Burbage and Lowin, may be said to have undergone almost as many transitions as the drama. Those who would seek an illustration of these changes might probably find them in a series of representative plays from Shakspeare to our own time. The stately splendour, the god-like morality, the massive dignity, the profound philosophy of the Shakspearian drama, would indicate with curious felicity, if we may credit what has been told of Burbage and his brethren, the characteristics of its early exponents. The sparkle, the pertness, the licentiousness of the dramatists of the Stuart epoch will present us with the qualities of the school of Hart and Lacy. Coming to Quin and his imitators, we find

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<sup>1</sup> It is almost impossible to believe that any woman could have been found to publicly pronounce some of the language that is to be read in the plays of Dryden and Wycherley. Yet among the actresses in these and even worse dramas the reputations of some have been handed down to us as unimpeachable. Such was Mrs. Betterton; such was Mrs. Bracegirdle. Later on, when the licensing of plays came in vogue, a fine was levied upon any actor or actress giving utterance to an immoral sentence. Among the first who were mulcted for this offence were Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle.

their acting represented by those solemn, drowsy tragedies to which are subscribed the names of Addison, Banks, Fenton, Rowe, Phillips, and others. The genius of the school of Weston and Edwin will be found in the brocaded humour of the Colmans, and the stern merriment of such writers as Boaden and Kelly. And coming to our own time, we will find the decay of the artificial comedy to indicate a school of actors whose naturalness will not always exempt them from the charge of occasional vulgarity.

Dibdin closes his bulky volumes with the name of Garrick, whose praises he sounds with an energy which carries his language into the dark regions of hyperbole. Writing earlier than 1800, Dibdin had seen Kemble, Cooke, and Henderson; but the brilliant maturity of Edmund Kean he had not seen. Not for Kemble, nor Cooke, nor Kean, is it probable, or is it to be wished, that Dibdin would have dispossessed Garrick of his throne; yet I suspect had he witnessed the remarkable flux of talent that followed the decay of the Garrick school of actors he would have abated the enthusiasm, or at least qualified the praise with which he deals with the names of his contemporaries. There were giants no doubt in the days of Garrick; actors and actresses who present a perfect milky-way across the patined vault of the dramatic heavens. Yet let us think on those who followed. With the Garrick era there was undoubtedly high art: but through the eras that followed, if we find less art, we find more nature. In no way is this better illustrated than by the direction taken by the genius of these actors. They were most of them comedians capable indeed of the highest tragic flight, but inclining towards comedy as the best reflection of the life lived by the men and women who make up our world. They overturned the ponderous tragedies which had absorbed the energies of the Garrick school: they abandoned the scowl, the gasp, the start, the stalk, and the gurgle, the paving gesture and the theatrical air for the smiles or frowns, the actions and the attitudes of real people. With the last of the Garrick school—with old Bensley, for instance, in spite of Lamb's praise—may be said to have died the survivor of a line of traditional puppets who, "with all the contortions of the sibyl, had little or nothing of the inspiration."—*Burke.*

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# REPRESENTATIVE ACTORS.

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Richard Tarleton.

1530-1588.

TARLETON was an actor at the Bull in Bishopsgate-street, and performed originally in the play of "Henry V.," from which Shakspeare is supposed to have collected the materials for his play under the same title. When Elizabeth, at the solicitation of Sir Francis Walsingham, appointed a dozen players to perform at Barn-Elms, allowing them wages and liveries as grooms of the chamber, Tarleton was made a sort of manager. An old author says, "That for the clown's part he never had his equal." Even Ben Jonson, who libels actors, could not refrain from applauding Tarleton. Indeed by all accounts his humour was of an irresistible kind—I suppose something like that of Weston—for we are told that "the self-same words spoken by another would hardly move a merry man to smile, which uttered by him would force a sad soul to laughter." Tarleton for some time kept a tavern in Paternoster-row, and afterwards the sign of the Tabor in Gracechurch-street, where his humour operated as such an attraction that it was common to have his portraits as a sign. Oldys<sup>1</sup> says "that there was a sign in the Borough of a man playing on the pipe and tabor with the name of Tarleton written under it, and that this portrait was a copy of a wooden print which was published at the head

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<sup>1</sup> William Oldys, the antiquary, born 1696, died 1761. D'Israeli has written an account of him in the "Curiosities of Literature." Francis Grose, in his "Olio," a work full of keen humour and sharp satire, has also given his life. "He was a little mean-looking man," he says, "of a vulgar address, and when I knew him, rarely sober in the afternoon, never alter supper."—ED.

of a work called 'Tarleton's Jest.'—*Dibdin's "History of the Stage."*

He was a celebrated actor and jester, and was born at Andover in Shropshire. He was the author of a dramatic performance called "The Seven Deadly Sins;" and many of his witticisms have been printed in different jest-books.—*Universal Biography.*

Tarleton's nose was flattened by a blow which he received whilst parting some dogs and bears. This misfortune he turned into merriment by noticing that it did not affect him, for that he had still sagacity enough to smell a knave from an honest man.—*Dramatic Anecdotes.*

Richard Tarleton, for the clown's part, never had his match nor ever will have.<sup>1</sup>—*Baker's Chronicles.*

## Edward Alleyne.

1565-1626.

He was a youth of excellent capacity, a cheerful temper, a tenacious memory, a sweet elocution, and in his person, of a stately port and aspect.—*Fuller.*

If Rome so great and in her wisest age  
 Feared not to boast the glories of her stage,  
 A skilful Roscius and great Æsop, men  
 Yet crown'd with honours as with riches then,  
 Who had no less a trumpet to their name  
 Than Cicero, whose very breath was fame;  
 How can so great example die in me,  
 That, Alleyne, I should pause to publish thee?

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<sup>1</sup> Among the characters in our old plays a fool frequently occurs. The terms clown and fool were (however improperly) used as synonymous by our early writers; but although the fool of our old plays denoted either a mere natural, or else a witty hireling or artificial fool, retained for the purpose of making sport for his employers, the clown was certainly a perfectly distinct character, and one of much greater variety. A fool generally formed part of the establishment of every nobleman in the 16th century, and indeed much later. The stage costume of the fool is not exactly known, but it most probably closely resembled that used in common life—*i.e.*, a long cloak or petticoat, originally worn by the idiot or natural fool, and intended for purposes of concealment and cleanliness. It was of various colours, and the materials were often costly, as of velvet, and fringed with yellow.—*History of the Theatres*, 1823.



Who, both their graces in thyself hast more  
Outstript than they did all who went before ;  
And present worth in all dost so contract,  
As others spake, but only thou dost act ;  
Wear this renown.—*Ben Jonson.*

Edward Allen, the munificent founder of Dulwich College, was a player, and the sole proprietor of his own theatre, which he built from the ground, and this man could not be worth less than 25,000*l.*, a sum then equal to 100,000*l.* in our days, and not inferior, upon that account, to Mr. Garrick's fortune.—*T. Davies.*

Alleyn's fortune proceeded no doubt from marrying three wives, each of whom brought a handsome fortune, partly from the success of his theatre, partly from his being keeper of the King's wild beasts, and master of the Royal Bear Garden, and partly from his being a most rigid and penurious economist, which character he so strictly enjoined himself, that he was the first pensioner in his own charity.—*C. Dibdin.*

Alleyn united the very best works with a very sincere but unostentatious faith. His biography is to be read in the memorials of his yet existing and most bountiful charities: in St. Botolph's where he was born, in Cripplegate, St. Luke's, St. Saviour's (or St. Mary Overy, Southwark, as it was then called), where he had laboured untiringly and reaped fortune handsomely, helping many a poorer colleague the while. He founded almshouses, where for two centuries and a half old and infirm people, whose numbers would now make a total of many hundreds, have been indebted to the forethought springing from the gratitude of this noble actor, for all that can add comfort to declining years. But his noblest work of all was the founding of Dulwich College, as an asylum for the aged and a place of education for orphans. This foundation was made and completed in Alleyn's lifetime; he did not wait to order it to be done by his heirs; and he immediately called it "God's Gift College," intimating thereby that he was only the steward of the fortune which had been gathered by his industry.—*Cornhill Magazine, 1867.*

Richard Burbage.<sup>1</sup>

1566-1619.

He was the admir'd example of the age,  
 And so observ'd all your dramatic laws,  
 He ne'er went off the stage but with applause.  
 Who his spectators and his auditors  
 Led in such silent chains of eyes and ears,  
 As none, whilst he on the stage his part did play,  
 Had power to speak or look another way.—*Flecknoe.*

Astronomers and star-gazers this year,  
 Write but of four eclipses—five appear ;  
 Death interposing Burbage, and their staying,  
 Hath made a visible eclipse of playing.—*Middlton.*

Excellency in the meanest things deserves encouragement.  
 Richard Burbage and Edward Allen: two such actors as no  
 age must ever look to see the like.—*Baker's Chronides.*

He is a man famous as our English Roscius ; one who fitteth  
 the action to the word, the word to the action, most admirably.  
 —*Earl of Southampton.*

Burbage, the great actor of Shakspeare's principal characters,  
 we are told was so eminent in his profession that no country  
 gentleman thought himself qualified for conversation without  
 having an acquaintance with Dick Burbage.—*T. Davies.*

If we may believe some authorities, and there is no reason  
 to doubt them, Burbage was not only a great painter of living  
 portraits upon the stage, but a limner of dead ones upon  
 canvas ; he was an artist as an actor, and attained considerable  
 skill as a delineator of likenesses in oil colours.—*Payne Collier.*

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<sup>1</sup> About the other actors of this period little information is to be gathered.  
 Lowin, Hemmings, Condel, Fletcher, Mason, Field, Taylor, and others  
 were all eminent in their various walks. Marlowe, in his preface to the  
 "Jew of Malta," writes that "Mr. Mason and Mr. Taylor performed their  
 parts with that excellence that it was beyond conceiving." But of most of  
 these actors the traditions are vague and the memorials confused, and all  
 that we may really be said to know of them is that they were men whose  
 genius rendered them worthy to fill those lofty parts which were then being  
 written.—ED.

## Robert Cox.

1580-1648.

As meanly as you may now think of these Drolls, they were then acted by the best comedians, and I may say by some that then exceeded all now living; the incomparable Robert Cox, who was not only the principal actor, but also the contriver and author of most of these farces. How have I heard him cried up for his *John Swabber* and *Simpleton the Smith*, in which, he being to appear with a large piece of bread and butter, I have frequently known several of the female spectators and auditors to long for it; and once that well-known natural *Jack Adams of Clerkenwell*, seeing him with bread and butter on the stage, and knowing him, cried out, "Cuz! Cuz! give me some!" to the great pleasure of the audience. And so naturally did he act the smith's part, that being at a fair in a country town, and that farce being presented, the only master smith of the town came to him, saying, "Well, although your father speaks so ill of you, yet when the fair is done, if you will come and work with me, I will give you twelvepence a week more than I give any other journeyman." Thus was he taken for a smith bred, that was indeed as much of any trade.—*F. Kirkman*,<sup>1</sup> "*The Wits*," 1672.

At this epoch (*i.e.* during the suppression of the theatres by the Puritans) a great comic genius, Robert Cox, invented a peculiar sort of dramatic exhibition, suited to the necessities of the time—short pieces which he mixed with other amusements, that these might disguise the acting. It was under the pretence of rope-dancing that he filled the Red Bull playhouse, which was a large one, with such a confluence, that as many went back for want of room as entered. The dramatic contrivance consisted of a combination of the richest comic scenes<sup>2</sup> into one piece, from Shakspeare, Marston, Shirley, &c., con-

<sup>1</sup> Kirkman was an obscure author, who is said to have mutilated twenty-seven plays from Shakspeare, Jonson, and others.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> This collection by Kirkman has a view of the interior of the Red Bull Theatre, as a frontispiece, which is very curious and valuable. It represents a stage on which are seven figures, who perform before a number of people, some of whom sit in a kind of boxes, the rest in rows like persons seated at a dinner-table. The figures on the stage are—1, *Sir John Falstaff* habited in the costume in which we are accustomed to see him, but very

cealed under some taking title; and these pieces of plays were called "Humours," or "Drolleries." . . . There are however some original pieces by Cox himself, which were the most popular favourites, being characters created by himself, for himself, from ancient farces: such were "The Humours of John Swabber," "Simpleton the Smith," &c. This Cox was the delight of the city, the country, and the universities; assisted by the greatest actors of the time, expelled from the theatre, it was he who still preserved alive, as it were by stealth, the suppressed spirit of the drama.—*Isaac D'Israeli*.

Cox had very slender pretensions to be considered as an author, his whole merit having consisted in raking diverting circumstances from various plays, and forming them into farces and drolls; which being a good actor, he was well qualified to do.—*History of the Stage*.

## Thomas Heywood.

*Circa 1590-1645.*

A dramatic writer and actor in the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. He is said to have been a most voluminous author, having written no less than two hundred plays, of which only twenty-four are extant. Neither the date of his birth nor that of his death are on record.—*Universal Biography*.

Mr. Thomas Heywood was not only an excellent actor, but a very great author and dramatic poet. I have read all his works that are extant, and in my poor judgment, he may be accounted the first of the second-ranked poets in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. Several modern authors have borrowed from Mr. Heywood. I shall only mention two, Shadwell in his "Lancashire Witches," and Fielding in his "Intriguing Chambermaid."—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

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much thinner than what he is now made to be; 2, *Dame Quickly*; 3, *Clause*, from Beaumont and Fletcher's "Beggars Bush;" 4, the French dancing-master from Lord Newcastle's comedy called "Variety;" and 5 and 6, characters from pieces written by Cox himself. There is a figure stepping from behind a curtain pronouncing the words "Tu quoque," meant for Green, a celebrated comedian of the time, highly praised by Heywood in his preface to the comedy called "Tu quoque," written by Cook, but called, by reason of Green's fine acting, "Green's Tu-quoque."—ED.

This man, by some of the biographers, has been greatly extolled as a writer without any great appearance, however, of either truth or justice ; for the prodigious quantity he wrote, for which he ransacked the ancients without mercy, whatever might have been his real merit had he taken time to correct and polish his works, rendered it impossible for him to turn anything out of hand likely to secure him a solid reputation ; and thus we have a list of twenty-four pieces, out of two hundred and twenty which he himself says he either wrote or was concerned in, little more known at this moment than by their titles. Heywood was certainly a good classical scholar, and as an actor he was pretty celebrated. Indeed, the pursuing this occupation, and his being perpetually in company (for we are ridiculously told he wrote his plays upon the backs of tavern bills), must have left him but little opportunity to complete the difficult task of writing plays, especially such an immense number as are attributed to him.—*C. Dibdin.*

### Thomas Killigrew.<sup>1</sup>

1611-1685.

Thomas Killigrew was born in 1611, was page to Charles I., and accompanied the Prince of Wales into exile. During his absence from England he visited France, Italy, and Spain, and after the Restoration, was appointed by the new king (with whom he was a great favourite) one of his grooms of the bed-chamber. A vein of lively pleasantry, combined with a certain oddity, both of person and manner, placed him high in the good graces of Charles II., who would frequently allow him free access to his person, when characters of the first dignity in the State were refused it ; till Killigrew became almost the inseparable companion of his monarch's familiar hours. This was the Killigrew that obtained the appellation of "King Charles's jester ;" but though he was undoubtedly a mirth-creating spirit, his clever dramatic pieces discover few traces of that facetiousness and whim which one imagines he must have actually possessed.—*Universal Biography.*

He was a man of very droll make, and had an uncommon

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<sup>1</sup> Frequent mention of Tom Killigrew is made in Pepys's "Diary," but I can find nothing illustrative of his character or his wit to quote.—ED.

vein of humour, with which he used to divert that merry monarch, Charles II., who on that account was fonder of him than of his best Ministers, and would give him access to his presence, when he denied it to them. It was usually said of him that when he attempted to write, he was nothing near so smart as he was in conversation.—*Dr. Carry.*

Thomas Killigrew, commonly known by the name of King Charles's jester, produced ten plays. They were principally written for his amusement when he was abroad, and not, as it was generally imagined, as manager of his own theatre, for it is pretty clear that he never had one. The history of Killigrew, and that he followed Charles II. in exile and returned with him, that he was groom of the bed-chamber and continued in high favour with the King and had access to him when he denied himself to the first characters in the kingdom, is perfectly well drawn. He had such lively parts, and was a man of such eccentric and peculiar humour, that he was a perfect counterpart to Charles; and, having been admitted to habits of freedom and familiarity during their residence abroad, he was suffered to go sometimes to most unwarrantable lengths in the liberties he took. There is a story told that he came to the King dressed like a pilgrim, and being asked where he was going, answered, "To fetch Oliver Cromwell from hell to take care of the affairs of the nation, for that his successor took no care at all of them."—*C. Dibdin.*

The jester Killigrew frequently had access to Charles II. when admission was denied to the first peers in the realm. Charles, who hated business as much as he loved pleasure, often disappointed the council either by not attending or withdrawing before the business was concluded. One day the council sat a considerable time in expectation of his Majesty, when the Duke of Lauderdale, so distinguished for his haughty demeanour, quitted the room in a great passion. On his way he met Killigrew, to whom he expressed himself more freely than courteously respecting his master. Killigrew bade his grace be calm, for he would lay a wager of a hundred pounds that he would make his Majesty attend the council in less than half an hour. Lauderdale took him at his word, and Killigrew, getting immediate admission to the King, told him all that had happened, adding, "I know your Majesty hates Lauderdale, though the necessity of your Majesty's affairs obliges you to receive him; now if you wish to get rid of a man you hate, come to the

council, for Lauderdale is a man so boundlessly avaricious that rather than pay the wager, he will hang himself and never plague you more." The King laughed at the observation and attended the council.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

## Edward Kynaston.

1619-1687.

We hear of Kynaston, the last beautiful youth who figured in petticoats on the stage, having been carried about in his theatrical dress by ladies of fashion in their carriages. This was an unseemly spectacle, and we can forgive the Puritans for objecting to see "men in women's clothing."—*T. Campbell.*

Aug. 18.—Captain Ferrers took me and Creed to the Cockpitt play, the first that I have had time to see since my coming from sea. "The Loyall Subject," where one Kinaston, a boy, acted the Duke's sister, but made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life. Jan. 7.—Tom and I and my wife to the theatre, and there saw the "Silent Woman." Among other things here Kinaston, the boy, had the good turn to appear in three shapes; first, as a poor woman in ordinary clothes to please Morose; then in fine clothes as a gallant, and in them was clearly the prettiest woman in the whole house; and lastly, as a man, and then likewise did appear the handsomest man in the whole house.—*Pepys's "Diary."*<sup>1</sup>

Though women were not admitted to the stage till the return of King Charles, yet it could not be so suddenly supplied with them but that there was still a necessity, for some time, to put the handsomest young men into petticoats—which Kynaston was then said to have worn with success, particularly in the part of *Evadne* in the "Maid's Tragedy," which I have heard him speak of; and which calls to my mind a ridiculous distress that

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<sup>1</sup> Pepys is frequent in his eulogies of one Mistress Knipp, an actress of whom I can find no other mention. A note to the "Diary" says, "Of Mrs. Knipp's history nothing seems known, except that she was a married actress belonging to the King's House, and as late as 1677 her name occurs among the performers in the 'Wily False One.'" In 1667, on the 12th of February, Mr. Pepys went by coach to hear some Italian music. Here he met Killigrew, a page of honour to Charles I., who when a boy "would go to the Red Bull, and when the man cried to the boys, 'who will go and be a devil, and he shall see the play for nothing?' then would he go in, and be a devil upon the stage, and so get to see plays." He had a chat with Kil-

arose from these sort of shifts which the stage was then put to. The King coming a little before his usual time to a tragedy, found the actors not ready to begin, when his Majesty, not choosing to have as much patience as his good subjects, sent to them to know the meaning of it, upon which the master of the company came to the box, and, rightly judging that the best excuse for their default would be the true one, fairly told his Majesty that the queen was not *shaved* yet; the King, whose good humour loved to laugh at a jest as well as to make one, accepted the excuse, which served to divert him till the male queen could be effeminated. In a word, Kynaston at that time was so beautiful a youth that the ladies of quality prided themselves in taking him with them in their coaches to Hyde Park in his theatrical habit, after the play; which in those days they might have sufficient time to do, because plays then were used to begin at four o'clock, the hour that people of the same rank are now going to dinner. Of this truth I had the curiosity to inquire, and had it confirmed from his own mouth, in his advanced age; and indeed to the last of him his handsomeness was very little abated; even at past sixty his teeth were sound, white, and even as one could wish to see in a reigning toast of twenty. He had something of a formal gravity in his mien, which was attributed to the stately step he had been so early confined to, in a female decency. But even that, in characters of superiority, had its proper graces; it misbecame him not in the part of *Leon*, in Fletcher's "Rule a Wife," &c., which he executed with a determined manliness and honest authority well worth the best actor's imitation. He had a piercing eye, and in characters of heroic life, a quick, imperious vivacity in his tone of voice, that painted the tyrant truly terrible. There were two plays of Dryden, in which he shone with uncommon lustre—in "Aurengzebe" he played *Morat*, and in "Don Sebastian" *Muley Moloch*; in both these parts he had a fierce

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ligrew, who told him "that Knipp is like to make the best actor that ever come upon the stage, she understanding so well, that they are going to give her thirty pounds a year more." Killigrew further boasted "that by his pains the stage is a thousand times better and more glorious than heretofore. Now wax candles, and many of them, then not above 3lbs. of tallow; now all things civil, no rudeness anywhere; then as in a bear-garden; then two or three fiddlers, now nine or ten of the best; then nothing but rushes upon the ground, and everything else mean; now all otherwise; then the Queen seldom, and the King never would come; now, not the King only 'or state, but all civil people do think they may come as well as any."



lion-like majesty in his port and utterance, that gave the spectators a kind of trembling admiration.—*Colley Cibber*.

Kynaston, who performed the parts of women in his youth,<sup>1</sup> of lovers in his maturer age, and of genteel old men later in life, is said not only to have possessed a grace and an ease that nothing ever surpassed, but to have thrown a peculiar dignity into everything he performed. We are told that, though Betterton and Kynaston both observed the rules of truth and nature, they were each as different in their acting as in their form or features. This we know is requisite, and this particular discrimination seems to have made up a great part of the excellent acting of that time.—*C. Dibdin*.

## John Lacey.

1622-1681.

John Lacey, a dramatic writer, was born at Doncaster, and bred a dancing-master; this employment he quitted for the army, but subsequently took to the stage, and acquired such ability as a comedian that Charles II. had his portrait painted in three different characters. He wrote the comedies of the "Dumb Lady," "Sir Hercules Buffoon," "Old Troop," and "Sawney the Scot."—*Universal Biography*.

A comedian whose abilities in action were sufficiently known to all that frequented the King's Theatre, where he was for many years an actor, and performed all parts that he undertook

<sup>1</sup> All accounts exhibit Kynaston as the most celebrated actor of women's parts of his day. It was not until after the Restoration that women performed on the stage. They were introduced by Sir William Davenant at his theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1662. The play was the "Siege of Rhodes," in which Mrs. Saunderson, the first female actress that ever played for hire before the public in England, took the part of the heroine. In 1593, one Dr. Reynolds had published a foaming invective against stage-plays, in which he vigorously attacked the sin of boys wearing the dress, and affecting the airs of women; yet Tom Nash, in his "Pierce Penniless," applauds the English stage for not having courtezans or women-actors (the definition is his), as they have abroad. D'Israeli attributes the change less to an improved taste than to necessity; "for," he says, "the boys who had been trained to act female characters before the Rebellion, during the suspension of the theatre (by the Puritans), had grown too masculine to resume their tender office at the Restoration." This innovation of actresses, pronounced an indecorum, though copiously apologized for, grew speedily popular, so much so indeed, that before long plays were represented of which the cast consisted wholly of women.—ED.

to a miracle, insomuch that I am apt to believe, that as *this* age never had, so the *next* never will have, his *equal*—at least not his superior. He was so well approved of by King Charles II., an undeniable judge in dramattick arts, that he caused his picture to be drawn in three several figures in the same table—viz., That of *Teague* in the “Committee,” *Mr. Scruple* in “The Cheats,” and *M. Galliard* in “The Variety,” which piece is still in being in Windsor Castle. Nor did his talents wholly lie in acting: he knew both how to judge and write plays; and if his comedies are somewhat allied to French farces, it is out of choice rather than want of ability to write true comedy.—*Gerard Langbaine.*

To the King’s House and there saw the “Taming of the Shrew,” . . . and best part *Sawny* done by Lacey.—To the King’s Playhouse and saw “Love in a Maze;” but a sorry play, only Lacey’s clown part which he did most admirably indeed.—To the King’s House to see “Horace;” this is the third day of its acting; a silly tragedy, but Lacey hath made a farce of several dances, between each act, one; but his words are but silly, and invention not extraordinary as to the dances.—To the Royal Theatre, and there saw “The Committee,” a merry but indifferent play, only Lacey’s part, an Irish footman, is beyond imagination.—*Pepys’s “Diary.”*

### Mrs. Betterton.

. . . .—1712.

Though far advanced in years, she was still so great an actress that even the famous Mrs. Barry, who acted *Lady Macbeth* after her, could not in that part, with all her superior strength and melody of voice, throw out those quick and careless tones of terror which the other gave, with a facility in her manner that rendered her at once tremendous and delightful. Time could not impair her skill though it gave her person to decay. She was to the last the admiration of all true judges of nature and lovers of Shakspeare, in whose plays she chiefly excelled, and without a rival. She was the faithful companion of her husband and his fellow-labourer for five-and-forty years, and was a woman of unblemished and sober life.—*Colley Cibber.*

Mrs. Betterton was remarkable for performing the female characters of Shakspeare to a greater degree of excellence than

any other actress before or since, which exhibits a most striking proof that she must have been critically a judge of nature, for though many of them are purposely underwritten because they were performed in Shakspeare's time by men, yet there is a feminine truth and beauty in them more winning than all we find in those overcharged characters which, in some of the more modern tragedies—a mode we have borrowed from the French—seem to have all the conduct of the piece. The fact is, that when women came to grace the stage, the authors were so delighted with this pleasurable and advantageous circumstance, that they did not know how to husband it, but as much overshot the mark as their predecessors had come short of it. It is related of Mrs. Betterton that, though *Lady Macbeth* had been frequently well performed, no actress, not even Mrs. Barry, could in the smallest degree be compared to her. Her judgment as an actress is said to have been so consummate that no female performer succeeded who did not imitate her, or failed who did.—*C. Dibdin.*

It is not positively certain, but it is extremely probable that the earliest regular actress of the English stage was a Mrs. Saunderson, afterwards Mrs. Betterton,<sup>1</sup> the wife of the famous actor. At all events, if not the earliest, she was the greatest actress for many years after the Restoration.—*Thomas Campbell.*

## Thomas Betterton.

1635-1710.

March 1, 1660.—To White-friars, and saw “The Bondman” acted; an excellent play and well done; but above all that ever I saw, Betterton do the Bondman best. May 28, 1663.—By water to the Royal Theatre; but that was so full they told us we could have no room. And so to the Duke's House; and there saw “Hamlet” done, giving us fresh reason never to think enough of Betterton.—*Pepys's “Diary.”*

Betterton, although his countenance was ruddy and sanguine, when he performed *Hamlet*, through the sudden and violent emotion of amazement and horror at the presence of his

<sup>1</sup> She is called Ianthe by Pepys in his “Diary,” as having performed *Ianthe* in Davenant's play of the “Siege of Rhodes.” Apparently Pepys greatly admired her, praising her sweet voice and her “incomparable acting” wherever he mentions her.—ED.

father's spectre, instantly turned as white as his neckcloth, while his whole body seemed to be affected with a strong tremor; had his father's apparition actually risen before him he could not have been seized with more real agonies. This struck the spectators so forcibly that they felt a shuddering in their veins, and participated in the astonishment and the horror so apparent in the actor. Davies, in his "Dramatic Miscellanies," records this fact; and in the "Richardsoniana" we find that the first time Booth attempted the ghost when Betterton acted *Hamlet*, that actor's look at times struck him with such horror that he became disconcerted to such a degree that he could not speak his part.<sup>1</sup> Here seems no want of evidence of the force of the ideal presence in this marvellous acting; these facts might deserve a philosophical investigation.—*Isaac D'Israeli*, "Curiosities of Literature."

Boswell: "If Betterton and Foote were to walk into this room, you would respect Betterton much more than Foote." Johnson: "If Betterton were to walk into this room with Foote, Foote would soon drive him out of it. Foote, sir, *quatenus* Foote, has powers superior to them all."—*Life of Johnson*.

Such an actor as Mr. Betterton ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius among the Romans. I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared upon our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in the part of *Othello*, the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind upon the innocent answers *Desdemona* makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and perfectly convince him that it is to stab it to admit that worst of daggers—jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene will find that he cannot (except he has as warm an imagination as Shakspeare himself) find any but dry, incoherent, and broken sentences. But a reader that has seen Betterton act it observes there could not be a word

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<sup>1</sup> A similar story is told by Chetwood of Wilks, who, acting in "The Maid's Tragedy" with Betterton, was so much struck by the actor's dignity, that he could hardly speak. Betterton, remarking his confusion, said, "Young man, this fear does not ill become you—a horse that sets out at the strength of his speed will soon be jaded."—ED.

added, that longer speeches had been unnatural, nay, impossible, in *Othello's* circumstances. This is such a triumph over difficulties that we feel almost persuaded that the deficiencies themselves contributed to the success.—*Addison*.

Mr. Betterton, although a superlative good actor, laboured under an ill figure,<sup>1</sup> being clumsily made, having a great head, short thick neck, stooped in the shoulders, and had fat short arms which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach. His left hand frequently lodged in his breast, between his coat and waistcoat, while with his right he prepared his speech. His actions were few but just. He had little eyes and a broad face, a little pock-bitten, a corpulent body, with thick legs and large feet. He was better to meet than to follow, for his aspect was serious, venerable, and majestic—in his latter time a little paralytic. His voice was low and grumbling; yet he could tune it by an artful climax which enforced universal attention even from the fops and orange-girls. He was incapable of dancing even in a country dance, as was Mrs. Barry, but their good qualities were more than equal to their deficiencies.—*Anthony Aston's*<sup>2</sup> "*Brief Supplement*."

You may have seen a *Hamlet* perhaps who on the first appearance of his father's spirit has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express rage and fury; and the house has thundered applause, though the misguided actor all the while was tearing a passion into rags. The late Mr. Addison, whilst I sate by him to see this scene acted, made the

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<sup>1</sup> Colley Cibber, on the other hand, says that Betterton's person was suitable to his voice—"more manly than sweet, not exceeding the middle stature, inclining to be corpulent, of a serious and penetrating aspect, his limbs nearer the athletic than the delicate proportion, yet however formed, there arose from the harmony of the whole a commanding mien of majesty which the fairer-faced, or as Shakspeare calls them, the curled darlings of his time, ever wanted something to be equal masters of."

<sup>2</sup> This man, it has been said contemptuously, "known by the name of Tony Aston, was a very curious character. He was an attorney, and turned actor, and being determined to follow the profession in its primitive style, he resorted to all the principal towns in England with a performance he called his medley, which was a farrago taken from different plays. His company consisted of himself, his wife, and his son. He was very dexterous in the exertion of his legal abilities, which was frequently called forth in defence of his monopolizing towns, and he got such a character this way, and was supposed to understand the spirit of the old laws respecting public exhibitions so well, that he was permitted to speak his sentiments on a bill pending at that time in the House of Commons, for the regulation of the stage." He died 1753. Chetwood has written a memoir of him.

same observation, asking me with some surprise if I thought *Hamlet* should be in so violent a passion with the ghost, which, though it might have astonished, had not provoked him. For you may observe that in this beautiful speech the passion never rises beyond an almost breathless astonishment, or an impatience limited only by filial reverence to inquire into the suspected wrongs that may have raised him from his peaceful tomb, and a desire to know what a spirit so seemingly distressed might wish or enjoin a sorrowful son to execute towards his future quiet in the grave. This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene, which he opened with a pause of mute amazement, then rising slowly to a solemn, trembling voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectators as to himself, and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghostly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency, manly, but not braving—his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered.—*Colley Cibber*.

Betterton was the greatest actor the English stage ever possessed, with the exception perhaps of the more versatile Garrick. Almost incredible accounts remain to us of the effects produced by his performances. The magnetic influence of tone and expression seemed to mesmerize an audience, and make them the followers of his slightest intonation. Almost without speaking he could let them into the workings of his mind and anticipate his next motion, as if it arose from their own volition.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1861.

Pepys does not speak much of Betterton, the chief performer at the Portugal-street Play house.<sup>1</sup> The reason must be either

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<sup>1</sup> Portugal-street, running parallel with the south side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, is the site of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, sometimes styled the "Duke's Theatre." The back or north front of it opened upon the south side of Lincoln's Inn, then Portugal Row, on the site of the Museum of the College of Surgeons. This theatre, which was built after a design by Sir C. Wren, was opened in the spring of 1662 under a patent granted to Sir William Davenant.—*Jesse's "London."* Readers of theatrical history are generally led to conclude that there was only one theatre in the Lincoln's Inn quarter; but this is a mistake. There were at least two successive houses in two different places, though usually confounded under the title of the "theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields." The first was in Gibbon's tennis-court, in Vere-street, Clare-market.—*Hunt's "Town."* The other was the theatre referred to by Jesse.—ED.

that Betterton played chiefly in tragedy, or that his comic talent (which is probable) was not equal to his tragic. He was the great actor of his time, as Garrick was of the last century, and Mr. Kean lately. His most admired character appears to have been that of *Hamlet*. . . . Betterton died old and poor, rather, it should seem from misfortune than from imprudence. The actors in those times, though much admired, were not rewarded as they have been since, nor received anything like the modern salaries. His death is said to have been hastened by tampering with the gout, in order to perform on his benefit night. His person was rather manly than graceful. He was a good-natured man, and, like Molière, would perform when he was ill rather than hinder the profits of his brother-actors. At Caen Wood, Hampstead, the seat of Lord Mansfield, there is a portrait of him by Pope, who was an amateur in painting. They became acquainted when the latter was young and the actor old, and took such a liking to one another that Pope is supposed to have had a hand in a volume of pieces from Chaucer, purporting to have been modernized by Betterton.—*Leigh Hunt*, “*The Town*.”

The son of Charles I.'s cook was, for fifty-one years, the pride of the English theatre. His acting was witnessed by more than one old contemporary of Shakspeare—the poet's younger brother being among them—he surviving till shortly after the accession of Charles II.; and a few of Betterton's younger fellow-actors lived to speak of his great glory to old stagers who were loquacious in the early days of elderly men yet paying scot and lot among us.<sup>1</sup> The frozen-out actors warmed into life and laughter again beneath the sunshine of his presence. His dignity, his marvellous talent, his versatility, his imperishable fame, are all well known and acknowledged. His industry is indicated by the fact that he

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<sup>1</sup> In 1709 Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Barry played in “*Love for Love*” at Drury Lane, for Betterton's benefit. He stood forward, and whilst the following epilogue was spoken by Mrs. Barry, the two actresses clasped him round the waist :—

“ . . . So we, to former leagues of friendship true,  
Have bid once more our peaceful homes adieu,  
To aid Old Thomas, and to pleasure you.  
Like errant damsels, boldly we engage,  
Arm'd, as you see, for the defenceless stage.  
Time was when this good man no help did lack,  
And scorn'd that any she should hold his back.

created one hundred and thirty new characters ! Among them were *Jaffier* and *Valentine*, three *Virginiuses*, and *Sir John Brute*. He was as mirthful in *Falstaff* as he was majestic in *Alexander* ; and the craft of his *Ulysses*, the grace and passion of his *Hamlet*, the terrible force of his *Othello*, were not more remarkable than the low comedy of his *Old Bachelor*, the airiness of his *Woodville*, or the cowardly bluster of his *Thersites*. The old actors who had been frozen out, and the new who had much to learn, could not have rallied round a more noble or a worthier chief ; for Betterton was not a greater actor than he was a true and honourable gentleman. Only for him the old frozen-outs would have fared but badly. He enriched himself and them, and, as long as he lived, gave dignity to his profession. The humble lad, born in Tothill-street, before monarchy and the stage went down, had a royal funeral in Westminster Abbey, after dying in harness almost in sight of the lamps. He deserved no less, for he was the king of an art which had well-nigh perished in the Commonwealth times, and he was a monarch who probably has never since had, altogether, his equal. Off, as on the stage, he was exemplary in his bearing ; true to every duty ; as good a country-gentleman on his farm in Berkshire as he was perfect actor in town ; pursuing with his excellent wife the even tenor of his way ; not tempted by the vices of his time, not disturbed by its politics ; not tipping like Underhill, not plotting and betraying the plotters against William, like Goodman, nor carrying letters for a costly fee between London and St. Germain, like Scudamore. If there had been a leading player on the stage in 1647, with the qualities, public and private, which distinguished Betterton, there perhaps would have been a less severe

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But now, so age and frailty have ordained,  
 By two at once he's forced to be sustain'd,  
 You see what failing nature brings man to,  
 And yet, let none insult ; for aught we know,  
 She may not wear so well with some of you.  
 Though old, you'll find his strength is not yet pass'd,  
 But true as steel, he's metal to the last.  
 If better he perform'd in days of yore,  
 Yet now he gives you all that's in his power,  
 What can the youngest of you all do more?" &c.

Betterton was then 74 years old. (See Rowe's Poems, Johnson's ed. p. 45.)—ED.



ordinance than that which inflicted so much misery on the "frozen-out actors."—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1862.

There are so many vouchers for the merit of this extraordinary actor that there would be no great difficulty in ascertaining or risk in asserting precisely what they were. I must content myself with saying that it has been unanimously allowed, his mental and personal qualifications for the stage were correct to perfection, and that, after a variety of arguments to prove this, we are obliged to confess that he appears never to have been on the stage for a single moment the actor but the character he performed.—*Dibdin*.<sup>1</sup>

## Joseph Ashbury.

1638–1720.

This worthy gentleman was born in London, the year 1638, of an ancient family. His father married a near relation of that great scholar and soldier Sir Walter Raleigh, who was first gentleman to that Duke of Buckingham that was killed by Lieutenant Felton in the reign of King Charles I. The gentleman I am about to give an account of was sent very young to Eton School, near Windsor, where he received a genteel education, being very well instructed in classical learning. After the death of his father, his friends procured him a pair of colours in the army under the Duke of Ormond, which was the first time of his coming into this kingdom (Ireland) in the last year of Oliver Cromwell's administration. Mr. Ashbury was one of the number of officers that seized the castle of Dublin when Governor Jones was made prisoner, and secured in behalf of King Charles II. He was made lieutenant of foot of a company granted by that monarch to

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<sup>1</sup> In a note appended to this passage, Dibdin speaks of having in his youth been acquainted with old Steed, who had been many years prompter of Covent Garden Theatre. From Steed, Dibdin derived much information respecting the actors of a long-preceding epoch. It is remarkable that Steed, who had seen Betterton perform, though he allowed him all the merits praised by Cibber, affirmed that, "taking everything into consideration, he was by no means equal to Garrick." Steed's authority imparts to Dibdin's criticisms on bygone actors a value which they would not have, were they based only on the testimonies of Cibber, Steele, and other contemporary writers.—ED.

the city of Dublin, in the year 1660 and 1662; the Duke of Ormond, the then lord lieutenant, made him one of the gentlemen of his retinue, and deputy-master of the Revels under John Ogilbey, Esq., some time after. In the year 1682, at the death of the Master of the Revels, through Mr. Ashbury's interest with the Duke of Ormond, he was made Patentee, and Master of the Revels in this kingdom (Ireland). His first wife was sister to an eminent actor of that time, Mr. Richards, by whom he had two children, who died in their infancy; and the mother of them being a very infirm woman, was not long after the death of her second child before she left the world. Mr. Ashbury continued a widower many years, till fixing his eyes upon Miss Darling. By this lady he had two sons. Mr. Ashbury was not only the principal actor in his time, but the best teacher of the rudiments of that science in the three kingdoms. I speak not from my own judgment, but that of many others, as Mr. Wilks, Mr. Booth, Mr. Keene, &c. Mr. Ashbury succeeded Mr. Darling as steward of the King's Inns, a post of good profit. I had not the pleasure of knowing this great man but till the latter part of his life; yet notwithstanding his great age, I have seen him perform several parts with the utmost satisfaction, and though at his years it could not be expected the fire of youth and vigour should blaze out, yet truth and nature might be seen in a just light. His person was of an advantageous height, well-proportioned, and manly, and, notwithstanding his great age, erect; a countenance that demanded a reverential awe; a full and meaning eye, piercing though not in its full lustre. I have seen him acquit himself in the part of *Cardless*, in "The Committee," so well that his years never struck upon remembrance. And his person, figure, and manner in *Don Quixote* were inimitable. The use of a short cloak in former fashions on the stage seemed habitual to him, and in comedy he seemed to wear it in imagination, which often produced action, though not ungraceful, particular and odd to many of the audience. This great man was Master of the Revels to five monarchs of England—viz., King Charles II., King James II., King William, Queen Anne, and King George I.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

## Joseph Haines.

1638-1701.

The anecdotes related of this facetious comedian are innumerable. Among those which are not so generally known is the following, extracted from a work containing memoirs of his life, dated 1701. Some idea of the character of the famous tragedian Hart may be also gathered from it:—

“About this time (1673) there happened a small pique between Mr. Hart and Joe, upon the account of his late negotiation in France, and there spending the company’s money to so little purpose, or, as I may properly say, to no purpose at all. There happened to be one night a play called “Cataline’s Conspiracy,” wherein there was wanting a great number of senators. Now Mr. Hart, being chief of the house, would oblige Joe to dress for one of these senators, although his salary, being fifty shillings a week, freed him from any such obligation. But Mr. Hart, as I said before, being sole governor of the playhouse, and at a small variance with Joe, commands it, and the other must obey. Joe being vexed at the slight Mr. Hart had put upon him, found out this method of being revenged upon him. He gets a scaramouch dress, a large full ruff, makes himself whiskers from ear to ear, puts on a long merry Andrew’s cap, a short pipe in his mouth, a little three-legged stool in his hand, and in this manner follows Mr. Hart on the stage, sets himself down behind him, and begins to smoke his pipe, laugh and point at him, which comical figure put all the house in an uproar, some laughing, some clapping, and some hallooing. Now Mr. Hart, as those who knew him can aver, was a man of that exactness and grandeur on the stage, that let what would happen, he’d never discompose himself or mind anything but what he then represented, and had a scene fallen behind him, he would not at that time look back to see what was the matter ; which Joe knowing, remained still smoaking ; the audience continued laughing ; Mr. Hart acting and wondering at this unusual occasion of their mirth—sometimes thinking it some disturbance in the house ; again, that it might be something amiss in his dress. At last, turning himself towards the scenes, he discovered Joe in the aforesaid posture ; whereupon he immediately goes off the stage, swear-

ing he would never set foot on it again unless Joe was immediately turned out of doors ; which was no sooner spoke than put in practice."<sup>1</sup>—*R. Wewitzer's "Dramatic Remains."*

## Eleanor Gwynne.

1642-1691.

To the King's House, and there saw the "Humorous Lieutenant," a silly play, I think ; only the spirit in it that grows very tall and then sinks again to nothing, having two heads breeding upon one ; and then Knipp's singing did please us. Here in a box above we spied Mrs. Pierce, and going out they called us, and so we staid for them, and Knipp took us all in, and brought to us Nelly, a most pretty woman, who acted the great part *Cælia* to-day very fine, and did it pretty well ; I kissed her, and so did my wife, and a mighty pretty soul she is.—*Pepys*.<sup>2</sup>

Guin,<sup>3</sup> the indiscreetest and wildest creature that ever was in

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<sup>1</sup> In other parts of this work I have called attention to the extraordinary liberties taken with their audiences by actors. This joke of Haines, however, is mild compared to what was once done at a Dublin theatre. Peg Woffington was acting "Lear" with Garrick ; in the part where the old King recovers from his delirium, and sleeps with his head on *Cordelia's* lap, a gentleman came forward from behind the scenes and threw his arms around Peg's waist. This affront, which a modern audience would probably have resented by destroying the interior of the theatre, seemed rather to entertain the Dublin public.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> From Pepys's entries a fair idea of Nell's histrionic powers may be gathered. In 1666, he tells us that he saw a comical part done by Nell, "which is Florimel, that I never can hope to see the like done again by man or woman." This is on the 2nd of March ; but on the 7th, he discovers that, as a dancer, Moll Davies is infinitely superior to Nell. On the 25th he sees Nell again, so acting "a merry part," "as cannot be better done in nature." In April, 1667, he "saw pretty Nelly standing at her lodgings' door in Drury-lane, in her smock sleeves and bodice, looking upon one ; she seemed a mighty pretty creature." In October, he went into the "tiring-room" of the King's House, and saw Nell dressing herself—Knipp was with her. "But Lord !" he cries, "to see how they were both painted, would make a man mad, and did make me loathe them." "But to see how Nell cursed for having so few people in the pit, was strange." In mad parts he finds her "beyond all imitation," but he finds fault with her in tragedy, and more fault with her in modesty. "Lord, her confidence !" he exclaims, as she comes off the stage in boy's clothes, surrounded by men ; whilst another time, he spies the jade Nell in an upper box, "a bold, merry slut, who lay laughing there upon people."—ED.

<sup>3</sup> Thus spelt by Burnet in the edition of his "History of My Own Times" before me. In the different portraits mentioned by Granger, she is thus

a Court, continued to the end of the King's life in great favour, and was maintained at a vast expense. The Duke of Buckingham told me that when she was first brought to the King, she asked only five hundred pounds a year, and the King refused it. But when he told me this about four years after, he said she had got of the King above sixty thousand pounds. She acted all persons in so lively a manner, and was such a constant diversion to the King, that even a new mistress could not drive her away. But after all, he never treated her with the decencies of a mistress.<sup>1</sup>—*Burnet.*

The orange basket her fair arm did suit,  
Laden with pippins and Hesperian fruit ;  
This first step raised, to the wond'ring pit she sold  
The lovely fruit, smiling with streaks of gold.  
Fate now for her did its whole force engage,  
And from the pit she mounted to the stage ;  
There in full lustre did her glories shine,  
And long eclips'd, spread forth their light divine :  
There Hart and Rowley's soul she did ensnare,  
And made a king a rival to a player.—*Rochester.*

Whilst we may safely reject as unfounded gossip many of the stories associated with the name of Nell Gwynne, we cannot refuse belief to the various proofs of kind-heartedness, liberality, and—taking into consideration her subsequent power to do harm—absolute goodness of a woman mingling (if we may believe a passage in Pepys) from her earliest years in the most depraved scenes of a most dissolute age. The life of Nell Gwynne, from the time of her connexion with Charles II., to that of her death, proved that error had been forced upon her by circumstances, rather than indulged from choice.—*Douglas Ferrol.*

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described : Madam Eleanora Gwynn ; Madam Eleanor Gwynn ; Madame Ellen Gwynn ; Madam Ellen Gwin ; Mrs. Ellen Gwynn. Moll Davies, frequently mentioned by Pepys, was for some time Nell's rival with the King. She was comedian in the Duke of York's Theatre. She had one daughter by Charles named Mary, who took the surname of Tudor, and was in 1687 married to the son of Sir Francis Ratcliffe, who became Earl of Derwentwater. When the King turned her off, he settled a pension upon her of a thousand pounds a year. It is said that he fell in love with her on hearing her sing the ballad of "My lodging is on the cold ground."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> That true gentleman, Evelyn, is bitter against "Mrs. Nellie, as they called an impudent comedian." See his "Memoirs."

Nelly, who was called the "poor man's friend" was literally a general favourite, and not undeservedly; for bred as she had been, as an orange-girl, amidst the haunts of dissipation, vice was more her destiny than her blame. She was really a good-hearted woman, and in the days of her prosperity showed herself grateful to her old friends, among whom she had the honour of ranking Otway and Dryden. She was faithful to the King, never pestered him about politics, and was never the creature of Ministers. Once when Charles had ordered an extravagant service of plate, as a present to the Duchess of Portsmouth, from a jeweller in Cheapside, an immense crowd collected about the shop, cursing the Duchess, and wishing that the plate were melted and poured down her throat. But they added, "What a pity it should not be bestowed on Madam Ellen!" The mistaken tradition of Ellen Gwynne founding Chelsea Hospital probably arose from her character of benevolence, as well as from her frequently visiting Chelsea, where her mother lived many years, and where the old woman died, in consequence of falling one day into the Thames, when looking out of her window. What had made her top-heavy is not recorded.—*Thomas Campbell.*

I have seen in my time at least fifty portraits of Nell Gwynne, of all sizes and complexions, black, brown, and fair. It may be well to inform the proprietors of these *soi-disant* Nell Gwynnes, that the real Nell Gwynne (and we know but of one) was a little, sprightly, fair-haired woman, with laughing blue eyes; round, but beautiful face, and a turned-up nose. I have met but with one portrait answering this description, and having therefore some pretensions to authenticity. It is in the possession of General Grosvenor, and is the original of the well-known print by Thane.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826.<sup>1</sup>

She was low in stature, and what the French call *mignonne* and *piquante*, well-formed, handsome, but red-haired, and rather

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<sup>1</sup> The "initiated" will not require to be told the reason of my copious transcriptions from the early numbers of the *New Monthly Magazine*. But there are others who might demand a reason; to them I reply, that among the contributors to that magazine during the years in which it will be found quoted, were Theodore Hook, Thomas Hood, Judge Talfourd, Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Poole, the author of "Paul Pry," O'Keefe, the "Stage Veteran," Leigh Hunt, Thomas Campbell, Cyrus Redding, and many others whose names are intimately associated with the dramatic literature of their time.—ED.

*embonpoint*; of the *enjoué* she was a complete mistress. Airy, fantastic, and sprightly, she sang, danced, and was exactly made for acting light, showy characters, filling them up, as far as they went, most effectually. On the front of Bagnigge Wells, one of her country houses, where she entertained the King with concerts, there was a bust of her, and though it was wretchedly executed, it confirmed the correctness of Lely's pencil. She had remarkably lively eyes, but so small they were almost invisible when she laughed; and a foot, the least of any woman in England.—*The Manager's Note-Book.*

Poor Nell Gwynne, in a quarrel with one of the Marshalls, who reproached her with being the mistress of Lord Buckhurst, said she was mistress but of one man at a time, though she had been brought up in a bad house, "to fill strong waters to the gentlemen;" whereas her rebuker, though a clergyman's daughter, was the mistress of three. This celebrated actress, who was as excellent in certain giddy parts of comedy as she was inferior in tragedy, was small of person, but very pretty, with a good-humoured face, and eyes that winked when she laughed. She is the ancestress of the ducal family of St. Albans, who are thought to have retained more of the look and complexion of Charles II. than any other of his descendants. Beauclerc, Johnson's friend, was like him; and the black complexion is still in vigour. The King recommended her to his brother with his last breath, begging him not to let poor Nelly starve. Burnet says she was first introduced to the King by Buckingham to supplant the Duchess of Cleveland; but others tell us he first noticed her in consequence of a hat of the circumference of a coach-wheel, in which Dryden made her deliver a prologue, as a set-off to an enormous hat of Pistol's at the other house, and which convulsed the spectators with laughter. If Nelly retained a habit of swearing, which was probably taught her when a child (and it is clear enough from Pepys that she did), the poets did not discourage her. One of her epilogues by Dryden began in the following startling manner:—

"Hold, are you mad, you d—, confounded dog?  
I am to rise and speak the epilogue!"

Leigh Hunt, "*The Town.*"

## Thomas Britton.

1650-1714.

(The Musical Small-coal Man.)

It had always been a custom to entertain companies at private houses with minstrelsy, but music in parts being now brought to great perfection, concerts were set forward, to no great effect however, till a man of the name of Britton, a most singular instance of natural endowment, who attained to perfection in everything he studied, and who seems to have had a most scientific mind, established, under very forbidding circumstances, a regular concert. This Britton, a small-coal man, in an obscure part of the town, in a room without ornament or accommodation, and more like a prison than a receptacle for decent auditors, attracted all the fashion of the age, who flocked regularly every week to taste a delight of which the English were now so particularly fond that it was considered as vulgar then not to have attended Britton's concert as it would be now not to have heard Banti.—*C. Dibdin.*

The eccentric Thomas Britton, better known by the name of the "Musical Small-coal Man," though living in an old and ruinous house in Aylesbury-street, Clerkenwell, attracted as polite an audience to his concerts as ever frequented the opera. The ceiling of the room in which his concert was held was so low that a tall man could scarcely stand erect in it, the staircase was outside the house, and could scarcely be ascended without crawling; yet ladies of the first rank in the kingdom forgot the difficulty with which they ascended the steps in the pleasure of Britton's concert, which was attended by the most distinguished professors. Of the origin of Britton's concert, we have an account written by a near neighbour of his, the facetious Ned Ward, the author of the "London Spy," and many doggerel verses, who at that time kept a public-house in Clerkenwell. In one of his publications, entitled "Satirical Reflections on Clubs," he has bestowed a whole chapter on the Small-coal man's club. He says, "The club was first begun, or at least confirmed, by Sir Roger L'Estrange, a very musical gentleman, who had a tolerable perfection on the bass viol." Ward further says, "that the attachment of Sir Roger and other ingenious gentlemen, lovers



of the muses, to Britton, arose from the profound regard he had in general to all manner of literature ; that the prudence of his deportment to his betters procured him great respect ; and that men of the greatest wit, as well as some of the highest quality, honoured his musical society with their company." Britton was indeed so much distinguished that when passing along the streets in his blue linen frock, and with his sack of small-coal on his back, he was frequently accosted with such expressions as these : "There goes the famous small-coal man, who is a lover of learning, a performer of music, and a companion for gentlemen."—*Percy Anecdotes*.

## William Mountford.<sup>1</sup>

1660–1692.

The characters supported by Mountford pertain almost altogether to an obsolete theatrical repertory. He flourished in days when the ranting tragedies of Nat Lee, the jingling plays of Dryden, the ribald comedies of Mrs. Behn, Etherege, and others, held firm possession of the stage. In Mountford's list of characters appears *Macduff*, played probably to the *Macbeth* of Betterton ; but there is no evidence of his having sustained any other Shaksperian part. His most important tragic characters seem to have been *Alexander* and *Castalio* in Otway's tragedy of the "Orphan." Cibber highly applauds

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<sup>1</sup> Mountford was murdered by Captain Hill. The actor used to play *Alexander* to Mrs. Bracegirdle's *Statira*, which made Hill, who was Mrs. Bracegirdle's unaccepted lover, jealous. The Captain and Lord Mohun having failed to abduct Mrs. Bracegirdle, Hill swore he would be revenged on Mountford. He met him in the street, and boxed the actor's ear. Mountford, with an oath, demanded to know "what that was for?" Upon this (according to Mountford's dying statement), Hill drew his sword and ran it through the actor's body. Hill fled ; Lord Mohun, who was concerned, was tried for his life, but acquitted on insufficient evidence. A full account of this broil will be found in Leigh Hunt's "Town."

In the "Records of a Stage Veteran" is the following:—"It was remembered by old actors as a tradition current sixty years ago, that the motive for the murder of Mountford was not jealousy of Mrs. Bracegirdle's attachment to him, but revenge for his having gained and betrayed the affections of a lady of exceedingly high rank in this country, and that one of the children whom Mrs. Mountford brought up as her own, was in fact the fruits of the amour in question. That child was living in 1730, yet Cibber, who speaks at length of Mountford, does not allude to it."—ED.

his *Sparkish*, in Wycherley's "Country Wife," as an evidence of the variety of his genius. In this part he is said to have entirely changed himself, and at once thrown off the man of sense for the brisk, vain, rude, and lively coxcomb, the false, flashy pretender to wit, and the dupe of his own sufficiency. His excellence in *Sir Courtly Nice*, in Crowne's comedy of that name, is reputed to have been still greater.—*Dutton Cook*.

Mountford has a very warm character given of him by those who knew him. His person was very fine and his voice melodious and winning. Steed used to compare him to Barry, but considered him as a superior actor, for that he was equally excellent when as the conqueror of the world he sued to *Statira* for pardon, and when in *Mirabel* he gave additional brilliancy to the *bon-mots* of Congreve. He is said to have had so much in him of the agreeable, that when he played Mrs. Behn's<sup>1</sup> dissolute character of the *Rover*, it was remarked by many, and particularly by Queen Mary, that it was dangerous to see him act, he made vice so alluring.—*C. Dibdin*.

Mr. William Mountford was accounted an excellent comedian; and Mr. Wilks often confessed he was the glass he ever adjusted himself by.—*Chetwood*.

## Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle.

1663-1748.

It is a funny trait of the sword-wearers that they could extol the virtue which they had ineffectually attempted to destroy. We see this in the case of Mrs. Bracegirdle, that Diana of the stage, before whom Congreve and Lord Lovelace, at the head of a troop of bodkined fops, worshipped in vain. The noblest of the troop, and it reckoned the Dukes of Devonshire and Dorset, the Earl of Halifax, and half a dozen delegates from

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Behn, variously called *Astrea* (by Pope), *Aphara* (by Langbaine), and *Aphra* (by her friends), and who died in 1689, was the writer of seventeen plays and several novels, on one of which Thomas Southerne founded his play (famous in its age) of "*Oroonoko*." She was a woman of genius, but in her morals and writings licentious beyond the privileges of description. This was the lady who in a dedication told Nell Gwynne, that "so excellent and perfect a creature as yourself differs only from the divine powers in this: the offerings made to you ought to be worthy of you, whilst they accept the will alone."—ED.

each rank of the peerage amongst its members, were wont at the coffee-house and over a bottle, to extol the Gibraltar-like virtue, if I may so speak, of this incomparable woman. "Come," said Halifax, "you are always praising the virtue; why don't you reward the lady who will not sell it? I propose a subscription, and there are two hundred guineas, *pour encourager les autres.*" Four times that amount was raised, and with it the nobles, with their swords in their hands, waited on Mrs. Bracegirdle, who accepted their testimonial, as it was intended, in honour of her virtue. What should we now think if——? But this is a delicate matter, and I might make a mistake. I will only add therefore, that had Mrs. Bracegirdle been rewarded for her charity, the recompense would have been at least as appropriate. For it *is* true of her, that when the poor saw her they blessed her, and we may add, she richly merited the well-earned benedictions.—*Dr. Doran.*

Her fascination was such that it was the fashion among the gay and young to have a *taste* or *tendre* for Mrs. Bracegirdle. From the important characters that were entrusted to her in tragedy, it is presumed that she was a good tragic actress;<sup>1</sup> but Cibber does not say so; and her chief charm seems to have lain in the lighter drama.—*Thomas Campbell.*

She was of a lovely height, with dark brown hair and eyebrows, black sparkling eyes, and a fresh, blushy complexion; and whenever she exerted herself, had an involuntary flushing in her breast, neck, and face, having continually a cheerful aspect, and a fine set of even white teeth: never making an exit but that she left the audience in an imitation of her pleasant countenance.—*Aston.*

She inspired the best authors to write for her; and two of them (Rowe and Congreve) when they gave her a lover in a play, seemed palpably to plead their own passions and make their private court to her in fictitious characters.—*Colley Cibber.*

It was said of her that in the crowded theatre she had as many lovers as she had male spectators. Yet no lover, however rich, however high in rank, had prevailed on her to be his mistress. Those who are acquainted with the parts which she

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<sup>1</sup> Garrick used to say that he once heard her repeat some lines from Shakspeare in a way that convinced him her reputation was wholly undeserved.—ED.

was in the habit of saying, and with the epilogue, which it was her special business to recite, will not give her credit for any extraordinary measure of virtue or delicacy. She seems to have been a cold, vain, interested coquette, who perfectly understood how much the influence of her charms was increased by the fame of a severity which cost her nothing, and who could venture to flirt with a succession of admirers in the just confidence that no flame which she might kindle in them would thaw her own ice.—*Macaulay*.

Mrs. Bracegirdle seems to have been the first actress who succeeded in establishing anything like a reputation for private worth and propriety of conduct. Mrs. Bracegirdle's career, if not wholly unimpeachable, presented an approximation to virtuous living,<sup>1</sup> worthy, all the circumstances of her case being considered, of very high praise. Cibber, who wrote in the lady's lifetime, was her old friend and playfellow, and, it may be supposed, was unlikely to give her needless offence, says, somewhat reservedly, that she was not unguarded in her private character. But he hastens to add that this discretion contributed not a little to make her the darling of the theatre—for, although she was a sort of universal passion, scarce an audience that saw her being less than half of them her lovers, without a suspected favourite among them, and although under the highest temptation, her constancy in resisting them served but to increase the number of her admirers.—*Dutton Cook*.

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<sup>1</sup> How an "approximation to virtuous living" can be worthy of high praise is not readily seen. Degrees of virtue are surely inadmissible in a female. Either a woman is virtuous or she is not. It is admitted that Mrs. Bracegirdle was not virtuous. For what, then, was she deserving of high praise? You may qualify your censure in proportion to a woman's behaviour of immorality; but you cannot surely *praise* her for any semblance of decency with which she may choose to mask her immorality. Contemporary testimony seems to point out Mrs. Bracegirdle as Congreve's mistress, and the conjecture, if conjecture it be, seems strengthened by the poet's legacy of 200*l.* Bellchamber, in his edition of Cibber, considers her to have been Congreve's mistress, and pronounces her intrigue with Mountford indisputable. Macaulay, in his essays, strongly inclines to this opinion. In Spence's Anecdotes, Dr. Young is made to say, "Congreve was very intimate with Mrs. Bracegirdle, and lived in the same street, his house very near hers, until his acquaintance with the young Duchess of Marlborough. *He then quitted that house.*" And Nicholas Rowe, in a copy of verses, exhorts Lord Scarsdale to

"Publicly espouse the dame,  
And say, confound the town."—ED.

Captain Hill, smitten with the charms of the beautiful Mrs. Bracegirdle, and anxious to marry her at all hazards, determined to carry her off, and for this purpose hired a hackney-coach with six horses, and a half-dozen of soldiers to aid him in the storm. The coach with a pair of horses (the four leaders being in waiting elsewhere) took its station opposite my Lord Craven's house in Drury Lane, by which door Mrs. Bracegirdle was to pass on her way from the theatre. As she passed, in company of her mamma and a friend, Mr. Page, the captain seized her by the hand, the soldiers hustled Mr. Page, and attacked him sword in hand, and Captain Hill and his noble friend (Lord Mohun) endeavoured to force Madam Bracegirdle into the coach. Mr. Page called for help; the population of Drury Lane rose; it was impossible to effect the capture; and bidding the soldiers go about their business and the coach to drive off, Hill let go of his prey sulkily, and he waited for other opportunities of revenge.—*Thackeray*.

Mrs. Bracegirdle—a name that has always been mentioned with great respect, both on account of her public merit and her private virtues—rendered herself a valuable ornament to the theatre and to society. She had many admirers, and authors, when they have vied with each other in scenes of tenderness, are said to have written them only to make their court to her. As to her acting, both authors and performers courted the assistance of her talents, which were universal. She equally delighted in melting tenderness and playful coquetry, in *Statira* or *Millamant*, and even at an advanced age, when she played *Angelica* in “Love for Love,” for Betterton's benefit, she retained all her powers of pleasing.—*C. Dibdin*.

## Benjamin Johnson.

1665-1742.

Benjamin Johnson, commonly called Ben Johnson, was bred a painter, where his employment led him to paint under his master the scenes for the stage; but he took more pleasure in hearing the actors rehearse than in his pencil or colours; and as he used to say in his merry mood, “Left the saint's occupation to take that of a sinner.” He arrived to as great a perfection in acting as his namesake did in poetry. He seemed to be proud to wear that eminent poet's double name, being more

particularly great in all that author's plays that were usually performed—viz., *Wasp* in the play of "Bartholomew Fair," *Corbaccio* in the "Fox," *Morose* in the "Silent Woman," and *Ananias* in the "Alchemist."—*Chetwood*.

Ben Johnson excelled greatly in all his namesake's comedies, then frequently acted. He was of all comedians, the chastest and closest observer of nature. Johnson never seemed to know that he was before an audience; he drew his character as the poet designed it. To form some idea of Johnson, the reader must call to mind the simplicity of Weston.—*T. Davies*.

## Henry Norris.<sup>1</sup>

1665-1734.

This natural comedian was born in Salisbury Court, near the spot where the theatre was afterwards erected that went by the name of Dorset Garden Theatre. . . . Though a diminutive figure, there were many parts that he excelled in—viz., *Barnaby Brittle* in the "Wanton Life," &c. I remember when Mr. Norris was in his decline, Mr. Cibber senior made some alterations in the play and performed the part himself; Mrs. Oldfield that of *Mrs. Brittle*. But she complained that she could not perform it with that spirit with him as she did with little Norris, as she called him. When I asked her the reason, she replied, "Cuckoldom did not sit so easy on Cibber's figure as it did upon that of Norris, who seemed formed by nature to be one." The mother of this little great comedian was one of the first women that came on the stage as an actress; for some time after the restoration of King Charles II., young, smooth-faced men performed the women's parts. That humorous monarch coming before his usual time to Shakspeare's "Hamlet," sent the facetious Earl of Rochester to know the reason of their delay, who brought word back that "the queen was not quite shaved." "Ods fish!" (his usual exclamation) "I beg her majesty's pardon; we'll wait till her barber has done with her." . . . Mr. Norris spoke tragedy exceedingly knowing in the different passions, though he never performed any part in the serious cast; for notwithstanding his judgment, on the London theatres

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<sup>1</sup> He was known by the nickname of "Jubilee Dicky."

his figure must have made the sentiments ridiculous.—*Chetwood*.<sup>1</sup>

Norris,<sup>2</sup> whose mother was the earliest English actress, must have been, as well as Nokes, an actor like Weston. Unconscious himself that he did anything more than utter, his audiences were constantly in a roar. In all characters of inveterate simplicity, he was exactly what he represented.—*C. Dibdin*.

[The following actors belong to this period. They were all distinguished for their various excellences; but in comparison with others who were their contemporaries, such few testimonies to their abilities have been transmitted, that it has been thought best to group them in the following order:—]

HART'S first appearance was at the Red Bull Theatre in 1659. "The best compliment ever known to have been paid to Hart," says Leigh Hunt, "is an anecdote recorded of Betterton. Betterton acted *Alexander* after Hart's time; and 'being at a loss,' says Davies, 'to recover a particular emphasis of that performer which gave a force to some interesting situation of the part, he applied for information to the players who stood near him. At last one of the lowest of the company repeated the line exactly in Hart's key. Betterton thanked him heartily, and put a piece of money into his hand, as a reward for so acceptable a service.' Hart had the reputation of being the first lover of Nell Gwynne, and one of the hundreds of the

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<sup>1</sup> Chetwood was for many years prompter of Drury-lane. To his little work on the stage, which is full of anecdote, besides containing many interesting memoirs of actors of whom nothing would be otherwise known, "all those," says Dibdin, "who have written on the subject of the stage have been materially indebted."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> There was another Norris, an actor who died in 1776, and of whom, or rather of whose widow, who became Mrs. Barry, the following singular story is told:—"Twelve years after Norris's death, Mrs. Barry was acting in the town in which he died the character of *Calista* in the 'Fair Penitent.' In the last act of the tragedy, where *Calista* lays her hand upon the skull, she was suddenly seized with an involuntary shuddering; she fainted, and was taken to her lodgings; during the night her illness increased, and on the following day, recovering her senses, she anxiously asked whence the skull had been procured which had been used on the preceding night. Upon inquiry, the sexton told her it was the skull of a Mr. Norris, an actor, who was buried in the corner of the churchyard. It proved to be her husband. The shock killed her; she died six weeks afterwards." This story is given by Oxberry.—ED.

Duchess of Cleveland." In Pepys's "Diary" the reader will find frequent mention of Hart.

MICHAEL MOHUN (or Moone, as Pepys writes his name) "appears," we are told, to have excelled in the ferocious parts of tragedy. Little is known of this actor, who was, however, held in great estimation by his contemporaries.

SANDFORD, according to Charles Dibdin, "is supposed to have been the completest and most natural performer of a villain that ever existed. One would think, had it been possible that Shakspeare, when he made *King John* excuse his intention of perpetrating the death of *Arthur*, by his comments on *Hubert's* face, by which he saw the assassin in his mind, had Sandford in idea, for he was rather deformed, and had a most forbidding countenance. The town, therefore, though the private character of this actor was perfectly amiable, could not endure him in any part in which there was the remotest similitude to honour or fair dealing."

NOKES is described as an actor "of so plain and palpable a simplicity, so perfectly his own, that he was as diverting in his common speech as on the stage. It is told of him that a nobleman hearing him relate to the performers behind the scenes a conversation that he had been witness of the day before, asked if he was repeating a new part. Nokes, it is said, was so perfectly original, that Estcourt, with all those powers of mimicry for which he was so famous, could not catch the slightest glimpse of him."

JOHN LEIGH, who was born in 1689, and died in 1726, is praised as "having been fraught with humour of a luxuriant kind. He was full of variety, and perfectly just to whatever character he represented." UNDERHILL, of whom Tom Davies has written, "was something," says Dibdin, "between Nokes and Leigh. He was true to nature in his acting both from adventitious endowments and good sense. He performed those parts which, though they are considered secondary in plays, require very frequently more judgment than those which are called principal."

GOODMAN, the comedian, who left the stage towards the close of the seventeenth century, was originally a Cambridge student, celebrated for his extravagance in dress, and for his being expelled for cutting and defacing the picture of the Duke of Monmouth, Chancellor of the University. He took to the stage, and was successful; but his salary was not sufficient to



enable him to dress as he liked, and consequently he "was compelled," as he himself said, "to take the air." The light comedian, when the play was over, mounted a horse, turned highwayman, and was brought thereby so near to the gallows, that it was only the sign-manual of James II. that saved his neck. The famous Duchess of Cleveland—"my Duchess," as Goodman used to call her—ought not to have left her handsome favourite in such a mean condition. His condition was so mean that he and a fellow comedian, named Griffin, lived in one room, shared the same bed, and had but one shirt between them. This they wore alternately. It happened that one of them had to pay a visit to a lady, and wished to wear the shirt out of his turn; and this wish so enraged the other, that a fierce battle ensued, which ended, like many other battles, in the destruction of the prize contended for, and the mutual damage of the combatants.—*Dr. Doran.*

He was one of the Alexanders of his time, but does not appear to have been a great actor. He was a dashing, impudent fellow, who boasted of his having taken "an airing" on the road to recruit his purse.<sup>1</sup> He was expelled from Cambridge for cutting and defacing the portrait of the Duke of Monmouth, Chancellor of the University, but not loyal enough to his father to please Goodman. James II. pardoned the loyal highwayman, which Goodman (in Cibber's hearing) said, "was doing him so particular an honour, that no man could wonder if his acknowledgment had carried him a little further than ordinary in the interest of that prince. But as he had lately been out of luck in backing his old master, he had now no way to get home the life he was out, upon his account, but by being under the same obligations to King William." The meaning of this is understood to be that Goodman offered to assassinate William, in consequence of his having had a pardon from James; but the plot not succeeding, he turned king's evidence against James, in order to secure a pardon from William. This "pretty fellow" was lately so easy in his circumstances, owing it is supposed to the delicate Cleveland, that he used to say he would never act *Alexander*

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<sup>1</sup> When Cibber was told, on his salary being reduced, that he had even then more than Goodman received, who was a better actor: "That may be," said Cibber, "but you will please to recollect that Goodman was forced to go upon the highway for a livelihood."—ED.

*the Great* but when he was certain that his "Duchess" would be in the box to see him.—*Leigh Hunt*.<sup>1</sup>

[Among other actors of this period were Keen, Griffith, Brown, Cross, and Trefusis, all spoken of as respectable, and even eminent in their different walks.]

## Richard Estcourt.

1668-1713.

Estcourt, the comedian—or mimic rather—for like most players who devote themselves to mimickry, which is a kind of caricature portrait-painting, his comedy, or general humour, was inferior to it. He was, however, a man of wit as well as a mimic; and in spite of a talent which seldom renders men favourites in private, was so much regarded that when the Beefsteak Club was set up (which a late author says must not be confounded with the Beefsteak Club held in Covent Garden Theatre and the Lyceum<sup>2</sup>), Estcourt was appointed *provveditore*, or caterer, and presented, as a badge of distinction, with a small gridiron of gold, which he wore about his neck fastened to a green ribbon. He is said at one time to have been a tavern-keeper, in which quality (unless it was in the other) Parnell speaks of him in the beginning of one of his poems:—

“ Gay Bacchus liking Estcourt’s wine,  
A noble meal bespoke us.”

*Leigh Hunt.*

Cibber says, Estcourt was so amazing and extraordinary a mimic, that no man nor woman, from the coquette to the privy councillor, ever moved or spoke before him, that he would not carry their voice, look, mien, and motion into another company. But this, however, was the boundary of his merit; and though he is said to have written notes on the part of

<sup>1</sup> The reader will compare Hunt’s account of Goodman’s “circumstances” with Dr. Doran’s.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Lambert, the scene-painter, when preparing his designs for a pantomime or new spectacle, would often take his chop or steak cooked on the German stove rather than quit his occupation for the superior accommodation of a neighbouring tavern. Certain of his visitors, men of taste, struck with the novelty of the thing, perhaps, or tempted by the savoury dish, took a knife and fork with Lambert, and enjoyed the treat. Hence the origin of the Beefsteak Club.—*Wine and Walnuts.*

*Falstaff*, describing the true spirit of the humour, and the tone, look, and gesture with which it ought to be delivered; yet when he came on the stage there was a flatness and insipidity in his acting that showed he could greatly conceive, but had not the power to execute.—*C. Dibdin.*

The best man that I know of for heightening the revel-gaiety of a company is Estcourt, whose jovial humour diffuses itself from the highest person at an entertainment to the meanest waiter.<sup>1</sup> Merry tales, accompanied with apt gestures and lively representations of circumstances and persons, beguile the gravest mind into a consent to be as humorous as himself. Add to this, that when a man is in his good grace, he has a mimicry that does not debase the person he represents, but which, taking from the gravity of the character, adds to the agreeableness of it. This pleasant fellow gives one some idea of the ancient Pantomime, who is said to have given the audience in dumb show an exact idea of any character or passion, or an intelligible relation of any publick occurrence, with no other expression than that of his looks and gestures.—*Sir Richard Steele.*

Richard Estcourt, born at Tewkesbury in 1688, and educated in the Latin school there, stole from home at the age of fifteen to join a travelling company of comedians at Worcester, and, to avoid detection, made his first appearance in women's clothes as *Roxana*, in "Alexander the Great." He was discovered, however, pursued, brought home, carried to London, and bound apprentice to an apothecary in Hatton-garden. He escaped again, wandered about England, went to Ireland, and there obtained credit as an actor; then returned to London, and appeared at Drury-lane, where his skill as a mimic enabled him to perform each part in the manner of the actor who had obtained chief credit by it. His power of mimicry made him very diverting in society; and as he had natural politeness with a sprightly wit, his company was sought and paid for at the entertainments of the great. "Dick Estcourt" was a great favourite with the Duke of Marlborough, and when men of wit and rank joined in establishing the Beef-steak Club, they made Estcourt their *providore*, with a small gold gridiron for badge, hung round his neck by a green ribbon.

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<sup>1</sup> He was the author of a comedy called "The Fair Example," and an interlude, "Prunella."—*ED.*

Estcourt was a writer for the stage, as well as an actor.—*Henry Morley.*

Mr. Estcourt was the original *Sergeant Kite*, and every night of performance entertained the audience with a variety of little catches and flights of humour, that pleased all but his critics. He was a great favourite with the late Duke of Marlborough, whose fame he celebrated in several out-of-the-way witty ballads. He was author of a comedy called "The Wife's Excuse; or, Cuckolds Make Themselves," and acted at the Theatre Royal in the year 1706; but, as I have been informed, with moderate success. Another little piece was produced by him called "Prunella," a burlesque upon the Italian operas then stole into fashion, too much supported by the excellent voice and judgment of Mrs. Tofts.<sup>1</sup>—*Chetwood's "Stage."*

### George Powell.

1669–1714.

He was a good actor, spoilt by intemperance, who came upon the stage sometimes warm with Nantz brandy, and courted his heroines so furiously that Sir John Vanbrugh said they were almost in danger of being conquered on the spot. His last new part of any note was, in 1713, *Portius* in Addison's "Cato." He lived on for a few wretched months, lost to the public but much sought by sheriffs' officers.—*Henry Morley.*

The warm and passionate parts of tragedy are always the most taking with the audience; for which reason we often see the players pronouncing in all the violence of action several parts of the tragedy which the author writ with great temper, and designed that they should have been so acted. I have seen Powell very often raise himself a loud clap by this artifice.—*Addison.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Tofts, a famous singer of her day, was the daughter of a person in the family of Bishop Burnet. In 1709 she quitted the stage mad, but recovered, and married Mr. Smith. Her madness, however, returned, taking the form of identifying herself with the Royal heroines whom she had personated. She died 1758.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> To this is appended the following apologetic note:—"Having spoken of Mr. Powell as sometimes raising himself applause from the ill taste of an audience, I must do him the justice to own that he is excellently formed for a tragedian, and, when he pleases, deserves the admiration of the best judges."—*The Spectator*, No. 40.

Powell, who was added to the company<sup>1</sup> soon after its union, felt an early ambition to perform capital parts; and when Rich quarrelled with his actors, and Betterton had it in his idea to leave him, with the utmost presumption Powell agreed to accept of his characters, some of which he took possession of, and almost the whole of Mountford's.<sup>2</sup>—*C. Dibdin.*

Mr. George Powell, a reputable actor with many excellencies, gave out that he would perform the part of *Sir John Falstaff* in the manner of that very excellent English Roscius, Mr. Betterton. He certainly hit his manner and tone of voice; yet to make the picture more like, he mimicked the infirmities of distemper, old age, and the afflicting pains of the gout which that great man was often seized with.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

### Mrs. Susannah Mountford.

1669-1701.

Mrs. Mountford during her last years became deranged, but as her disorder was not outrageous, she was not placed under any rigorous confinement, but was suffered to walk about her house. One day, in a lucid interval, she asked what play was to be performed that evening, and was told it was to be "Hamlet." Whilst she was on the stage she had acted *Ophelia* with great applause; the recollection struck her, and with all that cunning which is so frequently allied to insanity, she found means to elude the care of her attendants, and got to the theatre, where, concealing herself till the scene where *Ophelia* was to make her appearance in her mad state, she pushed upon the stage before the person appointed to play the character, and exhibited a representation of it that astonished the performers as well as the audience. She exhausted her vital powers in this effort, was taken home, and died soon after.—*Genest's "Account of the English Stage."*

Mrs. Mountford was a capital stage coquette, besides being able to act male coxcombs and country dowdies.—*Leigh Hunt.*

*Melantha* is as finished an impertinent as ever fluttered in a

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, the King's Company.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> There was another Powell, a contemporary of George Powell, who was a deformed cripple, and who achieved some celebrity as a puppet-showman. Steele has written of him in the *Spectator*.—ED.

drawing-room, and seems to contain the most complete system of female foppery that could possibly be crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. Her language, dress, motion, manners, soul and body, are in a continual hurry to do something more than is necessary or commendable. And though I doubt it will be a vain labour to offer you a just likeness of Mrs. Mountford's action, yet the fantastic impression is still so strong in my memory that I cannot help saying something, though fantastically, about it. The first ridiculous airs that break from her, are upon a gallant never seen before, who delivers her a letter from her father, recommending him to her good graces, as an honourable lover. Here now, one would think, she might naturally show a little of the sex's decent reserve, though never so slightly covered. No, sir, not a tittle of it; modesty is the virtue of a poor-souled country gentlewoman; she is too much a court lady to be under so vulgar a confusion: she reads the letter therefore with a careless dropping lip, and an erected brow, humming it hastily over as if she were impatient to outgo her father's commands, by making a complete conquest of him at once; and that the latter might not embarrass her attack, crack! she scrambles it at once into her palm, and pours upon him her whole artillery of airs, eyes, and motion; down goes her dainty diving body to the ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious load of her own attractions; then launches into a flood of fine language and compliment, still playing her chest forward in fifty falls and risings, like a swan upon waving water; and to complete her impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own wit, that she will not give her lover leave to praise it; silent assenting bows and vain endeavours to speak are all the share of the conversation he is admitted to: which at last he is relieved from by her engagements to half a score visits, which she swims from him to make, with a promise to return in a twinkling.—*Colley Cibber.*

It is supposed that no actress ever performed so variously as Mrs. Mountford. She had every species of native humour at command; she was equally natural in characters of high and low life, and would with the same ease and fidelity personate an affected coquette in a drawing-room, and a dowdy in a cottage; to all which she added the talents of being a most inimitable mimic, and is said to have played *Bayes*<sup>1</sup> in the

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<sup>1</sup> The name of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, demands cordial

“Rehearsal,” upon a particular occasion, probably a benefit, with more variety than had ever been thrown into it before.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Robert Wilks.

1670-1732.

A man who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered for his virtues, which are not often to be found in the world, and perhaps less often in his profession than in others.<sup>1</sup>—*Dr. Johnson.*

mention by every writer on the stage. Whatever we may think of him as a man—and as a man it would be difficult to speak of him in terms sufficiently condemnatory—high praise is due to him as a writer. He lived in an age when plays were chiefly written in rhyme, which served as a vehicle for foaming sentiments, clouded by hyperbole, the whole informed with a kind of hydrophobic madness. The dramas of Lee and Settle offer but a scanty illustration of the general quality of the plays of that epoch, made up of blatant couplets that emptily thundered through five long acts. To explode an unnatural custom by ridiculing it, was Buckingham’s design in the “Rehearsal,” though in doing this the gratification of private dislike was a greater stimulus than the wish to promote the public good. Settle’s plays are more meaningless than Crowne’s, Howard’s, and Dryden’s; yet Buckingham would patronize Settle at the same time that he was ridiculing in the others Settle’s conspicuous defect. Still the “Rehearsal” did good; for though it did not immediately achieve its end, it cleared the way for reform. And it is due to Buckingham to say that though his sentiments were largely shared in even by those whom he attacked, he stood alone in his resolution to effect a reformation in the drama.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, in this commendation, particularly refers to Wilks’s treatment of Savage. But Savage was not the only man who enjoyed Wilks’s bounty. “Smith,” says Dibdin, “was designed for the Church; but finding it impossible to become an orator from an impediment in his speech, he was determined to turn his thoughts to some other profession, and upon considering the matter every way, at last thought physic the best choice he could possibly make. To furnish himself with the means of prosecuting his studies, he wrote a play called “The Captive Princess.” It was refused by the actors; but Wilks, entering into the spirit of Smith’s intention, offered him a benefit, which he rendered so profitable that it enabled his friend to enter himself at Leyden, where he applied to the study of physic so diligently that Dr. Boerhaave recommended him to the Czarina, who made him one of the physicians of the Russian Court.”—*History of the Stage.* Wilks was equally generous to Farquhar, the dramatist. Reduced to extreme indigence in his last days, Farquhar, from his death-bed, sent Wilks the following letter:—“Dear Bob, —I have not anything to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls; look upon them sometimes, and think of him who was to the last moment of his life thine. G. Farquhar.” Wilks at once set to work procuring benefits for

Wilks the actor was the greater ruler in matters of dress about this time. He was exceedingly simple in his tastes off the stage, but he was the best-dressed man upon it; and what he adopted was universally followed. An eminent critic writing of this actor in 1729, says, "Whatever he did on the stage, let it be ever so trifling—whether it consisted in putting on his gloves, or taking out his watch, lolling on his cane, or taking snuff—every movement was marked by such an ease of breeding and manner, everything told so strongly the involuntary motion of a gentleman, that it was impossible to consider the character he represented in any other light than that of reality; but what was still more surprising, that person who could thus delight an audience from the gaiety and sprightliness of his manner, I met the next day in the street hobbling to a hackney-coach, seemingly so enfeebled by age and infirmities that I could scarcely believe him to be the same man." This splendid dresser exercised charity in a questionably liberal manner. He was a father to orphans, and left his widow with scarcely enough to find herself in cotton gowns.—*Dr. Doran.*

In "Rule a Wife," the old stage critics delighted in the *Copper Captain*; it was the test for every comedian. It could be worked on like a picture and new readings given. Here it was admitted that Wilks was unrivalled.—*Fitzgerald.*

Wilks has a singular talent in representing the graces of nature: Cibber the deformity in the affectation of them. Were I a writer of plays, I should never employ either of them in parts which had not their bent this way. This is seen in the inimitable strain and run of good humour which is kept up in the character of *Wildair*, and in the nice and delicate abuse of understanding in that of *Sir Novelty*. Cibber in another light hits exquisitely the *flat* civility of an affected gentleman usher, and Wilks the easy flatness of a gentleman. . . . To beseech gracefully, to approach respectfully, to pity, to mourn, to love, are the places wherein Wilks may be made to shine with the utmost beauty. To rally pleasantly, to scorn artfully, to flatter, to ridicule, and neglect, are what Cibber would perform with no less excellence.—*Steele.*

Wilks was an Irishman and had never dreamt of being an actor, but had drudged on in the Secretary of State's office, till

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his friend's family. Mention is made, however, of one of Farquhar's daughters being alive in 1764, and having to submit to drudgery for bread.—*ED.*



some private persons gave a play gratis. This play was "Othello," and Wilks acted the Moor, from which moment, though he was conscious how many circumstances he had to struggle against, he determined to quit his situation, by which his successor acquired a fortune of fifty thousand pounds, and attach himself wholly to the stage. With a view of getting at once into fame he came to England, but being neglected for a considerable time returned to Dublin, where, having gained experience, he once more came to England, and an opportunity being now opened to him by Mountford's death of trying his fortune, he began soon to be received by the public as a very sensible if not a very excellent actor. Wilks seems to have had many radical imperfections like Cibber, which he was obliged to soften and conceal by various arts. These arts at last became a standard, and have ever since been resorted to by all those whose merits as actors have been derived from information, understanding, and a strong comprehension of the passions and their motives; but to whom nature has denied either passion, or voice, or some other of those prominent requisites without which an actor with the best conception must have to struggle against the stream.—*C. Dibdin.*

Mr. Wilks's excellence in comedy was never once disputed, but the best judges extol him for the different parts in tragedy, as *Hamlet*, *Castalio* in the "Orphan," *Ziphares* in "Mithridates," *Edgar* in "King Lear," *Norfolk* in the "Albion Queens," *Percy* in "Anna Bullen," *Earl of Essex*, *Shore*, *Macduff*, *Moneses* in "Tamerlane," *Jaffier* in "Venice Preserved," and a countless catalogue of other parts in tragedy which he was allowed to perform in their full perfection. He was not only perfect in every part he acted, but in those that were concerned with him in every scene, which often prevented mistakes.—*Chetwood.*

## Colley Cibber.

1671-1757.

Colley Cibber, sir, was by no means a blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too much, he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled.—*Dr. Johnson.*

As for Cibber himself, taking from his conversation all that he ought not to have said, he was a poor creature. I remem-

ber when he brought me one of his Odes to have my opinion, I could not hear such nonsense, and would not let him read it to the end, so little respect had I for *that great man* (laughing).—*Ibid.*

Macklin says, Nature formed Colley Cibber for a coxcomb ; for though in many respects he was a sensible and observant man, a good performer and a most excellent comic writer, yet his predominant tendency was to be considered among the men as a leader of fashion, among the women as a *beau-garçon*. Hence he excelled in almost the whole range of light fantastic comic characters. His *Lord Foppington* was considered for many years as a model for dress, and that hauteur and non-chalance which distinguished the superior coxcombs of that day. The picture of him in this character, with a stiff embroidered suit of clothes, loaded with the ornaments of rings, muff, clouded cane, and snuff-box, exhibits a good lesson to a modern beau of the versatility and frivolity of fashion.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

Colley Cibber, to the reputation of an approved and successful writer, added the higher character of a distinguished dramatic writer. His merit in both capacities introduced him to persons in high life, and made him free of all gay companies. In his youth he was a man of great levity, and the constant companion of our young noblemen and men of fashion in their hours of dissipation ; Cibber diverted them with his odd sallies of humour and odd vivacities. He had the good fortune, in advanced life, to solace the cares of a great statesman, in his relaxations from business ; Mr. Pelham loved a *tête-à-tête* with Colley Cibber. But an habitual love of play, and a riveted attachment to pleasure, rendered him not so agreeable to persons of a grave turn of mind.—*T. Davies.*

Colley Cibber, one of the earliest of the dramatic autobiographers, is also one of the most amusing. He flourished in wig and embroidery, player, poet, and manager, during the Augustan age of Queen Anne, somewhat earlier and somewhat later. A most egregious fop according to all accounts he was, but a very pleasant one notwithstanding, as your fop of parts is apt to be. Pope gained but little in the warfare he waged with him, for this plain reason, that the great poet accuses his adversary of dulness, which was not by any means one of his sins, instead of selecting one of the numerous faults, such as pertness,

petulance, and presumption, of which he was really guilty.—  
*M. R. Mitford.*

Colley Cibber was extremely haughty as a theatrical manager,<sup>1</sup> and very insolent to dramatists. When he had rejected a play, if the author desired him to point out the particular parts of it which displeased him, he took a pinch of snuff, and answered in general terms, "Sir, there is nothing in it to coerce my passions." Fielding introduces this expression into one of his plays, containing a personal satire upon Colley and his son Theophilus.—*George Colman.*

As to his person, he is straight and well-made; of an open countenance, even free from the conspicuous marks of old age. Meet or follow him, and no person would imagine he ever bore

<sup>1</sup> The history of Drury Lane Theatre, with which the name of Colley Cibber is intimately associated, may be briefly summarized thus:—

1663. On the 8th of April Killigrew opened the theatre which he had built in Drury-lane.

1668. Davenant died. Three years after a new house was opened in Dorset-gardens, Salisbury-square, under the management of Lady Davenant, Sir William's relict. It did not answer.

1672. Drury Lane was burnt. A few months after Killigrew's patent was united to Davenant's patent.

1674. Drury Lane was rebuilt by Sir C. Wren.

1690. Alex. Davenant sold the patent that had been assigned to him in 1689 by Charles Davenant to Christopher Rich, a lawyer, who afterwards took Sir Thomas Skipwith as a partner.

1694. Rich attempted to reduce the salaries of the actors. They seceded, and acted in Tennis-court, Lincoln's-inn-fields.

1707. Drury Lane was closed by order of the Lord Chamberlain.

1710. Collier broke into Drury Lane, ejected Rich, and took possession.

1711. Wilks, Doggett, and Cibber entered into partnership with Collier.

1712. Doggett retired from, and Booth entered into, the partnership.

1714. A life-patent granted to Sir R. Steele. Revoked in 1719.

1747. Garrick became a partner with Lacey.

1774. Lacey died, and Garrick became sole proprietor.

1776. Sheridan, Lindley, and Ford purchased Drury Lane from Garrick.

1783. A patent granted to the three proprietors for twenty-one years, to commence Sept. 2, 1795.

1789. The Drury Lane Theatre about to be taken down, the company played at the King's Theatre, Haymarket.

1794. The new Drury Lane Theatre opened.

1809. Destroyed by fire. The company played at the Lyceum.

1812. Drury Lane opened under the management of Arnold.

the burden of above two-thirds of his years.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage,"* 1749.

Colley Cibber wore the laurel with unblushing front for twenty-seven years, from 1730. His annual birthday and new-year's odes for all that time are treasured in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. They are all so bad that his friends pretended he had made them so on purpose. Dr. Johnson, however, asserted from his personal knowledge of the man that he took great pains with his lyrics, and thought them far superior to Pindar's. His effusions are truly incomparable. Not only are they all bad, but not one of them in twenty-seven years contains a good line. Yet he was, happily for himself, more impenetrable to the gibes of the wits than a buffalo to the stings of mosquitoes. Of the numerous epigrams twanged at him, here is one from the *London Magazine* for 1737:—

“ON SEEING TOBACCO-PIPES LIT WITH ONE OF THE LAUREATE'S ODES.

“While the soft song that warbles George's praise  
From pipe to pipe the living flame conveys;  
Critics, who long have scorn'd, must now admire,  
For who can say his ode now wants its fire?”

*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1848.

Cibber, though he wrote a good comedy, would appear by some accounts of him to have been little more on the stage than a mimic of past actors.—*Leigh Hunt*.

Garrick, when he made one laugh, was not always judicious, though excellent. What idea did his *Sir John Brute* give of a surly husband? His *Bayes* was no less entertaining; but it was a Garreteer-bard. Old Cibber preserved the solemn coxcomb; and was the caricature of a great poet, as the part was designed to be.—*Walpole*.

His treatise on the stage is inimitable.—*Ibid*.

Cibber, with a great stock of levity, vanity, and affectation, had sense, and wit, and humour.—*Warton*.

Cibber was perhaps upon the whole a character of as singular utility to the theatre as any that ever lived; for without any extraordinary inherent genius, by judgment, by art, by ingenuity, and by perseverance, he became eminent as an actor, as an author, and as a manager; and I think it not difficult to pronounce that, in the last capacity, Garrick modelled his conduct

upon Cibber's plan. Conscious of the impossibility of attaining reputation as an author by bold and genuine traits of intuitive genius, he contented himself with keeping within the modesty of nature, and what he lost on the side of fire and spirit he by this means gained on the side of order and morality. Thus, when the *Anathema* of Collier was fulminated against those oaks, Dryden, Congreve, and the rest, Cibber kept himself as inoffensive and secure as that laurel with which he was afterwards so harmlessly adorned.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Thomas Doggett.

. . . . —1721.

When we come to characters directly comical, it is not to be imagined what effect a well-regulated stage would have upon men's manners. The craft of an usurer, the absurdity of a rich fool, the awkward roughness of a fellow of half-courage, the ungraceful mirth of a fellow of half-wit, might be for ever put out of countenance by proper parts for Doggett.—*Sir Richard Steele.*

An excellent comic actor, who was for many years joint manager with Wilks and Cibber . . . and bequeathed the Coat and Badge that are rowed for by Thames watermen every first of August from London Bridge to Chelsea.—*H. Morley.*

Doggett, as we are informed from good and impartial authority, was the most original and strictest observer of nature of all the actors then living. He was ridiculous without impropriety, he had a different look for every different kind of humour; and though he was an excellent mimic, he imitated nothing but nature. In comic songs and dances he was admirable; and if the description of his performance of *Ben*, in "Love for Love," be correct, that part has certainly never been performed since to any degree of perfection. He was a great observer of nature, and particularly delighted in catching the manners in low life, as Congreve is said to have gone to Wapping to write *Ben*, Gay to Newgate to furnish his "Beggars' Opera," or as Swift used to listen for hours to the low Irish; but with all this the acting of Doggett was so chaste, and his manners in private life so well bred, that though he never chose to be the actor anywhere but on the stage, yet his company was warmly sought after by persons of rank and taste.—*Dibdin.*

This truly great comedian was born in Castle-street, Dublin (a circumstance overlooked by the laureate, Cibber). He left his occupation as an actor several years before his death, and in his will bequeathed to Waterman Hall a sum for ever, sufficient to buy a coat and silver badge, to be rowed for on the Thames by prentices every year that have fulfilled their indentures. A humorous poet wrote the following lines on the occasion on a glass window at Lambeth, on August 1st, 1736 :

“ Tom Doggett, the greatest sly drole in his parts,  
 In acting was certain a master of arts.  
 A monument left—no herald is fuller,  
 His praise is sung yearly by many a sculler.  
 Ten thousand years hence, if the world lasts so long,  
 Tom Doggett must still be the theme of their song.”

*Chetwood.*

Doggett, the player, was a man of great humanity, as will appear by this story :—His landlady’s maid having taken an opportunity to go into his chamber one afternoon and cut her throat with one of his razors, of which an account being brought to him behind the scenes the same night, Doggett with great concern and emotion cried out, “ Zounds, I hope it was not with my *best razor*.”—*R. Wewitzer.*

## John Rich.

1681-1761.

When Lun appeared, with matchless art and whim,  
 He gave the power of speech to every limb ;  
 Tho’ mask’d and mute convey’d his quick intent,  
 And told in frolic gestures what he meant :  
 But now the motley coat and sword of wood  
 Require a tongue to make them understood.—*Garrick.*

In gesticulations and humour our Rich appears to have been a complete mimic ; his genius was entirely confined to pantomime, and he had the glory of introducing harlequin<sup>1</sup> on the

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<sup>1</sup> The parti-coloured hero, with every part of his dress, has been drawn out of the great wardrobe of antiquity ; he was a Roman Mime. Harlequin is described with his shaven head, *rasis capitibus* ; his sooty face, *fuligine faciem obducti* ; his flat, unshod feet, *planipedes* ; and his patched coat of many colours, *Mimi centunculo*.—See “ *Curiosities of Literature*.”

English stage, which he played under the feigned name of LUN. He could describe to the audience by his signs and gestures as intelligibly as others could express by words. There is a large caricature print of the triumph which Rich had obtained over the severe muses of tragedy and comedy, which lasted too long not to excite jealousy and opposition from the *corps dramatique*.—*I. D'Israeli*.

The name of Rich should be dear to all pantomime goers; and the rows of little ones that line the front seats at Christmas taught who their benefactor was. There were pantomimes, indeed, before his day, so early as the year 1700; but it was Rich, both as player and writer, who made that sort of piece respectable. It was in 1717 that we find his name conspicuously associated with a *Féerie*, called "Harlequin Executed!" He was a strange being and curious manager, but beyond question the most vivacious and original of harlequins. . . . Rich from some affectation would not appear under his own name, but was always set down in the bills as "Mr. Lun." He was not a little eccentric, and had a dialect of his own, with an odd, blunt, Abernethy manner.—*P. Fitzgerald*.

The poor man's head, which was not naturally very clear, had been disordered with superstition, and he laboured under the tyranny of a wife and the terror of hell-fire at the same time.—*Smollett*.

Mr. Rich was not only a very artful contriver of that kind of stage entertainment called pantomime, but an admirable actor of harlequin, the principal actor in it.<sup>1</sup> Nor can we boast of

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<sup>1</sup> Colman, in his "Random Records," tells a good story of one Johnstone, a machinist, who was connected with Old Drury during the time of Sheridan. "He was celebrated," he says, "for his superior taste and skill in the construction of flying chariots, triumphal cars, palanquins, banners, wooden children to be tossed over battlements, and straw heroes and heroines to be hurled down a precipice; he was further famous for wickerwork lions, pasteboard swans, and all the sham birds and beasts appertaining to a theatrical menagerie. He wished on a certain occasion to spy the nakedness of the enemy's camp, and therefore contrived to insinuate himself, with a friend, into the two-shilling gallery, to witness the night rehearsal of a pantomime at Covent Garden Theatre. Among the attractions of this Christmas foolery a *real* elephant was introduced; and in due time the unwieldy brute came clumping down the stage, making a prodigious figure in a procession. The friend who sat close to Johnstone joggled his elbow, whispering, "This is a bitter bad job for Drury. Why, the elephant's *alive!*—he'll carry all before him, and

any one man who has, during the space of fifty years, approached to his excellencies in that part. His gesticulation was so perfectly expressive of his meaning, that every motion of his hand or head, or any part of his body, was a kind of dumb eloquence that was readily understood by the audience. Mr. Garrick's action was not more perfectly adapted to his characters than Mr. Rich's attitudes and movements to the varied employment of the wooden sword magician. His taking leave of Columbine in one or two of his pantomimes was at once graceful and affecting.—*T. Davies.*

As the late Mr. Rich, the celebrated Harlequin, was one evening returning home from the playhouse, in a hackney-coach, he ordered the coachman to drive him to the Sun, then a famous tavern in Clare Market. Just as the coach passed one of the windows of the tavern, Rich, who perceived it to be open, dexterously threw himself out of the coach-window into the room. The coachman, who saw nothing of this transaction, drew up, descended from his box, opened the coach door, and let down the step, then taking off his hat, he waited for some time, expecting his fare to alight; but at length, looking into the coach, and seeing it empty, he bestowed a few hearty curses on the rascal who had bilked him, remounted his box, turned about, and was returning to his stand, when Rich, who had watched his opportunity, threw himself into the coach, looked out, asked the fellow where the devil he was driving, and desired him to turn about. The coachman, almost petrified with fear, instantly obeyed, and once more drove up to the door of the tavern. Rich now got out, and after reproaching the fellow with stupidity, tendered him his money. "No, God bless your honour," said the coachman; "my master has ordered me to take no money to-night." "Pshaw!" said Rich; "your master's a fool; here's a shilling for yourself." "No, no," said the coachman, who had by this time remounted his box, "that wont do. I know you too well for all your shoes; and so, Mr. Devil, for once you're outwitted."—*A Thousand Notable Things.* 1800.

Nobody in Harlequins beat Rich, the manager of this

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beat you hollow. What d'ye think on't, eh?" "Think on't!" said Johnstone, in a tone of the utmost contempt; "I should be very sorry if I couldn't make a much better elephant than that at any time!"



theatre (Covent Garden).<sup>1</sup> His pantomimes and spectacles produced a reaction against Garrick, when nothing else could ; and Covent Garden ever since has been reckoned the superior house in that kind of merit—"the wit," as Mr. Ludlow Holt calls it, "of goods and chattels."<sup>2</sup>—*Leigh Hunt.*

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<sup>1</sup> The name of Rich is associated with Covent Garden Theatre as that of Cibber is with Drury Lane. The following summary epitomizes the history of that theatre :—

1732. John Rich and his company removed to Covent Garden from the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields.

1761. John Rich died. His son-in-law, Beard, continued to play at Covent Garden Theatre under Rich's patent.

1767. Beard sold his interest in the house for 60,000*l.* to Colman, Harris, Powell, and Rutherford.

1791. The new Covent Garden Theatre opened.

1803. Kemble came into the management.

1808. It was destroyed by fire. The company removed to the King's Theatre.

1809. Rebuilt by Beazley and re-opened. The O. P. riots.

1812. Mrs. Siddons took her farewell benefit.

1816. Macready's first appearance.

1818. H. Harris came into the management.

1823. Charles Kemble came into the management.

1839. Madame Vestris came into the management.

1847. Opened for Italian Opera.

<sup>2</sup> A jumper or vaulter named Ireland, who was acting about the commencement of the present century, seems to have been of as remarkable an agility as Rich. Here is a story of him :—Ireland, the vaulter, was the most extraordinary *natural* jumper I ever saw, though I have seen many who excelled him when aided by the spring-board and other artificial contrivances. I have walked with Ireland, and he has suddenly left my arm, and with the mere impetus of a couple of paces, jumped over a turnpike gate. His leaping over the bar opposite the Surrey Theatre, when going home half tipsy, first attracted attention towards him. In those days of practical joking he was foremost in frolic ; his animal spirits were great, and he was vain and fond of display. One trick of his was, if he saw a horse held in waiting for his rider, to stand beside it, as if uncertain which way he should turn for a moment ; and when he saw the rider coming out, to spring clean over the back of the horse, with a ludicrous appearance of anxiety to get out of the gentleman's way. What made this seem more singular was that Ireland always walked off as if he had performed no extraordinary feat at all, leaving those who had beheld the jump doubting the evidence of their own senses, and liable, of course, to be doubly doubted if they narrated the occurrence. One of his stage exhibitions was to throw a somersault over a waggon and eight horses—over a dozen grenadiers standing at present arms with fixed bayonets. Sir Thomas Picton, a man of unquestionable courage, went to witness this exhibition ; but when he saw the men placed he trembled

Harlequin comes their chief!—See from afar  
 The hero seated in fantastic car!  
 Wedded to novelty, his only arms  
 Are wooden swords, wands, talismans, and charms.  
 On one side Folly sits, by some called Fun,  
 And on the other his arch-patron LUN.  
 Behind, for liberty athirst in vain,  
 Sense, helpless captive! drags the galling chain.

*Churchill.*

The education of Rich, manager of Lincoln's Inn Fields and Covent Garden Theatres, had been grossly neglected, consequently, though he had a good understanding, his language was vulgar and ungrammatical. He had contracted a strange and rude habit of calling everybody Mister, which gave rise to an unmannerly *bon-mot* by Foote. Rich having called him Mister several times, Foote grew warm, and asked him the reason of his not calling him by his name. "Don't be angry," said Rich; "for I sometimes forget my own name." "That's extraordinary," replied Foote, "for though I knew you could not write it, I did not suppose you could forget it."—*Ana.*

Covent Garden Theatre continued till 1760 to be uninterruptedly managed by Rich, who, it must be confessed, upon his father's plan, though he was not the same nefarious character, continued to keep himself up as a formidable rival to the managers of Drury Lane. His own performance of Harlequin, and the advantage he took of English inclination for foreign gew-gaws, now and then operated in his favour with decided superiority. In the time of Fleetwood his pantomimes were a great injury to his opponents, and though I do not find he was ever splendidly off—indeed, he is described to have been at one time so necessitated as to have taken a house situated in three different counties to have avoided the importunity of the sheriffs' officers—yet he took care to satisfy to the letter his performers, and all those with whom he made engagements.—*Dibdin.*

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like a leaf, and kept his head down while Ireland jumped; nor did he look up till he had first asked, "Has he done it?" When assured he had, he said, "A battle's nothing to that."—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

## Mrs. Porter.

. . . —1762.

Mrs. Porter was tall, fair, well-shaped, and easy and dignified in action. But she was not handsome, and her voice had a small degree of tremor. Moreover, she imitated, or, rather, faultily exceeded, Mrs. Barry in the habit of prolonging and toning her pronunciation, sometimes to a degree verging upon a chant; but whether it was that the public ear was at that period accustomed to a demi-chant, or that she threw off the defect in the heat of passion, it is certain that her general judgment and genius, in the highest bursts of tragedy, inspired enthusiasm in all around her, and that she was thought to be alike mistress of the terrible and the tender.—*Thomas Campbell.*

I remember Mrs. Porter, to whom nature had been niggard in voice and face, so great in many parts, as *Lady Macbeth*, *Alicia* in “*Jane Shore*,” *Hermione* in the “*Distressed Mother*,” and many parts of the kind, that her great action, eloquence of look and gesture, moved astonishment; and yet I have heard her declare she left the action to the possession of the sentiments in the part she performed.—*Chetwood.*

She excelled greatly in the terrible and the tender—the great actor Booth speaking in raptures of her *Belvidera*—and Dr. Johnson saying that in the vehemence of tragic acting he had never seen her equal.<sup>1</sup> For many years she acted, though absolutely a cripple, having had her hip-joint dislocated by a fall from her chaise in an encounter with a highwayman, whom she terrified into supplication by the sight of a brace of pistols. Finding he had been driven to desperation by want, she gave him ten guineas, and afterwards raised sixty pounds by subscription for relief of his family. In acting *Elizabeth* in the “*Rival Queens*” she had to support herself on a crutched cane; and after signing Mary’s death-warrant, she expressed her agitation by striking the stage with her cane so violently as to draw bursts of applause. At last she herself subsisted on charity; and Dr. Johnson, who paid her a visit of benevolence some years before her death, said she was then so wrinkled that a picture of old age

<sup>1</sup> “Mrs. Porter in the vehemence of rage, and Mrs. Clive in the sprightliness of humour, I have never seen equalled.”—*Johnson.*

in the abstract might have been taken from her countenance.—  
*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1834.

Mrs. Porter surpassed Garrick in passionate tragedy.—  
*Walpole*.

## Barton Booth.

1681-1733.

Booth enters : hark ! the universal peal !

“ But has he spoken ? ” Not a syllable.

“ What shook the stage and made the people stare ? ”

Cato's long wig, flower'd gown, and lacquer'd chair.—*Pope*.

Booth had great advantages from birth and education ; he was a relation of the Earl of Warrington, and not far remote from the title. He was a scholar, and a man of poetical fancy, as his compositions in verse, which are far from mean, will testify. His professional merit recommended him to Lord Bolingbroke, who was so pleased with his company and conversation that he sent his chariot to the door of the theatre every night to convey Booth, after the play was finished, to his country seat. There was in his look an apparent goodness of mind, which struck everybody that saw him. I have heard Mr. Delane, the actor, say, that when he entered the Bedford coffee house, at a time when it was frequented by men of fashion, he attracted the eyes of everybody by the benevolence of his aspect, the grandeur of his step, and the dignity of his whole demeanour. To sum up his character, he was an actor of genius, and an amiable man.—*T. Davies*.

Barton Booth was an actor of great talent. After Betterton's death he was kept back by Wilks in favour of his friend Mills, who was a very inferior actor to Booth. When Addison's “ Cato ” was produced, the hero was offered to Cibber, who refused it. It was then given to Mills, who declined acting it on the ground of its being too old for him. It was then given to Booth, who was so eminently successful in the representation of the character, as to be universally allowed to be at the head of his profession. His popularity was perhaps in some measure assisted by the party feeling which the production of the play had created.<sup>1</sup>—*The Manager's Note Book*.

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<sup>1</sup> “ The whole nation,” says Johnson, “ was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line (in the play) in which liberty

Having paused awhile beneath the sumptuous monument of Garrick to ponder on his genius and his triumphs, let us wander on to the humbler memorial of the scarcely less celebrated actor, Barton Booth. He it was who, when he was still a thoughtless boy at Westminster school—having his head turned by the sensation which he created when acting in one of Terence's plays—quitted the tutorship of Busby, of whom he was the favourite pupil, and with apparently no other advantages but melody of voice, and beauty and elegance of person, became by industry and application the great actor, whose exquisite delineations of human passions drew down upon him the applause of millions in his life-time, and which, after his death, procured him the honour of a burial-place in Poet's Corner.—*Jesse's "London."*

It is remarkable that Booth, who, in the very year Wilks left Dublin for Drury Lane, left it also for Lincoln's Inn Fields, and who had in Ireland been a pretty free lover of the bottle, was, some time after his arrival in London, so shocked at the contempt and distress that Powell had plunged himself into by the vice of hard drinking, that he instantly made a resolution, which he never broke, of utterly abandoning that practice, and to this circumstance there can be no doubt but that the world is indebted for so admirable an actor.—*Charles Dibdin.*

In connexion with Betterton's successor, Barton Booth, and *Cato*, of which he was the original representative, there is a story told, the application of which tended to place the stage on a level with the pulpit. Booth and his gifted fellows went down to Oxford to play Addison's famous tragedy before the most learned audience in the world. After the third and last performance was concluded, Dr. Sandridge, Dean of Carlisle, addressed a letter to Barton, in which the writer remarked: "I heartily wish all discourses from the pulpit were as instructive and edifying, as pathetic and affecting, as that which the audience were then entertained with from the stage."—*Theatrical Anecdotes.*<sup>1</sup>

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was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories, and the Tories echoed every clap to show that the satire was unfelt. The story of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator."—*Life of Addison.*

<sup>1</sup> There is a story that one day, when Betterton called on Archbishop Tillotson at Lambeth, the prelate asked him, "How it came about that after he had made the most moving discourse that he could, was touched

He had a vast fund of understanding as well as good-nature, and a persuasive elocution even in common discourse, that would compel you to believe him against your judgment of things. Notwithstanding his exuberance of fancy, he was untainted in his morals. In his younger years he admired none of the heathen deities so much as Jolly Bacchus; to him he was very devout; yet if he drank ever so deep, it never marred his study or his stomach. But immediately after his marriage with Miss Santlow, whose wise conduct, beauty, and winning behaviour so wrought upon him that home and her company were his chief happiness, he entirely condemned the folly of drinking out of reason, and from one extreme fell I think into the other too suddenly; for his appetite for food had no abatement. I have often known Mrs. Booth, out of extreme tenderness to him, order the table to be removed, for fear of overcharging his stomach. His profound learning was extraordinary.—*Chetwood's "General History of the Stage."*

He had a talent of discovering the passions where they lay hid in some celebrated parts by the injudicious practice of other actors; when he had discovered, he soon grew able to express them; and his secret for attaining this great lesson of the theatre was an adaptation of his looks to his voice, by which artful imitation of nature, the variation in the sounds of his words gave propriety to every change in his countenance.—*Aaron Hill.*

### Mrs. Elizabeth Barry.

1682-1733.

Mrs. Barry is said to have been a very elegant dresser; but, like most of her contemporaries, she was not a very correct one. Thus in the "Unhappy Favourite" she played *Queen Elizabeth*, and in the scene of the crowning, she wore the coronation robes of James II.'s Queen; and Ewell says she gave the audience a strong idea of the first-named Queen. Anne of Modena, with the exception of some small details, was dressed as little like Elizabeth as Queen Victoria was dressed like Anne.—*Dr. Doran.*

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deeply with it himself, and spoke it as feelingly as he was able, yet he could never move people in the church near so much as the other did on the stage." "That," answered Betterton, "is easily accounted for. It is because you are only telling them a story and I am showing them facts."

The fame to which Mrs. Barry arrived is a particular proof of the difficulty there is of judging with certainty, from their first trials, whether young people ever will make any great figure on a theatre. There was, it seems, so little hope of her at her first setting out, that she was at the end of the year discharged the company. I take it for granted that the objection to Mrs. Barry must have been a defective ear, or some unskilful dissonance in her manner of pronouncing.—*Colley Cibber*.<sup>1</sup>

She was the daughter of Edward Barry, a barrister, who got the title of colonel, for having raised a regiment in the cause of Charles I. His orphan daughter was born in 1682. She was educated by the charity of Lady Davenant, a relation of the poet of that name, and by his interest was brought upon the boards in 1700. Her first effort was a failure. Two years afterwards she reappeared in Otway's "Alcibiades," when her merit obtained the thanks of the poet, and drew universal attention. In 1707 the part of *Monimia* in the first representation of the "Orphan" drew forth her power to still higher advantage; and two years afterwards her *Belvidera* in "Venice Preserved" obtained for her the permanent appellation of the *famous Madam Barry*. Her fame was not diminished by her appearing as the original *Isabella* in Southerne's "Fatal Marriage;" and she enjoyed perhaps a higher character than any actress anterior to Mrs. Siddons.—*Thomas Campbell*.

Mrs. Barry, always excellent, has in this tragedy excelled herself, and gained a reputation beyond any woman I have ever seen on a theatre.—*Dryden, Preface to "Cleomenes."*<sup>2</sup>

With all her enchantment this fine creature was not hand-

<sup>1</sup> She was mistress of the notorious Earl of Rochester, and to his tuition, it was said, she owed many of the most conspicuous graces of her acting. "Mrs. Barry," says Cibber, "in characters of greatness, had a presence of elevated dignity; her mien and motion superb and gracefully majestic; her voice full, clear, and strong, so that no violence of passion could be too much for her; and when distress or tenderness possessed her, she subsided into the most affecting melody and softness. In the art of exciting pity she had a power beyond all the actresses I have yet seen, or what your imagination can conceive."

<sup>2</sup> "Cleomenes," a tragedy, appeared in 1692. With this play the *Guardian* connects the following story of Dryden:—As he came one night out of the playhouse, a young "fop of fashion" accosted him with, "Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan hero." "That, sir, is perhaps true," answered Dryden; "but give me leave to tell you you are no hero."—ED.

some ; her mouth opening most on the right side, which she strove to draw the other way ; and at times composing her face as if to have her picture drawn. She was middle-sized, had darkish hair, light eyes, and was indifferent plump. She had a manner of drawing out her words, which suited her, but not Mrs. Bradshaw and Mrs. Porter, her successors. In tragedy she was solemn and august ; in comedy alert, easy, and genteel ; pleasant in her face and manner, and filling the stage with a variety of action. Yet she could not sing, nor dance ; no, not even in a country dance.—*Anthony Aston.*

Mrs. Barry was a fine tragedian, both of the heroic and tender cast. Dryden pronounced her the best actress he had seen. It is said she was a mistress of Lord Rochester's when young ; that it was to her his love-letters were addressed, and that she owed her celebrity to his instructions. She was not handsome, and her mouth was a little awry, but her countenance was very expressive. This is the actress who, in the delirium of her last moments, is said to have alluded in an extempore blank verse to a manœuvre played by Queen Anne's Ministry some time before :

“Ha, ha ! and so they make us lords by dozens !”

*Ligh Hunt.*

Mrs. Barry in characters of greatness is said to have been graceful, noble, and dignified ; that no violence of passion was beyond the reach of her feelings, and that in the most melting distress and tenderness she was exquisitely affecting. Thus she was equally admirable in *Cassandra*, *Cleopatra*, *Roxana*, *Moinia*, or *Belvidera*. She was the first actress who was indulged with a benefit-play, a favour for some time after given only as a distinction of merit.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Mrs. Oldfield.

1683-1730.

Each look, each attitude, new grace displays,  
Your voice and motion life and music raise.—*Savage*.<sup>1</sup>

The ravishing perfections of this lady are so much the admiration of every eye and every ear, that they will remain fixed

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<sup>1</sup> Savage had reason to speak well of Mrs. Oldfield, for she allowed him an annuity during her life of 50*l.* Richard Savage, one of the most curious characters in English literary history, was the son of the Countess



in the memory of many when these light scenes<sup>1</sup> are forgotten.—*Fielding*.

Mrs. Oldfield had been a year in the Theatre Royal before she gave any tolerable hope of her being an actress, so unlike to all manner of propriety was her speaking.—*Colley Cibber*.

She was tallish in stature, beautiful in action and aspect, and she always looked like one of those principal figures in the finest paintings, that first seize, and longest delight the eye of the spectator. Her countenance was benevolent like her heart, yet it could express contemptuous indignity so well that once when a malignant beau rose in the pit to hiss her, she made him instantly hide his head and vanish, by a pausing look, and her utterance of the words “poor creature!”—*Ibid.*<sup>2</sup>

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of Macclesfield by the Earl Rivers; and his birth gave his mother an excuse for obtaining a divorce from a man whom she hated. He was born in 1696 in Fox Court, a low alley out of Holborn, whither his mother had repaired, under the name of Mrs. Smith, her features concealed in a mask which she wore throughout her confinement. Discovery was embarrassed by a complication of witnesses; the child was handed from one woman to another, until, like a story bandied from mouth to mouth, it seemed to lose its paternity. The son of an earl, the child was apprenticed to a shoemaker; but preferring the pen to the awl, he betook himself eventually to literature, after having by an accident discovered his origin. He made the acquaintance of Steele, who formed a grand design to marry Savage to a natural daughter of his, on whom he meant to settle a thousand pounds. How Savage, himself a natural son, might have relished the proposal of a natural daughter for a wife cannot be guessed—a thousand pounds might make even the author of the “Bastard” witness a charm in illegitimacy. But neither the natural daughter nor the thousand pounds was ever forthcoming. Savage, mortified by the frequent disappointments that attended Steele’s promises, took an early opportunity to lampoon his friend, and his friend very properly cut him. He was as quick, however, at making friends as he was at losing them. When he was near dying of starvation, a subscription was raised for him, and he was despatched to Wales. He pushed as far as Bristol, where he halted; spent the money he had in hand, wrote impudent letters for more, was arrested for debt, and lodged in gaol, where he died July 31, 1743.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to “Love in Several Masques.”

<sup>2</sup> According to Frederick Reynolds, “Mrs. Oldfield was the actress whose principal anxiety when dying concerned the arrangement of the unbecoming dress of death.” Pope’s lines are well known:—

“Odious! in woollen! ’twould a saint provoke,”  
 (Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke;)  
 “No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace  
 Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face:  
 One would not, sure, be frightful when one’s dead,  
 And, Betty—give this cheek a little red.”—ED.

I imagine Anne Oldfield, though the description of her gives us no idea of such majesty as Mrs. Siddons, to have been otherwise the most beautiful woman that ever trod the British stage. Even indifferent prints of her give us a conception of those large, speaking eyes, which she half shut with so much archness in comedy, and of the graceful features and spirited mien that could put life in tragedy, even into Thomson's "Sophonisba."—*T. Campbell.*

She was the daughter of Captain Oldfield, and went to live with her aunt, who kept the Mitre Tavern in St. James's Market. Here we are told, Captain Farquhar, overhearing Miss Nancy read a play behind the bar, was so struck "with the proper emphasis and agreeable turn she gave to each character, that he swore the girl was cut out for the stage. As she had always expressed an inclination for that way of life, and a desire of trying her fortune in it, her mother, on this encouragement, the next time she saw Captain Vanbrugh (afterwards Sir John), who had a great respect for the family, acquainted him with Captain Farquhar's opinion, on which he desired to know whether her heart was most tragedy or comedy. Miss, being called in, informed him that her principal inclination was to the latter, having at that time gone through all Beaumont and Fletcher's comedies; and the play she was reading when Captain Farquhar dined there having been 'The Scornful Lady.' Captain Vanbrugh shortly after recommended her to Mr. Christopher Rich, who took her into the house at the allowance of fifteen shillings per week. However, her agreeable figure and sweetness of voice soon gave her the preference, in the opinion of the whole town, to all the young actresses of that time; and the Duke of Bedford in particular, being pleased to speak to Mr. Rich in her favour, he instantly raised her to twenty shillings per week. After which her fame and salary gradually increased till at length they both obtained that height which her merit entitled her to." The new actress had a silver voice, a beautiful face and person, great good nature, sprightliness, and grace, and became the fine lady of the stage in the most agreeable sense of the word. She also acted heroines of the sentimental order, and had an original part in every play of Steele.—*Leigh Hunt*, "The Town."

She always went to the house (*i.e.*, the theatre) in the same dress she had worn at dinner, in her visits to the houses of great people; for she was much caressed on account of her general

merit, and her connexion with Mr. Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough's brother; she used to go to the playhouse in a chair, attended by two footmen; she seldom spoke to any one of the actors, and was allowed a sum of money to buy her own clothes.—*General Biographical Dictionary*.

Had her birth placed her in a higher rank of life she had certainly appeared in reality—what in this play (*Lady Betty Modish* in the “Careless Husband”) she only excellently acted—an agreeable gay woman of quality, a little too conscious of her natural attraction.<sup>1</sup> Women of the first rank might have borrowed some part of her behaviour without the least diminution of their sense of dignity.—*Walpole*.

I remember, in her full round of glory in comedy, she used to slight tragedy. She would often say, “I hate to have a page dragging my train about. Why do they not give Porter these parts? She can put on a better tragedy face than I can.” When “Mithridates” was revived, it was with much difficulty she was prevailed upon to take the part; but she performed it to the utmost length of perfection, and after that she seemed much better reconciled to tragedy. What a majestic dignity in *Cleopatra*! and, indeed, in every part that required it. Such a finished figure on the stage was never yet seen. Her excellent clear voice of passion, her piercing, flaming eye, with manner and action suiting, used to make me shrink with awe, and seemed to put her monitor *Horatio* into a mouse-hole.—*Chetwood*.

The young actress had scarcely appeared on the stage, when her wit and beauty captivated the heart of the handsome and accomplished Arthur Maynwaring, by whom she had a son, who bore the baptismal and surname of his father, and who afterwards followed his mother to the grave as chief mourner. Maynwaring dying in 1712, of a cold caught by him in visiting the Duchess of Marlborough, at St. Albans, Mrs. Oldfield shortly afterwards placed herself under the protection of General Charles Churchill, the son of an elder brother of the great Duke of Marlborough:—

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<sup>1</sup> Swift is contemptuous enough in his mention of Mrs. Oldfield:—“I was this morning at ten at the rehearsal of Mr. Addison's play called ‘Cato,’ which is to be acted on Friday. There was not above half a score of us to see it. We stood on the stage, and it was foolish enough to see the actors prompted every moment, and the poet directing them; and the drab that acts Cato's daughter out in the midst of a passionate part, and then calling out, ‘What's next?’”—*Journal to Stella*, 1712-13.

“None led through youth a gayer life than he,  
 Cheerful in converse, smart in repartee;  
 Sweet was his night and joyful was his day,  
 He dined with Walpole and with Oldfield lay.”

SIR C. HANBURY WILLIAMS.

By General Churchill she had also one son, who married Lady Mary Walpole, a natural child of Sir Robert, for whom he obtained the rank of an earl's daughter. Mrs. Oldfield died on the 23rd of October, 1730, at the age of forty-seven. Her contemporaries considered her deserving of burial in Westminster Abbey, and accordingly thither her body was borne through the very street in which she had formerly lived a humble sempstress. Her pall was not only supported by persons of distinction, but her remains were suffered to lie in state in the Jerusalem Chamber. Her grave is towards the west end of the south aisle of the Abbey, between the monuments of Craggs and Congreve, near the Consistory Court.—*Fesse's "London."*

This actress seems to have possessed some portion of every requisite that characterized the merit of the old school. Her performance embraced every description of tragedy and comedy.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Thomas Elrington.

1688—1732.

This excellent actor was born in June 1688, in London. His father having a numerous issue, put his son apprentice to an upholder in Covent Garden, where I was first acquainted with him. He was early addicted to the drama. I remember, when he was an apprentice, we played in several private plays together: when we were preparing to act “Sophonisba; or, Hannibal's Overthrow,” after I had written out my part of *Massiva*, I carried him the book of the play to study the part of *King Masinissa*; I found him finishing a velvet cushion, and gave him the book. But alas! before he could secrete it, his master, a hot voluble Frenchman, came in upon us, and the book was thrust under the velvet of the cushion. His master, as usual, rated him for not working, with a “*Morbleu! why a you not vark, Tom?*” and stood over him so long, that I saw with some mortification the book irrecoverably stitched up in the cushion, never to be retrieved till the cushion is worn to pieces. Poor

Tom cast many a desponding look upon me when he was finishing the fate of the play, while every stitch went to both our hearts. His master observing our looks, turned to me, and with words that broke their necks over each other for haste, abused both of us. The most intelligible of his great number of words, were *Jack Pudenges*, and the like expressions of contempt. But our play was gone for ever! Another time we were so bold as to attempt Shakspeare's "Hamlet," where our apprentice Tom had the part of the *Ghost*, father to young *Hamlet*. His armour was composed of pasteboard neatly painted. The Frenchman had intelligence of what we were about, and to our great surprise and mortification made one of our audience. The Ghost in its first appearance is dumb to *Horatio*. While these scenes passed the Frenchman only muttered between his teeth, and we were in hopes his passion would subside; but when our Ghost began his first speech to *Hamlet*, "*Mark me,*" he replied, "*Begar, me vil mark you presently!*" and without saying any more, beat our poor Ghost off the stage through the street, while every stroke on the pasteboard armour grieved the auditors (because they did not pay for their seats) insomuch that three or four ran after the Ghost and brought him back in triumph, with the avenging Frenchman at his heels, who would not be appeased till our Ghost promised him never to commit the offence of acting again. A promise made like many others, never intended to be kept. However, in the last year of his time, his rigid master gave him a little more liberty, and our young actor played different parts, till he was taken notice of by Mr. Keene, an excellent player at that time. He was introduced upon the stage in the part of *Oroonoko*, where he met with a good reception in the year 1711. The next season he was invited over by Joseph Ashbury, Esq.; and in the year 1713, wedded the daughter of that worthy gentleman, by whom he had a numerous issue, particularly three sons, who are now alive; the eldest, Mr. Joseph Elrington, who makes a considerable figure on the present theatre here; Mr. Richard Elrington, now of a country company in England; and Mr. Thomas Elrington, the youngest, first an ensign, now a lieutenant in Colonel Flemming's regiment in Flanders. Mr. Elrington the father, was a true copy of Mr. Verbruggen, a very great actor in tragedy and polite parts in comedy; but the former had an infinite fund of (what is called low)

humour upon the stage. I have seen him perform *Don Choleric* in the "Fop's Fortune" with infinite pleasure; he entered into the true humour of the character, equal to the original, Mr. William Penkethman. His voice was manly, strong, and sweetly full-toned; his figure tall, and well-proportioned. His eldest son, Mr. Joseph Elrington, is most like him in person and countenance. This excellent player succeeded his father-in-law, Joseph Ashbury, Esq., in the place of steward of the King's Inns; and the more to establish him in the kingdom, a post was given him of fifty pounds a year in the Quit-rent Office; also gunner to the train of artillery, a gift of the Lord Mountjoy, father to the present Earl of Blessington. which at the death of that noble lord, he got permission to dispose of. He was a gentleman of honour, humanity, and extensive good-nature, of a facetious, well-mannered conversation, a little too desirable for his health, from company of the best condition. He was taken ill the very day he was consulting a plan for a new theatre, after the form of that in Drury Lane, London, with an eminent builder of this city. He went home, where his malady increased to a violent pleuritic fever, which never left him (notwithstanding all the physician's art) till he expired, July 22nd, 1732.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

### Charles Macklin.

1690-1797.

Macklin, who largely deals in half-form'd sounds,  
 Who wantonly transgresses nature's bounds,  
 Whose acting's hard, affected, and constrain'd,  
 Whose features, as each other they disdain'd,  
 At variance set, inflexible and coarse,  
 Ne'er knew the workings of united force,  
 Ne'er kindly soften to each other's aid,  
 Nor show the mingled powers of light and shade;  
 No longer for a thankless stage concern'd,  
 To worthier thoughts his mighty genius turn'd,  
 Harangued, gave lectures, made each simple elf  
 Almost as good a speaker as himself.<sup>1</sup>—*Churchill.*

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<sup>1</sup> He not only "harangued, gave lectures," but started a tavern and coffee-house in the Piazza, Covent Garden. He made a most ceremonious

At this time Charles Mathews sought an interview with the celebrated Charles Macklin, who had then attained a hundred years and upwards. He had been recommended to recite to him for the purpose of gaining the veteran's opinion and instructions; and going by appointment to the residence of the aged man in Tavistock-row, he found him ready to receive him. There was Macklin in his arm-chair; and when the door opened, and the youth was announced, he did not attempt to rise, nor indeed take any notice of the entrance of the stranger, but remained with an arm on either elbow of the chair he sat in, looking sour and severe at his expected pupil, who, hesitating on the threshold, paused timidly, which occasioned the centenary to call out, "Come nearer! What do you stand there for? You can't act in the gap of the door." The young man approached. "Well," added Macklin, in a voice ill-calculated to inspire confidence, "now let me hear you; don't be afraid." His crabbed austerity completely chilled the aspirant's ardour; however, mustering up all the confidence this harsh reception had left him, he began to declaim according to the approved rule of "speech-days." Macklin, sitting like a stern judge waiting to pronounce sentence upon a criminal, rather than to laud a hero, soon interrupted the speech with a mock imitation of the novice's monotonous tones, barking out, "Bow, wow, wow, wow!"—*Life of Mathews.*

A strange character—an Irishman of rough humour and ability, a good fives player, and a very promising actor. His appearance was very remarkable; a coarse face, marked not

affair of his ordinary, bringing in the first dish himself, with a napkin over his arm. The price of the dinner was three shillings, including wine. When the repast was concluded the company adjourned to the "School of Oratory."—*ED.*

<sup>1</sup> Macklin had many pupils, amongst whom was Moss, whose Jew in the "Merchant of Venice" was considered inferior only to Kean's. An odd story is told of Moss. He was fond of a joke, and acting one night in a translation of Molière's "L'Avare" (The Miser), in rushing about the stage distracted at the loss of his gold, he seized the wig from the head of M. Nozay, the leader of the orchestra. The reception of Nozay's naked head at the hands of the audience may be imagined. Colman avenged Nozay by casting Moss for a contemptible character in a new piece. Moss returned to the provinces. The old cry of "Play up, Nosey," it is said, has its origin in Nozay, though I have seen it attributed to one Cervetto, a violoncello player at Drury Lane in 1753, who was remarkable for an extraordinarily long nose.—*ED.*

with "lines," but what a brother actor with rude wit had called "cordage." He was struggling hard to get free of a very pronounced brogue, and having come to the stage with what was to English ears an uncouth name, and to English mouths an almost unpronounceable one, had changed it from M'Laughlin to Mechlin, and later Macklin. . . . He was a most striking and remarkable character, and one that stands out very distinctly during the whole course of his long career, which stretched over nearly ninety years. He was quarrelsome, overbearing, even savage; always, either in revolt or conflict, full of genius and a spirit that carried him through a hundred misfortunes.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

His mind was as rough and durable as his body. His aspect and address confounded his inferiors, and his delight in making others fear and admire him gave him an aversion for the society of those who were his superiors.—*Thomas Holcroft.*<sup>1</sup>

Macklin was celebrated in *Shylock*, and in some other sarcastic parts, particularly that of *Sir Archy* in his comedy of "Love à la Mode." We take him to have been one of those actors whose performances are confined to the reflection of their own personal peculiarities. The merits of Shuter, Edwin, Quick, and others, who succeeded one another as buffoons, were perhaps a good deal of this sort; but pleasant humours are rare and acceptable. Macklin was a clever satirist in his writings, and embroiled himself, not so cleverly, with a variety of his acquaintances. He foolishly attempted to run down Garrick; and once, in a sudden quarrel, poked out a man's eye with his stick, and killed him, for which he narrowly escaped hanging. However, he was sorry for it; and he is spoken of by the stage historians as kind in his private relations, and liberal of his purse.—*Leigh Hunt.*

The great excellence of the veteran Macklin drew considerable audiences whenever he appeared at Covent Garden Theatre, and he had been announced to perform his *own*

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<sup>1</sup> "Holcroft had been a riding-boy, a shoemaker, and an actor ere he became a politician and an author. He was called a bad actor because he was not a noisy one; but I believe old Harris had not brains enough to understand him. Had he had sufficient practice, his *Touchstone*, *Autolycus*, &c., would have been admirable; he *read* these characters inimitably."—*Records of a Veteran.*



*Shylock*<sup>1</sup> on the 10th of January, 1788, at the extraordinary age of eighty-nine. I went there to compare his performance with that of my friend Henderson, whose loss I even still regret; and with some anxiety, and much veneration, secured a station in the pit, which none but the young should scuffle about, for it was much contested. You first saw the foot of the actor, and thus had his full expression and whole figure bearing upon your eye. . . . It was a little time before my introduction to Macklin; and I would not, at that time, miss a repetition of his triumph in the Jew. . . . Macklin got through the first act with spirit and vigour, and except to a very verbal critic, without material imperfection. In the second, he became confused, and sensible of his confusion. With his usual manliness, and waiting for no admonition from others, he advanced to the front of the stage, and with a solemnity in his manner that became extremely touching, thus addressed his audience:—"Ladies and gentlemen, within these few hours I have been seized with a terror of mind I never in my life felt before; it has totally destroyed my corporeal as well as mental faculties. I must, therefore, request your patience this night—a request which an old man of EIGHTY-NINE years of age may hope is not unreasonable. Should it be granted, unless my health is totally re-established, you may depend upon it this will be the last night of my ever appearing before you in so ridiculous a situation." Thus dignified, even in his wreck, was that great man, whom Pope had immortalized by a compliment, and whose humanity Lord Mansfield had pronounced to be at least equal to his skill as an actor. He recovered with the general applause of the audience, and got through the play by great attention from the prompter and his assistant.—*Boaden*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On Macklin's *Shylock* Pope wrote the well-known couplet:

"This is the Jew  
That Shakspeare drew."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> During the rehearsal of *Macbeth* by Macklin, when he was in the seventy-fifth year of his age, he was so prolix and tedious in the rehearsal of his character, as well as in his instructions to the other actors, that Shuter exclaimed, "The case was very hard, for the time has been that when the brains were out the man would die, and there an end." Macklin, overhearing him, answered, "Ah, Ned, and the time was that when liquor was in wit was out, but it is not so with thee." Shuter rejoined, "Now, now thou art a man again."—*Percy Anecdotes*.

I did not meet with this great original till he was in the winter of his life ; but I have heard some contemporaries assert that to the *manner* he conjoined a considerable portion of the *matter* of Dr. Johnson.<sup>1</sup> On the truth or falsehood of this declaration, I cannot pronounce ; but of his *Shylock*, as I have seen it various times, I can venture boldly to assert that for *identity* of character from the first scene to the last, probably as a performance it was never surpassed.—*Frederick Reynolds.*

Macklin was tenacious, and very properly so, of the performers throwing in words of their own. Lee Lewes one morning at Covent Garden, at the rehearsal of “*Love à la Mode*,” in which he played *Squire Groom*, said something which he thought very smart. “Hoy! hoy!” said Macklin, “what’s that?” “Oh,” replied Lee Lewes, “’tis only a little of my nonsense.” “Ay,” replied Macklin, “but I think *my* nonsense is rather better than *yours*, so keep to that if you please, sir.”—*F. O’Keefe.*<sup>2</sup>

Macklin, whose writing was as harsh and as hard as his conduct was rude and dogmatic, who, though he did not produce many pieces, contrived to make one answer the purpose of many, whose strange peculiarities made him a torment to himself and to everybody else, was, however, a useful, and sometimes a great actor, and very far from an inferior author.—*C. Dibdin.*

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<sup>1</sup> Rude he was, but generally witty with it. Once at a dinner party, being rather the worse (or better) for wine, he suddenly turned and violently clapped an Irish clergyman on the back. “Now, sir,” he cried, “what is your opinion of Terence’s plays?” The clergyman, half confounded by the blow, and the vehemence with which the question had been put, answered, in a rich brogue, “What! do you mean his Latin edition?” “Do you think,” replied Macklin, giving him another hearty blow, “do you think I meant his *Irish* edition? and be d—— to you!”—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Macklin was particularly proud of this play. Once a country manager produced it at his theatre, upon which, says O’Keefe, Macklin wrote him word that if he did not withdraw it, “he would send him sheets of parchment that would reach from Chancery-lane to the next gooseberry-bush the nearest verge of Yorkshire, to John O’Groat’s house. The manager’s answer to Macklin ran thus:—“*Your* ‘*Love à la Mode*,’ sir! I’m not going to play *your* ‘*Love à la Mode*,’ I’ll play my *own* ‘*Love à la Mode*,’ I have twenty ‘*Love à la Modes*,’ I could write a ‘*Love à la Mode*’ every day in the week. I could write three hundred and sixty-six ‘*Love à la Modes*’ in a year!”—ED.

## John Evans.

1692-1734.

This person was an actor of very good repute in this kingdom,<sup>1</sup> joined in the management with Mr. Thomas Elrington, Mr. Thomas Griffith, &c. His person was inclinable to the gross, therefore wanted delicacy for the amiable parts; he had an excellent harmonious voice, and just delivery, but a little too indolent for much study or contemplation. In the last year of the reign of Queen Anne, the company of Dublin went down in the summer season to play at Cork. One evening Mr. Evans was invited by some officers of a regiment, then on duty in that city, to a tavern. Many healths were proposed, and went round without reluctance; when it came to Mr. Evans's turn, he proposed the health of her Majesty Queen Anne, which so much disgusted one of the company (though clothed in the livery of his royal mistress), that he ran downstairs and sent up a drawer to whisper to Mr. Evans, who immediately put on his sword and went after him, without taking the least notice to the company. He found his antagonist in a room in the passage of the tavern, with the door half open, who courageously made a thrust at Mr. Evans, which he put by with his left hand; at this, Mr. Evans drew, thrust the door wide open, entered, and soon drove his opposer out to the passage, where he disarmed the doughty hero, before the company above stairs knew anything of the matter. The rest of the military gentlemen expressed an abhorrence to the treatment Mr. Evans received, and seemingly reconciled them on the spot; but notwithstanding, when the company returned to Dublin, the person who sent the challenge upstairs at Cork, being then returned also, told his own story in such a manner that several warm gentlemen of the army were made to believe that Mr. Evans had affronted the whole body military; and when the poor supposed culprit came to his business of the theatre, their clamour in the audience was so great that the house was dismissed, and no play to be acted till Mr. Evans had asked public pardon upon the stage. His high spirit was with great difficulty brought to submit, but at last he consented. I remember the play was "The Rival Queens; or, the Death

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<sup>1</sup> Ireland.

of Alexander the Great," the part of *Alexander* to be played by the delinquent. He came to ask pardon before the curtain. When he addressed the audience, one Smart from the pit, cried out, "Kneel, you rascal!" Evans then collected in himself, replied in the same tone of voice, "No, you rascal, I'll kneel to none but God and my Queen!" a dangerous paroxysm at such a crisis. However, as there were many worthy gentlemen of the army who knew the whole affair, the new-raised clamour ceased, and the play went through without any molestation, and by degrees things returned to their proper channel. By this we may see it is some danger for an actor to be in the right. Three years after this affair, Mr. Evans went to the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, and in his journey back to Ireland was taken ill of a fever at the town of Whitchurch in Shropshire, from whence he was removed for better advice to Chester, where he ended his progress of life, in the forty-first year of his age, and was privately buried in the cathedral, without monument, stone, or inscription.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

### James Quin.

1693-1766.

In fancied scenes, as in life's real plan,  
He could not for a moment sink the man.  
In whate'er cast his character was laid,  
Self still, like oil, upon the surface played.  
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in :  
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still 'twas Quin.<sup>1</sup>

*Churchill.*

Quin killed Bowen in 1717. The former had declared that Ben Jonson acted *Facomo*, in "The Libertine," better than Bowen. The latter pursued Quin to a tavern, shut the door of

<sup>1</sup> The style of acting in Quin's day may be gathered from a curious notice of Garrick's acting, quoted by Fitzgerald in his "Life of Garrick." "Garrick's voice," it says, "was neither whining, bellowing, nor grumbling, but perfectly easy in its transitions, natural in its cadence, and beautiful in its elocution. . . . *He never drops his character when he has finished a speech, by either looking contemptuously on an inferior performer, unnecessary spitting, or suffering his eyes to wander through the whole circle of spectators.*" By what he did not do we are made to see what the others did.—ED.

the room in which he found him, placed his back against the door, and threatened to pin Quin to the wainscot if he did not immediately draw. Quin remonstrated, but drew, and kept on the defensive; whilst the impetuous Bowen pressed so upon his adversary that he actually fell upon that adversary's sword and died, after acknowledging his own rashness. Quin was tried and acquitted.<sup>1</sup>—*Dr. Doran*, "*Table Traits*."

. . . . I became a favourite with the Duke and Duchess of Leeds, where I recollect often meeting the famous actor, Mr. Quin, who taught me to speak Satan's speech to the sun in "*Paradise Lost*." When they took me to see him act *Cato*, I remember making him a formal courtesy, much to the Duchess's amusement, perhaps to that of the player.—*Piozzi's "Memoirs."*

Quin (as Sir George Beaumont told me) was once at a very small dinner-party. The master of the house, pushing a delicious pudding towards Quin, begged him to taste it. A gentleman had just before helped himself to an immense piece of it. "Pray," said Quin, looking first at the gentleman's plate and then at the dish, "which *is* the pudding?"—*S. Rogers's "Table Talk."*

Quin's position, long the established tragedian, and in command of the town, was cruelly affected by Garrick's success. He was at once thrust down and deposed. There was fatal truth in the hypothesis he threw out in his first burst of disgust, "If this young fellow be right, then *we* have been all wrong." He secretly believed that *they* were right, and therefore the "young fellow" was wrong. But, alas! the public were deciding the question rapidly, and without any question of delicacy. Such dethronements have been always carried out with the rudeness of a *coup d'état*. So sudden and mortifying a desertion is always terribly incident to the actor's lot; this was the third time he had experienced this rude shock. On Booth's death he had reigned supreme; when suddenly arose Delane, and

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<sup>1</sup> In the "*Percy Anecdotes*," that most amusing, if not always veracious collection, I find this anecdote:—"The consummate epicurism and coarse manners of Quin, the actor, often rendered him a very disagreeable guest. Dining one day with the Duchess of Marlborough, her Grace, to his great surprise, helped herself to the leanest part of a haunch of venison which stood near her. 'What!' said Quin; 'does your Grace eat no fat?' 'Not of venison, sir.' 'Never, my Lady Duchess?' 'Never, I assure you.' Too much affected to restrain his genuine sentiments, the epicure exclaimed, 'I like to dine with such fools.'"

Quin found himself deserted. Again, Macklin's success had brought a fresh abandonment. Yet there was a bluff honesty about Quin—even to dignity—in the way in which he set himself to do battle for his throne ; when he found himself fairly beaten, he gave up the struggle, and, for a time at least, retired. He had no animosity to his conqueror, and could later become his warm friend.—*Fitzgerald.*

Mark one who tragical struts up and down,  
 And *rolls* the words as Sisyphus his stone.  
 His labouring arms, unequal to the weight,  
 Heave like a porter's when at Billingsgate.

*A Clear Stage and No Favour.<sup>1</sup>*

That tongue which set the table in a roar,  
 And charm'd the public ear, is heard no more :  
 Clos'd are those eyes, the harbinger of wit,  
 Which spake before the tongue what Shakspeare writ.  
 Cold is that hand which, living, was stretch'd forth  
 At Friendship's call to succour modest worth.  
 Here lies James Quin.—*Garrick.*

Quin presented himself, upon the rising of the curtain, in a green velvet coat embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottom periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes. With very little variation of cadence, and in a deep, full tone, accompanied by a sawing kind of action, which had more of the senate than of the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics with an air of dignified indifference that seemed to disdain the plaudits that were bestowed upon him.—*R. Cumberland.*

To Mr. Quin's various excellencies in acting I have endeavoured to do equal justice ; and in general we have authority to say, that to his various parts in comedy may be added no mean list of dignified characters in tragedy, where sentiment and gravity of action, and not passion, predominated. He had so happy an ear for music, and was so famous for singing with ease a common ballad or catch, that Gay was persuaded to offer him the part of *Macheath*, in the "Beggars' Opera ;" but after a short trial of his abilities, Quin gave it up. . . . Mr. Booth gave ample testimony to his elocution ; for having seen him act the part of the *Duke*, in "Measure for Measure," he declined

<sup>1</sup> A satire on the contest between Quin and Garrick.—ED.

reviving the play, and acting that character, though pressed to it by Wilks and Cibber. Booth declared he would never, if he could avoid it, hazard a comparison between himself and Quin.—*T. Davies*.<sup>1</sup>

Quin's *Falstaff* must have been glorious, and the tradition of it places Quin very high, for it seems to be the most difficult of all characters to sustain. Since Garrick there have been more than one *Richard*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*; but since Quin only one *Falstaff* (Henderson). Quin seemed born to play it. He was convivial; and when carrying the dead *Hotspur* (Garrick) off the stage, he would say to him, "Where shall we sup?" He was satiric, and had much of *Falstaff's* wit; but in him it was the appendage of a noble nature.—*C. R. Leslie*.

Quin in *Falstaff* was as excellent as Garrick in *Lear*.—*H. Walpole*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Davies gives an illustration of Quin's acting. "When *Lothario* gave *Horatio* the challenge, instead of accepting it instantly, with the determined and unembarrassed bow of superior bravery, Quin made a long pause, and dragged out the words :

' I'll meet thee there !'

in such a manner as to make it appear absolutely ludicrous. He paused so long before he spoke, that somebody, it was said, called out from the gallery, ' Why don't you tell the gentleman whether you'll meet him or not ?'

<sup>2</sup> The opinions of Walpole are to be received with caution, for he is never in earnest. His cynicism is ingenious, but his portraits are overcharged with it. They are caricatures. The truth is, Walpole was a man of weak parts, though of some wit. In his letters he exhibits a misanthropy not radically inherent, but very sedulously cultivated. Those whom he admired he admired too ambitiously, so that while his readers laugh over his wit, they are always haunted by a suspicion that they are doing honour to some other man's intelligence. Besides being a laborious cynic, Horace was a coxcomb and an egotist. His wit he imitated from George Selwyn; his learning he borrowed from the poet Gray. As a critic he was contemptible enough. He sneered at Bishop Berkeley, a man whom Atterbury pronounced an angel, and whom even the morose and cynical Swift honoured for his genius; he sneered at Johnson, whom he called a gigantic pedant, brutal and dogmatic, without parts and without learning; he sneered at Boswell's biography, which has been pronounced the best memoir that was ever written; he sneered at Akenside, whose poem "To Curio" Macaulay praises as exhibiting a power that in time might have rivalled Dryden, and whose "Ode to Lord Huntingdon" has passages nobler than anything to be found in Collins or Gray; he sneered at Thomson, whose "Seasons" indicate a genius not inferior to Wordsworth's in its attentive admiration of nature, whilst the history of poetry in England exhibits nothing more exquisitely beautiful in description and melodious in language than the "Castle of Indolence." He

With double force th' enlivened scene he wakes,  
 Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows to keep  
 Each due decorum. Now the heart he shakes,  
 And now with well-urged sense th' enlighten'd judgment takes.  
*Thomson's "Castle of Indolence."*

Quin has hardly had justice rendered to his good works. We are apt to think of this great player, who lived a good deal according to the jolly fashion of his rather too jolly days, as a mere imbiber of claret, and the most unctuous of *Falstaffs*. But in offices of charity, rendered with exquisite delicacy, Quin's active life wears a very different aspect. How refined was the manner in which he forced upon penniless Thomson a hundred pounds! It was a debt, he said, which he owed the poet for the pleasure he had experienced in reading his poems! What generous humour in his reply to half-starved Winston (for whom he had procured an engagement, and an outfit, to enable him to enter on it with decency), who timidly asked, under the impulse of hunger, what he should do for a little ready money for the next few days. "Nay," exclaimed Quin, "if you're in want of money, you must put your hand in your own pocket!" And when Winston did so, after Quin had left, he found a 10*l.* note, which Quin had placed there!—*Cornhill Magazine*, "*The Saints of the Stage*," 1867.

Quin, though he must have been an actor of greater understanding and more mind than Macklin, was still in stilts, and proved that though acting comprehends the whole of oratory, oratory by no means comprehends the whole of acting. Greatness and dignity Quin is universally allowed to have possessed; for a correct and commanding understanding, and a thorough and discriminating power of expressing the sense of an author, I have always understood he never had a superior. We are told, and I do not dispute the truth of the assertion, that his manner of utterance was so just, and had such a display of that feeling which the sentiment he pronounced conveyed to his mind, that he transferred an equal sensation of pleasure and conviction to his auditors.—*C. Dibdin*.

It will perhaps be scarcely credited, yet it is most solemnly

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sneered at Garrick, at Fielding, at Goldsmith; he spoke contemptuously of Dryden, of Waller, and of Milton. Gray he admired rather for his literature than his poetry; but he thought Mason a very fine poet, and Hannah More superior to Goldsmith as a prose-writer.—ED.



true, that we have seen Mr. Quin, when at least sixty years old, and of such corpulence as to weigh twenty stone, roll on for the young *Chamont*, in "The Orphan," in a suit of clothes heavy enough for *Othello*: a pair of stiff-topped white gloves, then only worn by attendants on a funeral, an old-fashioned major-wig, and black stockings; yet odd as this external appearance may seem, his performance was not one jot less so; and without exaggeration we may assert that there never was anything so like burlesque as the veteran's dronish apology for the juvenile soldier.—*Dramatic Censor*, vol. 2.

A single slip in the unlucky, but popular tragedy of "Cato," cost a little Welsh actor his life. His name was Williams. Playing *Decius* to Quin's *Cato*, at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, in 1718, he entered with—"Cæsar sends health to Cato;" but he pronounced the last name affectedly, mincing it into something like "Keeto." Quin, who gave a broad classical enunciation to the letter *a* in the word, was offended, and instead of replying,

" Could he send it  
To Cato's slaughter'd friends, it would be welcome,"

he exclaimed—"Would he had sent a better messenger." The fiery little Welshman was bursting with rage; and when *Cato* resumed with, "Are not your orders to address the Senate?" he could hardly reply, "My business is with"—it *would* come—"Keeto." Ten times in the short scene he had to repeat the name, and Quin nearly as often; but the latter gave it a broad sound, and delivered it with a significant look which almost shook the little actor off his feet, and did shake all the sides of the house with inextinguishable laughter. When they met in the green-room, the Welshman, triply armed by having just ground of complaint, assailed Quin for rendering him ridiculous in the eyes of the audience. Quin said it was in their ears, and would have laughed the matter off. But the soul of Williams would not stoop to such treatment, and after the play he lay in wait for Quin under the *Piazza* as *Cato* passed that way to take his punch. The older actor laughed as Williams drew his sword, and bade Quin defend himself. The latter would have sustained defence with his cane, but the angry Welshman thrust so fiercely that the other was fain to draw his rapier, which speedily, but without malice or intention on the part of the wielder, passed clear through the poor player's body. *Decius* was stretched dead on the pavement, and *Cato* looked

on bewildered. Here was a man slain, and all for the mispronunciation of a vowel! The tragedy brought Quin to the bar of the Old Bailey; but the catastrophe was laid rather to the fashion of wearing swords than to the drawing them with evil purpose; and Quin was freed from censure, but not from sad memories.—*Dramatic Anecdotes.*

## Lacy Ryan.

1694–1770.

The first part he was taken notice of in was that of *Marcus* in “*Cato*,” which was first acted in 1712. In the run of that celebrated tragedy he was accidentally brought into a fray with some of our Tritons on the Thames; and in the scuffle a blow on the nose was given him by one of these water-bullies, who neither regard men nor manners. I remember the same night, as he was brought on the bier after his supposed death in the fourth act of “*Cato*,” the blood from the real wound in the face gushed out with violence; that hurt had no other effect than just turning his nose a little, though not to deformity, yet some people imagined it gave a very small alteration to the tone of his voice, though nothing disagreeable. He acquitted himself in many capital parts, both in tragedy and comedy, to the satisfaction of his auditors, and has ever been esteemed in the first rank of actors.—*Chetwood's “History of the Stage.”*

From him succeeding Richards<sup>1</sup> took the cue,  
And hence his style, if not the colour, drew.—*Foote.*

He had, with some slight extravagance, excellent judgment, sense, and feeling. . . . In scenes where comedy trenched upon the domain of the sister muse, by the exhibition of profound emotion, Ryan was very great; and probably no actor has so nearly resembled him in this respect as Mr. Robson, whose origin is as modestly respectable as Ryan's was. They who can recollect Elliston, as he played, in his latter days, the genial *Rover*, may have some idea of what Ryan was when he grew old, in *Captain Plume*—namely, defiant of age, and full of the natural assumption of a spirit that seemed backed by the

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<sup>1</sup> Garrick is said to have borrowed some of the ideas suggested by Ryan's *Richard III.*, and to have enlarged upon them.—ED.

strength which was not there, but which had a substitute in irresistible good-will.—*Dr. Doran.*

Justice has scarcely been done to Ryan's merit. Garrick once going with Woodward to see his *Richard* with a view of being amused, owned that he was astonished at the genius and power he saw struggling to make itself felt through the burden of ill-training, uncouth gestures, and an ungraceful and slovenly figure. He was generous enough to own that all the merit there was in his own playing of *Richard*, he had drawn from studying this less fortunate player.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

Mr. Ryan had enjoyed a kind of prescriptive claim to all the lovers in tragedy and fine gentlemen in comedy, at the theatres in Lincoln's-inn-fields and Covent-garden, for nearly thirty years. In a conversation which I had with him some years before his death, he told me that he began the trade of acting when he was a boy of about sixteen or seventeen years of age; and that one of his first parts, which was suddenly put into his hand, in the absence of a more experienced player, was *Seyton*, an old officer in the tragedy of "Macbeth," when Betterton acted the principal character. As Betterton had not seen Ryan before he came on the stage, he was surprised at the sight of a boy in a large full-bottom wig, such as our judges now wear on the bench. However, by his looks he encouraged him to go on with what he had to say; and when the scene was over he commended the actor, but reprov'd old Downs, the prompter, for sending a child to him instead of a man advanced in years. The first dawn of his good fortune was the distinction paid him by Mr. Addison, who selected him from the tribe of young actors to play the part of *Marcus* in "Cato." The author and his friend Steele invited him to a tavern some time before the play was acted, and instructed him in his part. The old gentleman felt an honest pleasure in recollecting that early mark of favour bestowed on him by men of such eminence.—*Thomas Davies.*

Ryan is spoken of in terms of the warmest praise by his biographer, who fancying himself obliged to write nevertheless in the language of candour, confesses, while he speaks of his person and features as the model of symmetry and perfection, that having first received a blow on the nose in one affray, which turned it out of its place, and a brace of pistol-bullets in his mouth in another, which broke his jaw, these accidents so discomposed his voice that he became a most ridiculous object

of imitation, but that he remained a very deserving stage favourite to the last. It is universally acknowledged that he was a very sensible man and a most respectable member of society, and upon this account he was probably encouraged greatly beyond his professional merit. Nobody seems to have known this better than Quin, who, in the most friendly manner, after he had retired from the stage, performed *Falstaff* regularly for his benefit once a year, till he himself took a hint from nature and found that his deception would not do. In short, in spite of whatever may be said by those who, from the best intentions in the world, wish well to the reputation of Ryan, he never could have ranked on the stage as an actor of first-rate abilities.—*C. Dibdin.*

### Thomas Walker.

1698-1744.

In the early part of his life, when he first appeared at Drury-lane, he was taken notice of by Booth, who thought him worthy of his countenance and instruction. He had from nature great advantages of person and voice. His countenance was manly and expressive, which may be seen in a mezzotinto of him in the part of *Macheath*,<sup>1</sup> which is very like him. The humour, ease, and gaiety he assumed in this character established his own reputation, and was one great support of the "Beggars' Opera." He knew no more of music than barely singing in tune; and indeed, his singing was supported by his inimitable action, by his speaking to the eye, not charming the ear. In several parts of tragedy Walker's look, deportment, and action gave a distinguished glare to tyrannic rage and uncommon force to the vehemence of anger.—*T. Davies.*

Quin himself had so bad an opinion of the "Beggars' Opera" that he refused the part of *Captain Macheath*, and gave it to Walker, who acquired great celebrity by his grave yet animated performance of it.—*Boswell.*

Tom Walker, the original *Macheath*, was the famous *Massinello*, the fisherman of Naples, in Tom D'Urfey's farce, performed at the theatre, Lincoln's-inn-fields. Poor Walker

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<sup>1</sup> He was the original *Macheath* in "The Beggars' Opera."—ED.

was a great humorist, a member of many convivial clubs, who shortened his life by long drinking.—*Wine and Walnuts*.<sup>1</sup>

In his youth he was a very promising actor. The part of *Charles* in the "Nonjuror," gave him the first establishment as an actor. The applause he gained from performing the part of *Macheath* in the "Beggars' Opera" was fatal to him. He followed Bacchus too ardently, insomuch that his credit was often drowned upon the stage, and by degrees almost rendered him useless.—*Chetwood*.

## Henry Giffard.

1699-....

This gentleman was descended from an ancient family, originally in Buckinghamshire. His father had a numerous issue, he being the last of eight sons. He was born in London, in 1699. In the year 1716, he was made a clerk to the South Sea Company, in which post he remained three years. But having a strong propensity to the stage, he first appeared in public on the theatre in Bath, in 1719, and, in two years' probation, he made such progress that the manager of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre invited him to join his company, where he continued two years more. From thence he went to try his fortune in Ireland, where his merit soon brought him into the management. During his stay there, he married the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lydal, persons that made very good figures in the theatre. This gentlewoman died in child-bed very young, leaving behind her one son, born in his father's house on the North Strand, who is now an actor in this kingdom. Some years after Mr. Giffard married a second wife, who is now alive. She has an amiable person, and is a well-esteemed actress, both in tragedy and comedy; born, if I am not misinformed by her mother, the widow Lydal, in the year 1711. Mr. Giffard and spouse, if I mistake not, came over to England 1730, where they supported a company of comedians, then under the management of Mr. Odell, now deputy-licenser

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<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt speaks of "Wine and Walnuts" as "an antiquarian fiction, but not entirely such." The book is full of amusing anecdotes, but narrated in a dull, old-fashioned style.—ED.

of plays under the Lord Chamberlain, his Grace the Duke of Grafton. Mr. Odell, from not understanding the management of a company (as, indeed, how should any one, that is not, in some sort, brought up to that knowledge?) soon left it to Mr. Giffard, that did; who, in the year 1733, caused to be built an entire new, beautiful, convenient theatre, by the same architect with that of Covent Garden; where dramatic pieces were performed with the utmost elegance and propriety. Some years after he was obliged to quit that theatre (I may say by oppression), and occupied the vacant theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields. But his success did not answer his merit. From thence he transplanted himself into the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

## John Thurmond.

1700—1749.

He was an actor of repute in this kingdom about thirty years past, and stood in many capital parts, being then a sharer in old Smock Alley Theatre with Mr. Thomas Elrington, &c. To let you see how formerly even tragedy heroes were now and then put to their shifts, I'll tell you a short story that befel Mr. Thurmond. It was a custom, at that time, for persons of the first rank and distinction to give their birth-day suits to the most favoured actors. I think Mr. Thurmond was honoured by General Ingoldsby with his. But his finances being at the last tide of ebb, the rich suit was put in *buckle* (a cant word for forty in the hundred interest). One night, notice was given that the general would be present with the Government at the play, and all the performers on the stage were preparing to dress out in the suits presented. The spouse of Johnny (as he was commonly called) tried all her arts to persuade Mr. Holdfast, the pawnbroker (as it fell out, his real name) to let go the clothes for that evening, to be returned when the play was over. But all arguments were fruitless; nothing but the ready, or a pledge of full equal value. Such people would have despised a Demosthenes, or a Cicero, with all their rhetorical flourishes, if their oratorian gowns had been in pledge. Well! what must be done? The whole family in confusion, and all at their wit's end; disgrace, with her glaring eyes and extended mouth,

ready to devour. Fatal appearance! At last Winny, the wife (that is, Winnifrede), put on a composed countenance (but, alas! with a troubled heart); stepped to a neighbouring tavern, and bespoke a very hot negus, to comfort Johnny in the great part he was to perform that night, begging to have the silver tankard with the lid, because, as she said, a covering, and the vehicle silver, would retain heat longer than any other metal. The request was complied with, the negus carried to the play-house piping hot—popped into a vile earthen mug—the tankard *l'argent* travelled incog. under her apron (like the Persian ladies veiled), popped into the pawnbroker's hands, in exchange for the suit—put on, and played its part, with the rest of the wardrobe; when its duty was over, carried back to remain in its old depository—the tankard returned the right road; and, when the tide flowed with its lunar influence, the stranded suit was wafted into safe harbour again, after paying a little for dry docking, which was all the damages received. Mr. Thurmond died in London, when he was one of the company in Drury Lane Theatre; a merry, good-natured companion to the last.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

## Dennis Delane.

1700—1753.

Mr. Dennis Delane was a native of Ireland, descended from an ancient family. He first appeared on the Dublin stage and was very well received; his person and excellent voice, joined with his other merits, gained him the esteem he justly deserved. However, he set out for London, where he was recommended to the managers of Drury-lane, I think, in the year 1731; but their company being brimful, even to the running over, the managers did not give him the encouragement that the promise of his voice and person deserved. Mr. Giffard took hold of the occasion, and engaged him for his theatre in Goodman's-fields, where he had a better opportunity of shining without any rival ray. Mr. Quin, as I am informed (who can distinguish merit from his own superior judgment), prevailed upon him to leave that corner of the town, and act on the same stage with him, Covent-garden.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

Delane's person and voice were well adapted to the parts he

generally acted; *Alexander the Great* was his most admired and followed part, and his success in that character brought him from Goodamn's-fields to the more critical audience of Covent-garden. He had natural requisites which, with judgment and assiduity, would have rendered him a favourite actor; but his attachment to the bottle prevented him from rising to any degree of excellence. I think his chief merit was not generally understood. His address and manner were easy and polite; and he excelled more in the well-bred man, in a *Bevil* in the "Conscious Lovers" and a *Manly* in the "Provoked Husband," than in those parts which pushed him into notice.—*T. Davies.*

## Charles Hulet.

1701-1736.

He was born in the year 1701, and was by his father put prentice to a bookseller. By reading of plays in his master's shop, he used to repeat speeches in the kitchen in the evening, to the destruction of many a chair, which he substituted in the room of real persons in his drama. One night, as he was repeating the part of *Alexander* with his wooden representative of *Clytus* (an old elbow-chair), and coming to the speech where the old general is to be killed, this young mock *Alexander* snatched a poker instead of a javelin, and threw it with such strength against poor *Clytus* that the chair was killed upon the spot, and lay mangled on the floor. The death of *Clytus* made a monstrous noise, which disturbed the master in the parlour, who called out to know the reason; and was answered by the cook below, "Nothing, sir, but that *Alexander* has killed *Clytus*." His master, Mr. Edmund Curll, finding his inclination so strong for the stage, agreed to let him try his fortune there. He had a most extraordinary melodious voice, strong and clear; and in the part of *Macheath* in the "Beggars' Opera" he was allowed to excel the original. Then he was an excellent mimic, if excellency may be joined to mimicry. He took a little too much pride in the firmness of his voice; for he had an odd custom of stealing unperceived upon a person and with a *hem!* in his ear, deafen him for some time with the strength and loudness of his voice. Yet this customary folly (for folly it may be justly called) proved his fate; for the last *hem!* he gave broke a blood-vessel, which was the cause of his



death four-and-twenty hours after. He was a great benefactor to the malt-tax, which, in my opinion, was the cause of that mountain of flesh he was loaded with.—*Chetwood.*

Mr. Charles Hulet was endowed with great abilities for a player; but laboured under the disadvantage of a person rather too corpulent for the hero or the lover; but his port well became *Henry VIII.*, *Falstaff*, &c., and many other characters, both tragedy and comedy, in which he would have been equally excellent had his application and figure been proportionable to his qualifications, which, had he duly cultivated, he would have become a very considerable performer.—*Henry Giffard.*<sup>1</sup>

Hulet was a useful performer and a good singer.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Theophilus Cibber.

1703-1757.

Though Mr. Theophilus Cibber had some degree of merit in a variety of characters, and especially in brisk coxcombs, and more particularly in extravagant parts, such as *Pistol*, yet he generally mixed so much of false spirit and grimace in his acting, that he often displeased the judicious spectator.—*T. Davies.*

Theophilus Cibber, whose variegated and complicate history<sup>2</sup> was as scandalous, and would have been as noticeable as that of Savage, if he had been born with as much genius, who was forward in all manner of theatrical schisms and got into all manner of scrapes, who has been considered by Goldsmith and others to have fortunately escaped hanging by being drowned, who, in short, was a constant imposition in everything he said and did, all which is attributed by an author to his having been born on the day of the most memorable storm<sup>3</sup> ever known in this kingdom, which happened November 26th, 1703, brought

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Giffard was the manager of the theatre in Goodman's-fields, where Garrick made his first appearance. See page 79.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> His scampish character is sufficiently illustrated by his conduct towards his wife (see Mrs. Cibber). His habits were extravagant, and much of his life was passed in distress. He was drowned in crossing to Ireland.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> The storm, called "the great storm," one of the most terrible that ever raged in England. The devastation on land was immense, and in the harbours and on the coasts the loss in shipping and in lives was even

out, for we cannot say he wrote, six dramatic pieces.<sup>1</sup>—*Charles Dibdin.*

Mr. Theophilus Cibber received his education at Winchester School. His strong genius for the theatre brought him early upon the stage, where he has appeared in full lustre in the various branches of comedy; and though he has performed several parts in tragedy with success, in my imagination the *sock* sits easier upon him than the *buskin*.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

## Robert Wetherilt.

1708—1745.

This person was born at Stamford, in Lincolnshire, in the year 1708, where his father and mother, belonging to a country company, were then playing. He played, as he informed me, the part of the *Duke of York* in "Richard III.," before he could speak plain; so that it may be said he was born an actor. He came with his mother (who was a well-esteemed actress at that time) to Drury-lane a boy, where he showed his rising genius, first in the part of *Squire Richard* in the "Provoked Husband;" from thence he went to the theatre in Goodman's-fields, where he married the sister of Mr. Dennis Delane, then of that theatre. In the year 1738, he came over into this kingdom, and may be well remembered; his excellence, in several parts of comedy, having not yet been outdone. I cannot avoid mentioning a passage in the life of this truly good comedian. While he and his family belonged to the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane, after the company had finished the season of playing in London (which generally is at the end of May), he, with his father and mother, went, for the summer season, to play

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greater.—*Haydn.* This storm supplied Addison with his celebrated simile of the Angel in his poem "The Campaign:"—

"So when an angel by divine command  
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,  
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,  
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;  
And pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,  
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> They were "Henry VI.," "The Lover," "Pattie and Peggy," "The Harlot's Progress," "Romeo and Juliet," and the "Auction." Shakespeare, Allan Ramsay, and Fielding were the authors "improved" by Cibber in the above pieces.—ED.

at several towns in Lincolnshire (the custom of many of both established theatres). When the company were summoned to meet in London at the usual time (the latter end of August) to begin the winter-season, I received the following short letter :

“ Grantham, August 2nd.

“ SIR,—Mr. Wetherilt, and his wife, beg you will excuse them to Mr. Wilks ; their son is at the point of death. They beg an answer. Be pleased to direct to your humble servant R. Stukely, apothecary, in Grantham, Lincolnshire.”

The meaning why I mention this letter is, that the son, the very night this letter was written, in all appearance, expired, was stripped and washed, the bed taken away, and he laid stretched on a mat, with a basin of salt (a common custom in England) placed on his stomach, the inconsolable parents removed to another house, the coffin brought to the son's chamber, and the windows all open. About eight at night a person was sent with a light to watch the corpse. When she opened the door, the first object she perceived was poor Bob (as he was generally called by his familiars) sitting up, with his teeth trembling in his head (and well they might) with cold. The woman, in her fright, dropped the candle, and screamed out, “ The devil ! the devil ! ” This fright alarmed another woman below, who ran upstairs to see what was the matter. In the meantime Bob, with much ado, had made a shift to get from the bed ; and, taking up the candle, which lay upon the floor unextinguished, was creeping to the door to call for assistance, as naked as from the womb of his mother ; which the two women perceiving, with joint voices repeated again, “ A ghost ! a ghost ! the devil ! the devil ! ” The master of the house, hearing this uproar, ran himself to know the reason ; where poor Bob, the supposed devil, and he, soon came to a right understanding. He was put into a warm bed, to the unspeakable joy of his desponding parents, and in ten days after in London (*viva voce*) told me the whole story of his death. This accident, when real death paid him a visit, worked so strongly upon his forlorn parents, that they would not let his corpse be confined till five days after he expired. Vain hope ! He died in 1743, in the thirty-fifth year of his age. Both his parents died soon after him. I am sorry to end this account with saying, his company was so desirable, that he had many trials of

skill with his constitution. He was buried, in a very genteel manner, in the round churchyard.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

### Lavinia Fenton (Duchess of Bolton).

1708—1760.

The person who acted *Polly* (in the "Beggars' Opera"<sup>1</sup>), till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town; her pictures were engraved and sold in great numbers; her life written, books of letters and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her sayings and jests.—*Note to the "Dunciad."*

She was a very accomplished and most agreeable companion; had much wit, strong good sense, and a just taste in polite literature. Her person was agreeable and well made,

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<sup>1</sup> She was the original *Polly* in the "Beggars' Opera." Gay, the author of the piece, had carried his play to Mr. Cibber at Drury-lane, who rejected it; he then took it to Mr. Rich, at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, who had the wisdom to accept it. Its success was not anticipated. It was produced at the smallest cost for which it could be put on the stage, and the part of *Polly* was assigned to Miss Fenton, a young woman of handsome person, but of no reputation, who had indeed acted, not without success, the character of *Cherry* in the "Beaux' Stratagem," but who was willing to come to Rich for a salary of fifteen shillings a week. The Newgate pastoral, as Swift had called it, was the greatest success the stage had ever seen. It made the fortune of many connected with it; it put a large sum into the pocket of Gay, and left Rich, whom it had found poor, opulent. The success of the "Beggars' Opera" so elated Gay that he wrote a second part, which he called "*Polly*;" but the Chamberlain refused to license it. The truth was, the immoral tendencies of the "Beggars' Opera" had been very seriously commented upon. Swift, indeed, and others had commended it as a performance that placed all kinds of vice in the strongest and most odious light; but a numerous party, led by Dr. Herring, Archbishop of Canterbury, pronounced it in the highest degree injurious to public morals. It imparted, they said, to vice a sentimental colouring which would increase its attractions, and perplex or confound the speculations of such of the ignorant as might be disposed to virtue. They also declared that it gave dignity to the character of the great social pest of the day, the highwayman, and that it was calculated to increase the number of robbers by representing the hero with a conscience, and by dismissing him without punishment. In most ages the same causes produce the same consequences. In our own day the result of the introduction of *Jack Sheppard* on the stage as a hero must illustrate and confirm the objections of the opponents of the "Beggars' Opera."—ED.

though I think she could never be called a beauty. I have had the pleasure of being at table with her, when her conversation was much admired by the first characters of the age, particularly by old Lord Bathurst and Lord Granville.—*Dr. Joseph Walton.*

The famous *Polly*, Duchess of Bolton, is dead, having after a life of merit relapsed into her Pollyhood. Two years ago, ill at Tonbridge, she picked up an Irish surgeon. When she was dying, this fellow sent for a lawyer to make her will; but the man finding who was to be her heir instead of her children, refused to draw it. The Court of Chancery did furnish another less scrupulous, and her three sons have but a thousand pounds apiece, the surgeon nine thousand.—*Horace Walpole.*

The impression made by Miss Fenton in *Polly*, both by her singing and acting, was most powerful. Her popularity had reached its apex, and the manager, Mr. Rich, in order to secure her future services, was induced to increase his former liberality; and a second offer of *double* the amount of her previous salary presented to the young actress an income so truly magnificent that she was dazzled into a prompt acceptance of—*thirty shillings* a week! . . . The abilities of Miss Fenton cannot be disputed; the universal panegyrics of the time, and the anxiety of the managers to monopolize her services, assure us that no actress or singer could, at any period of the drama, be more popular. Not a print-shop or fan-shop but exhibited her handsome figure in her *Polly's* costume, which possessed all the characteristic simplicity of the modern Quakeress, without one meretricious ornament; and the stage presented her in this style of dress for sixty-three consecutive representations of the same character, when the theatre was crowded in every part by her admirers; indeed, so painfully was she importuned and pursued by her numerous lovers, that it was deemed expedient that some confidential friends should guard her nightly home, to prevent her being hurt by the crowd or run away with.—*Mrs. Charles Matthews.*

Miss Fenton, the original *Lucy Lockit* of "The Beggars' Opera," who was married to the Duke of Bolton, became after her elevation so obnoxious to the lower orders about the place of her residence, that they were with difficulty prevented from dragging her out of her coffin. The cause of this extraordinary antipathy is not exactly known.—*New Monthly Magazine.*

Charlotte Charke.<sup>1</sup>

1710-1760.

Her maiden name was Cibber. She was put to school at eight years old, and had an education more suitable to a boy than a girl. As she grew up, she accordingly delighted in masculine amusements—shooting, hunting, riding, &c. Her actions were not only mischievous, but frequently attended with danger. This wildness, however, was checked in a measure by her marriage, when very young, with Mr. Richard Charke, an eminent performer on the violin; but a disagreement between the parties afterwards occasioned a separation. Hereupon she applied herself to the stage, but as much from inclination as necessity. Her first character was *Mademoiselle*, in the “Provoked Wife;” and from this she rose to *Alicia*, in “Jane Shore,” and *Andromache*, in the “Distressed Wife;” in all which she met with a favourable reception. She was then engaged on a good salary at the Haymarket; and after that at Drury-lane. She now enjoyed a comfortable situation, and was like to have made no inglorious figure in theatric life had not her bad temper induced her to quarrel with Fleetwood, the then manager, whom she not only left on a sudden without any previous notice, but even vented her spleen against him in public by a little dramatic farce, called “The Art of Management.” She then commenced strolling actress, and returned to London in 1755, when she published a “Narrative of her Life,” in which she says, that when she had thrown herself out of employment, she set up as a grocer and oilwoman in Long-acre, but was robbed and cheated by sharpers. She then opened a puppet-show, which failed. Soon after the death of Mr. Charke, she was arrested for a small sum, and procured her discharge by a subscription among the “ladies” who kept coffee-houses in and about Covent-garden. Disguising her sex, she then became a performer among the lowest of actors, and afterwards engaged with a noble gentleman as *valet-de-chambre*. She also made and sold sausages for the support of herself and child; and this failing, became a waiter at the

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<sup>1</sup> She was a younger daughter of Colley Cibber.

King's Head Tavern in Marylebone.—*Hurst's "Biography of Female Character,"* 1803.

Mrs. Charke, whose memoirs in the annals of profligacy make almost as conspicuous a figure as those of Theophilus Cibber, her brother, who, a sort of English D'Eon,<sup>1</sup> amused herself in fencing, shooting, riding races, currying horses, digging in gardens, and playing upon the fiddle; who was at different times an actress, a grocer, an alehouse-keeper, a *valet-de-chambre*, a sausage seller, and a puppet-showwoman; one day in affluence, the next in indigence; now confined in a sponging-house, presently released by a subscription of prostitutes; in short, one of those disgraces to the community that ought not to be admitted into society, wrote three strange pieces, called "The Carnival," the "Art of Management," and "Tit for Tat."—*C. Dibdin.*

## William Mynitt.

1710–1763.

This gentleman was born of a good family, at Weobly, in Herefordshire, in the year 1710, where he received a good school education. He was sent to London very young to be put into business, but his friends, or rather, relations (who often prove our greatest enemies), neglecting his fortune, he turned his thoughts to the drama. However, he had not the vanity of most of the theatrical young heroes, who jump at once into your *Othello*, *Oroonoko*, *Hamlet*, or, *Captain Plume*; but wisely weighing his own talents, stepped into the part of *Polonius* in "Hamlet," where he gained such applause, that he resolved to put on the sock, with which he walked an easy pace in the right road to perfection. His first trial of skill was at the theatre in the Haymarket (commonly called the French House), where he gave such strokes of judgment that

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<sup>1</sup> Mademoiselle la Chevalier D'Eon du Beaumont, an extraordinary woman, born 1728, who was sent as a *man* by Louis XV. to the Court of Russia to treat with the Empress Elizabeth for an alliance, and for her successful negotiations was rewarded by a lieutenancy of dragoons. In 1759 she joined her regiment as captain, and was twice wounded at the engagement of Ulthrop; and at that of Ostervich she charged at the head of a detachment of dragoons, and completely routed a strong battalion Prussen de Rhes. She was subsequently appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of London.—ED.

alarmed his best antagonists. From his beginning encouragement he was solicited to add a promising member to the company of Bath, where there is a regular theatre, and an audience as difficult to be pleased as that in London, being generally persons of the highest rank that frequent those diversions in the capital. He had the good fortune to give satisfaction there, insomuch that several persons of distinction and taste promised to recommend him to one of the established theatres in London. But a company that season setting out for Ireland, he was resolved to accompany them, and cultivate his genius in this kingdom. His knowledge in music is some addition to his merit, and in his walk of acting he may keep pace with the best on both sides the water. I never saw Mrs. Mynitt perform any part; but as she has an amiable person and excellent voice, I have taken it upon trust that she is an agreeable actress both in tragedy and comedy. But the bulk of the letters in the bills are the distinguished characteristics of merit. It puts me in memory of a Mandarin I saw at Canton in China, who was lifted on a throne of state to public view, while a dozen of his slaves that bore him in triumph through the streets were covered with a curtain, and no more of their persons seen but the regular steps of their feet.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

### Thomas Davies.

1710-1785.

With him came mighty Davies; (on my life,  
That Davies has a very pretty wife!<sup>1</sup>)  
Statesman all over, in plots famous grown,  
He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone.

*Churchill.*<sup>2</sup>

He played *Fainall* in "The Way of the World," when Mr. Taylor and many friends were present. He seemed "an old

<sup>1</sup> This pretty wife died in 1801, it is said, in a workhouse.

<sup>2</sup> Churchill's sarcasm drove poor Davies from the stage. Johnson very justly blamed his folly in abandoning a profession by which he and his wife earned five hundred pounds a year. "What a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line!" he exclaimed. "Another line would have driven him from his shop!" Mediocre as a writer, tenth-rate as an



formal-looking man, with a dull gravity in his acting and a hollow rumbling in his voice." He made a speech, owning his inability, but hoping his good-will would be accepted. He seemed to decay gradually.—*Fitzgerald*.

Once an actor—now a conceited bookseller.—*Garrick*.

My predecessor, as an historian of the stage, Thomas Davies, had failed in his business as a bookseller, and returning to his very humble efforts as an actor for a single night, took a benefit on the 27th (of May, 1778). He chose, "a stroke of undesigned severity," the comedy of "The Way of the World," and after a silence of fifteen years performed the part of *Fainall*. Davies's countenance was Garrick's with all its fire quenched. His expression was placid and genteel, and in my youth I used to call in upon him, and enjoy his kind and communicative spirit, in the small parlour, behind his shop in Russell-street, Covent-garden. In his difficulties he obliged me with sundry books in which his own name had been written. I hope even then I felt that it increased their value.—*Boaden*.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talent, with the advantage of a liberal education; though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson-esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected many of Johnson's sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner while relating them.—*Boswell's "Life of Johnson."*

Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman.—*Dr. Johnson*.

actor, of narrow parts and slight wit, Davies nevertheless somehow contrived to hold his own in the brilliant society in whose records we find his name constantly recurring. Johnson patronized him, ate his dinners and leered at his wife; and what Johnson did and liked the others who formed his set were bound to approve. The haughty Beauclerc, however, had some difficulty in disguising his contempt for the little bookseller. Once at a dinner-party Davies slapped Moody, the actor, on the back, in approbation of his argument. When Boswell mentioned this to Beauclerc, he declared "that he could conceive nothing more humiliating than to be slapped on the back by Tom Davies."—*ED.*

Davies, who was a better gossip than critic, though he affected literature, was an actor himself of the mouthing order, if we are to believe Churchill, and his criticisms show him enough inclined to lean favourably to that side.—*Leigh Hunt*.

## William Havard.

1710—1778.

Havard undertook the tragedy of “Charles I.” at the desire of the manager of the company of Lincoln’s-inn-fields, to which he then belonged, in 1737. The manager had probably read of the salutary effects produced on the genius of Euripides by seclusion in his cave, and he was determined to give Havard the same advantage in a garret during the composition of his task. He invited him to his house, took him up to one of its airiest apartments, and there locked him up for so many hours every day, well knowing his desultory habits ; nor released him, after he had once turned the *davis tragica*, till the unfortunate bard had repeated through the key-hole a certain number of new speeches in the progressive tragedy.—*Thomas Campbell*.

Here Havard, all serene, in the same strains,  
Loves, hates, and rages, triumphs and complains ;  
His easy, vacant face proclaim’d a heart  
Which could not feel emotions nor impart.—*Churchill*.

Not unaccomplish’d in the scenic art,  
He grac’d the stage, and often reach’d the heart ;  
From his own scenes he taught distress to flow,  
And manly virtue wept for civil woe.  
Malevolence and envy he ne’er knew,  
He never felt their darts and never threw ;  
With his best care he form’d into his plan  
The moral duties of the social man.—*Paul Whitehead*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ May I—can worse disgrace on manhood fall?—

Be born a Whitehead and baptized a Paul.—*Churchill*.

He was born 1710, and died 1774. “ Paul Whitehead,” says Lord Dover, “ a satirical poet of bad character, was the son of a tailor. In politics Whitehead was a follower of Bubb Dodington ; in private life he was the friend and companion of the profligate Sir Francis Dashwood, Wilkes, Churchill, &c., and, like them, was a member of the ‘ Hell-fire Club.’ ”—*ED*.

He was a worthy, unobtrusive, harmless man, one of the objects of Garrick's talent for mimicry, and that is all.—*Boaden*.<sup>1</sup>

Havard the actor (better known from the urbanity of his manners by the familiar name of Billy Havard) had the misfortune to be married to a most notorious shrew and drunkard. One day, dining at Garrick's, he was complaining of a violent pain in his side. Mrs. Garrick offered to prescribe for him. "No, no," said her husband, "that will not do, my dear; Billy has mistaken his disorder; his great complaint lies in his rib."—*Theatrical Anecdotes*.

Havard, a respectable writer and a reputable character, wrote "Scanderbeg," founded upon Lillo's "Christian Hero," which had little success. "King Charles I." did credit to the author and the stage, but Lord Chesterfield's remark on it, in his famous speech against the licensing act, was that it was of too recent, too melancholy, and too solemn a nature to be heard of anywhere but in the pulpit. "Regulus" had some sterling merit, but it had but little success. "The Elopement," a mere farce, was acted only at his benefit.—*C. Dibdin*.

Havard was one of Garrick's "old guard," and was always faithful and true, and, when leaving the stage, had the unusual grace to write his old master a grateful and kindly letter. He was linked with the old days. Garrick had been truly kind, and after his last benefit, made him a present of a horse.—*Fitzgerald*.

No performer of his assiduity deserved encouragement more than he did. He acted a variety of characters, both in tragedy and comedy, and was constantly before the eyes of a critical audience. Such was the soundness of his judgment and so respectable his character, that he never met with any marks of displeasure from the public; on the contrary, he was constantly favoured with their countenance and approbation.—*T. Davies*.

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<sup>1</sup> Of James Boaden, a well-known dramatic critic, a writer says:—"His plays are numerous, but we believe there is not one of them that keeps the stage. Far more important are his dramatic memoirs. In them he has left probably the best record that the world can now have of John Kemble, Mrs. Jordan, and Mrs. Siddons." He died, 1839, aged seventy-seven.

Mrs. Cibber.<sup>1</sup>

1710-1766.

Formed for the tragic scene to grace the stage,  
 With rival excellence of love and rage,  
 Mistress of each soft art, with matchless skill  
 To turn and wind the passions as she will ;  
 To melt the heart with sympathetic woe,  
 Awake the sigh, and teach the tear to flow ;  
 To put on phrenzy's wild distracted glare,  
 And freeze the soul with horror and despair ;  
 With just desert enrolled in deathless fame,  
 Conscious of worth superior, Cibber came.—*Churchill.*

Mrs. Cibber, I think, got more reputation than she deserved, as she had a great sameness ; though her expression was undoubtedly very fine.—*Dr. Johnson.*

Cibber, with fascinating art,  
 Could wake the pulses of the heart.

*Dr. Syntax's Tours.*

When Mr. Whitehead's comedy of the "School for Lovers" was read before the performers at Garrick's house, it was suggested that the age of *Celia* (the character intended for Mrs. Cibber), which was sixteen, would be better altered to two or three and twenty. Mrs. Cibber, who was then reading her part with spectacles, said she liked the character better as it was, and desired it might remain as it stood. She was then more than fifty years old ; but the uncommon symmetry and exact proportion in her form, with her singular vivacity, enabled her to represent the character with all the juvenile appearance marked by the author.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

Mrs. Cibber had very pathetic powers ; her features, though not beautiful, were delicate, and very expressive ; but she uniformly pitched her silver voice, so sweetly plaintive, in too high a key to produce that endless variety of intonation with which Mrs. Siddons declaims.—*Miss Seward.*

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Cibber was sister to the celebrated Dr. Arne. Arne was born in 1710. "He was a musician," says Leigh Hunt, "against his father's will, and practised in the garret on a muffled spinet when the family had gone to

Mrs. Cibber, in a key high-pitched, but sweet withal, sung, or rather recited, Rowe's harmonious strain something in the manner of the improvisatore's. It was so extremely wanting in contrast, that though it did not wound the ear, it wearied it; when she had once recited two or three speeches, I could anticipate the manner of every succeeding one; it was like a long, old, legendary ballad of innumerable stanzas, every one of which is sung to the same tune, eternally chiming in the ear without variation or relief.—*R. Cumberland.*

Her features, figure, and singing, made her appear the best *Ophelia* that ever appeared either before or since.—*Tate Wilkinson.*

John Taylor told me that she strongly resembled Mrs. Siddons in the indescribable power of her eyes. When Garrick heard of her death he exclaimed, "Then Tragedy is dead on one side!" meaning female actors.—*T. Campbell.*

It was curious her face should resemble Garrick's so remarkably that she might have passed as his sister.<sup>1</sup> Never was there such tender, melting notes, such passion, such grief, and in the true pathos of Otway she was at home and unapproachable. Yet her favourite "demi-chant," pitched rather high, yet still keeping its musical sweetness, seemed to belong to the conventionality of the old school; and it is surprising

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bed. He was sent to Eton, which was probably of use to him in confirming his natural refinement, but nothing could hinder his devoting himself to the art. It is said the old man had no suspicion of his advancement in it, until, going to a concert one evening, he was astonished to see his son exalted, bow in hand, as the leader. Seeing the praises bestowed on him, he suffered him to become what nature designed him for." Hunt and Boaden give him high praise as a musician. Churchill satirized him in some sharp verses, beginning,—

" Let Tommy Arne, with usual pomp of style,  
Whose chief, whose only merit's to compile,  
Who meanly pilfering here and there a bit,  
Deals music out as Murphy deals out wit,  
Publish proposals," &c.

He died 1778.—*ED.*

<sup>1</sup> "In their person," says Davies, "they were both somewhat below the middle size; he was, though short, well made; she, though in her form not graceful, and scarcely genteel, was by the elegance of her manner and symmetry of her features, rendered very genteel. From similarity of complexion, size, and countenance, they would have been easily supposed to be brother and sister." Cumberland bears out this statement. (See note to David Garrick.)—*ED.*

that, under Garrick's teaching and companionship, she should have retained it. Her tenderness was natural, for it was said that in pathetic parts she wept genuine tears, and that her agitation turned her face pale even through the rouge. She was not what is called a "fine woman," but she had that look of interest and sympathy which is a superior charm.—*P. Fitzgerald*, "*Life of Garrick*."

Mrs. Susannah Maria Cibber was daughter to Mr. Arne, an upholsterer, who lived in King-street, Covent-garden, and was born much about the time the Indian Kings, mentioned by the *Spectator*,<sup>1</sup> were lodged in her father's house. When very young her voice was so melodious that her friends entertained great hopes of her becoming a very excellent singer; and I believe she acted, when she was about fourteen years of age, the part of *Tom Thumb* in the opera of that name, which was set to music by her brother, the celebrated Dr. Arne, and performed at the little theatre in the Haymarket. She certainly made some considerable progress in music, and was occasionally employed to sing at concerts. When she was married to Theophilus Cibber, his father, Colley Cibber, observed to his son, that though his wife's voice was very pleasing, and she had a good taste in music, yet as she could never arrive at more than the rank of a second-rate singer, her income would be extremely limited. The old man added, that he had overheard her repeat a speech from a tragedy, and he judged by her manner that her ear was good. Upon this she became a pupil to her father-in-law; and he publicly declared that he took infinite pleasure in the instruction of so promising a genius. To what I have already said of Mrs. Cibber's inimitable power of acting, I have little more to add. Her great excellence consisted in that simplicity which needed no ornament; in that sensibility which despised all art. There was in her person little or no elegance; in her countenance a small share of beauty; but nature had given her such symmetry of form and fine expression of feature, that she preserved all the appearance of youth long after she had reached to middle life.

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<sup>1</sup> In No. 50. Addison was the writer of the paper; and Swift in his "Journal" complains of Addison appropriating all his "under-hints." The four kings with queer names were Iroquois chiefs. They had been told that the English were vassals of the French, and that our Saviour was born in France and crucified in England.—ED.

The harmony of her voice was as powerful as the animation of her look. In grief or tenderness her eyes looked as if they were in tears ; in rage and despair they seemed to dart flashes of fire. In spite of the unimportance of her figure, she maintained a dignity in her action and a grace in her step.—*Thomas Davies, "Life of Garrick."*

She captivated every ear by the sweetness and expression of her voice in singing.—*Dr. Burney.*

She was more unfortunate than Mrs. Barry, the mistress of Lord Rochester ; for she was the wife of Theophilus Cibber, who sold her, and then brought an action against her seducer. . . . He laid his damages at 5000*l.*, and the jury awarded him two hundred shillings.<sup>1</sup> It was the fashion in those days to chant, to declaim in a sort of sing-song. The famous Barry "had a manner of drawing out her words." Mrs. Barry imitated her in the habit "of prolonging and timing her pronunciation ;" and Mrs. Cibber excelled them all in that demi-chant to which the public ear had become accustomed, and which we daresay was very delightful, though in those of her contemporaries it seemed to harmonize—heaven knows how!—with Garrick's acting.—*Blackwood's Magazine, 1834.*

Mrs. Cibber was a most exquisite actress. In all characters of tenderness and pathos, in which the workings of the feeling mind call for the force of excessive sensibility, she was like Garrick ; the character she represented—love, rage, resentment, pity, disdain, and all those gradations of the various passions, she greatly felt, and vigorously expressed. Her face, her figure, and her manner, were irresistibly impressive, and her voice was penetrating to admiration. Actresses may have had more

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<sup>1</sup> In 1730 was produced "The Lover," written by "Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian." This play he dedicated to his wife in language which might have been designed to conceal from the public—who then read the last new play as we now read the last new novel—his real feelings towards Mrs. Cibber. "Your tender terrors," says he, "wrought so visibly upon the more generous part of the audience, that whatever life it (the play) has to come, I shall judge it entirely owing to the pity that arose from your personal concern ; but your behaviour in the epilogue reached even the hearts of enemies, and made them my involuntary friends for your sake. To whom then could I with more justice dedicate this play than to her who has so effectually protected it? and has now convinced me of what vast use to any actor is a good character in private life, which I doubt not will be one strong motive to your preserving of yours, as it ought to be to the mending that of your sincerely Loving Husband."—ED.

majesty, more fire, but I believe that all the tragic characters, truly feminine, greatly conceived, and highly written, had a superior representative in Mrs. Cibber than in any other actress. She was certainly not so happy in comedy; but it would be no bad compliment to the present day if there were any actress who could perform it half so well.—*C. Dibdin.*

### Mrs. Clive.

1711-1785.

Miss Rastor (Mrs. Clive) had a facetious turn of humour and infinite spirits, with a voice and manner in singing songs of pleasantry peculiar to herself. Those talents Mr. Theo. Cibber and I (we all at that time living together in one house) thought a sufficient passport to the theatre. We recommended her to the laureate (Colley Cibber), whose infallible judgment soon found out her excellencies, and the moment he heard her sing, put her down in the list of performers at twenty shillings a week. But never any person of her age flew to perfection with such rapidity. . . . Her first appearance was in the play of "Mithridates, King of Pontus," in *Ismenes*, the page to *Ziphares*, in boy's clothes, where a song, proper to the circumstances of the scene, was introduced, which she performed with extraordinary applause.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage."*

Mrs. Clive was the best player I ever saw.—*Dr. Johnson.*

What Clive did best she did better than Garrick, but could not do half so many things well. She was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature.—*Ibid.*

It is your misfortune to bring the greatest genius for acting on the stage at a time when the factions and divisions among the players have conspired with the folly, injustice, and barbarity of the town to finish the ruin of the stage, and sacrifice our own native entertainments to a wanton affected fondness for foreign music; and when our nobility seem eagerly to rival each other in distinguishing themselves in favour of Italian theatres and in neglect of our own. However, the few who have yet so much English taste and good nature left as sometimes to visit that stage where you exert your great abilities, never fail to receive you with the approbation you deserve; nay, you extort, by the force of your merit, the



applause of those who are languishing for the return of Cuzzoni.<sup>1</sup>—*H. Fielding.*

First giggling, plotting chambermaids arrive,  
 Hoydens and romps led on by General Clive.  
 In spite of outward blemishes she shone,  
 For humour fam'd, and humour all her own.  
 Easy, as if at home, the stage she trod,  
 Nor sought the critic's praise, nor fear'd his rod.  
 Original in spirit and in ease,  
 She pleas'd by hiding all attempts to please.  
 No comic actress ever yet could raise  
 On humour's base more merit or more praise.—*Churchill.*

Mrs. Clive was a mixture of combustibles: she was passionate, cross, vulgar, yet sensible, a very sensible woman, and as a comic actress of genuine worth—indeed, indeed she was a diamond of the first water. When her scene of the *Fine Lady* came on, she was received with the usual expression of gladness on her approach, as so charming an actress truly deserved; and her song from the Italian Opera, where she was free with a good ridiculous take-off of Signora Mingotti, was universally encored, and she came off the stage much sweetened in temper and manners from her first going on. “Ay,” said she, in triumph, “that artful devil (Garrick) could not hurt me with the town, though he had struck my name out of the bill.” She laughed and joked about her late ill-humour as though she could have kissed all around her, though that happiness was not granted, but willingly excused.—*Tate Wilkinson.*

<sup>1</sup> “The operas,” says Mr. T. Wright, “had flourished equally with the masquerades, and were looked upon with jealousy by those who advocated the dignity of the legitimate English stage. Singers and dancers from Italy, such as Cuzzoni, and Faustina, and Farinelli, obtained large sums of money and returned to build themselves palaces at home, while first-rate actors at Drury Lane or Lincoln’s Inn Fields experienced a difficulty in obtaining respectable audiences.” And yet low as seemed the fortunes of the Stage at that period, Fielding had written in the *Covent Garden Journal*, when the opera was in its fullest swing of success: “The stage at present promises a much better provision than any of the professions. . . . The income of an actor of any rank is from six to twelve hundred a year; whereas that of two-thirds of the gentlemen of the army is considerably under one hundred; the income of nine-tenths of the clergy is less than fifty pounds a year; and the profits of the law, to ninety-nine in the hundred, amount not to a single shilling.”

Clive, like Shakspeare's toad, "ugly and venomous," but with a jewel of liveliness and spirit in her head, a bustle and animation, the established titular-chambermaid and hoyden, which in our time might have privileged her to lose all self-restraint and self-respect, and allow her to play any trick or buffoonery. But with her it was all nature, and the stage to her was a room at her own lodgings.—*Fitzgerald.*

Mrs. Clive when very young had a strong propensity to acting. Her first theatrical engagement to Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, in 1727, was principally owing to the goodness of her voice, and to some proficiency which she had made in singing; nor till her merit as an actress showed itself in *Nell*, the cobbler's wife,<sup>1</sup> was she considered in any other light than as one qualified to entertain the audience with a song between the acts of a play, or to act some innocent country girl, such as *Phillida* in "Damon and Phillida." An engraving of her in that character is still to be seen in the print-shops. The comic abilities of this actress have not been excelled, nor indeed scarcely equalled, by any performer, male or female, these fifty years; she was so formed by nature to represent a variety of lively, laughing, droll, humorous, affected, and absurd characters, that what Colley Cibber said of Nokes may with equal truth be applied to her; for Clive had such a stock of comic force about her, that she, like Nokes, had little more to do than to perfect herself in the words of a part and to leave the rest to nature; and if he, by the mere power of his action, kept alive several comedies, which after his death became obsolete, it may be justly said of her, that she created several parts in plays of which the poet scarce furnished an outline, and that many dramatic pieces are now lost to the stage for want of her animating spirit to preserve them.—*T. Davies.*

Clive, though she tried composition, had never mastered the elements of language, and she spelt most audaciously.—*Boaden.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In "The Devil to Pay."

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the elder Colman she writes: "There is nothing to be said on these Melancolly occasions To a person of understanding—fools Can not *feel* people of sense *must* and *will* and when they have Sank their spirits till they are ill will find that nothing but submission can give any Consolation to Inevitable missfortunes."—ED.

Here liv'd the laughter-loving dame—  
 A matchless actress, Clive her name ;  
 The Comic Muse with her retir'd,  
 And shed a tear when she expir'd.—*H. Walpole.*<sup>1</sup>

The jovial, ugly, witty, sensible actress, who by her bustle and humour, is recorded to have saved the fifth act of the new comedy endangered by want of sufficient rehearsal.—*C. R. Leslie.*

The evening for the card-party at length arrived, and its principal attraction was Mrs. Clive, the celebrated actress, who having retired from the stage on a handsome competency, rented a villa on the bank of the Thames, of Horace Walpole. Owing to her amazing celebrity as a comic actress, and as during her long theatrical career calumny itself had never aimed the slightest arrow at her fame, honest Kitty Clive (for so she was familiarly called) was much noticed in the neighbourhood. Yet from her eccentric disposition, strange, eccentric temper, and frank blunt manner, Mrs. Clive did not always go off with quite so much *éclat* in private as in public life, particularly if she happened to be crossed by that touchstone of temper, gaming. Quadrille was proposed, and all immediately took their stations. I soon observed Mrs. Clive's countenance alternately redden and turn pale. At last her Manille went, and with it the remnants of her temper. Her face was of an universal crimson, and tears of rage seemed ready to start into her eyes. At that very moment, as Satan would have it, her opponent, a dowager, whose hoary head and eyebrows were as white as those of an Albinos, triumphantly and briskly demanded payment for the two black aces. "Two black aces!" answered the enraged loser, in a voice rendered almost unintelligible by passion; "here, take the money, though instead, I wish I could give you *two black eyes, you old white cat!*"—*Frederick Reynolds.*

She was the favourite *Nell* of the stage in the "Devil to Pay," and similar characters: and according to Garrick there

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<sup>1</sup> To these lines, Peter Pindar, having Mrs. Jordan in mind, wrote the following reply:—

"Truth and thy trumpet seem not to agree ;  
 Know Comedy is hearty—all alive—  
 The sprightly lass no more expir'd with Clive,  
 Than dame Humility will die with thee."—*ED.*

was something of the devil to pay in all her stage life. She might have been Macklin's sister for humour, judgment, and a sturdiness of purpose amounting to violence, not unmixed with generosity. The latter part of her life she spent in retirement at Strawberry Hill, where she was a neighbour and friend to Horace Walpole, whose effeminacy she helped to keep on the alert. It always seems to us as if she had been the man of the two and he the woman.—*Leigh Hunt.*

She was the most dramatic, the veriest Thalia off the stage I ever knew—only among friends, I should tell you, for in company she was the complete gentlewoman, and deservedly admitted on easy terms to the society of some of the first ladies in the land. There was another, her friend Mistress Hannah Pritchard—she too was on the same footing with women of rank. Sir, the retiring of two such actresses in the same year or thereabouts was a sad blow upon Garrick, and a great loss to the lovers of the genuine drama at the same time ; for certainly, as regards some of their leading characters, they left a void which none could fill.—*Wine and Walnuts.*

### Mrs. Pritchard.

1711-1768.

Oft have I, Pritchard, seen thy wondrous skill,  
 Confess'd thee great, but thought thee greater still.  
 That worth, which shone in scatter'd rays before,  
 Collected now, breaks forth with double power.  
 The "Jealous Wife!"<sup>1</sup> on that thy trophies raise,  
 Inferior only to the author's praise.—*Churchill.*

Something of her Bartholomew Fair<sup>2</sup> origin may be traced in

<sup>1</sup> Written by the elder Colman.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> The following account of Bartholomew Fair is abridged from the description by Mark Lemon :—"Bartholomew Fair was granted to Rayère, the King's Jester, by Henry I. It was the principal cloth fair in England at the time of Elizabeth. When the City obtained a share of the tolls, the fair was proclaimed by the Lord Mayor at the entrance to Cloth Fair. His lordship then called upon the keeper of Newgate, and had a cool tankard of wine, nutmeg and sugar, and the custom only ceased on the second mayoralty of Sir Matthew Wood. Lord Chancellor Rich bought St. Bartholomew, and there had his town mansion, and all the tolls of the fair and the market which had pertained aforetime to the old Priory. The

Mrs. Pritchard's professional characteristics. She never rose to the finest grades even of comedy, but was most famous in scolds and viragoes. In tragedy, though she had a large imposing figure, she wanted grace in her manner, and was too loud and profuse in her expression of grief. Garrick told Tate Wilkinson that she was apt to blubber her sorrows.—*T. Campbell, "Life of Siddons."*

Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of "Macbeth" through. She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather of which he is making a pair of shoes is cut.—*Dr. Johnson.*<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible, thought I, that Mrs. Pritchard, the greatest of all the *Lady Macbeths*, should never have read the play? And I concluded that the Doctor (Johnson) must have been misin-

Bartlemy property passed to Elizabeth, heiress to Sir Walter Cope, of Kensington. She is supposed to have originated Lady Holland's mob—a riotous assemblage of the showmen and traders at Bartlemy, some five thousand strong, which proclaimed in its own way that the fair was opened. At Bartlemy Fair, principally at the George Inn yard, Smithfield, Henry Fielding, one of the greatest of the great English prose-writers, kept a theatrical booth for nine years. Drury Lane and the other west-end theatres closed during the fair, and some of their best actors played at Bartlemy. The fair died of inanition about 1849, after giving the City authorities a great deal of trouble." Of the character of the performances at the booths the following "bill of the programme" may give some idea:—"At Crawly's booth, over against the Crown Tavern in Smithfield, during the time of Bartholomew Fair, will be presented a little opera, called 'The Old Creation of the World,' yet newly revived, with the addition of Noah's Flood; also several fountains playing water during the time of the play. The last scene does represent Noah and his family coming out of the ark with all the beasts, two by two, and all the fowls of the air seen in a prospect sitting upon trees; likewise over the ark is seen the rising sun, in a most glorious manner; moreover a multitude of angels will be seen, in a double rank, which presents a double prospect, one for the sun, the other for a palace, where will be seen six angels ringing of bells. Likewise machines descend from above, double and treble, with Dives rising out of hell, and Lazarus seen in Abraham's bosom, besides several figures dancing jigs, sarabands, and country dances, to the admiration of all spectators; with the merry conceits of 'Squire Punch' and 'Sir John Spendall.'" This was performed in the reign of Queen Anne.—*ED.*

<sup>1</sup> In a conversation Johnson had with Mrs. Siddons, he said, "Pritchard in common life was a vulgar idiot; she would talk of her *gown*; but when she appeared upon the stage seemed to be inspired by gentility and understanding."—*ED.*

formed ; but I was afterwards assured by a gentleman, a friend of Mrs. Pritchard's, that he had supped with her one night after she had acted *Lady Macbeth*, and that she declared that she had never perused the whole tragedy : I cannot believe it.—*Mrs. Siddons.*

The famous ghost scene (“*Macbeth*”) was a great triumph for Mrs. Pritchard. Her bye-play, her efforts to distract the attention of the company from her husband's extravagances, her assumed gaiety and courtesies, were not mere “points,” worked out by an ingenious and clever player, but true flashes of genius, and intended by the poet. Great actresses have since won applause by a heightening and repetition of these “points,” but it was Pritchard who led the way.—*Fitzgerald.*

She excelled in the *Queen-mother* of “*Hamlet*,” *Zara* in the “*Mourning Bride*,” *Merope*, *Creusa*, and more especially in *Queen Katherine*, the wife of Henry VIII. She gave to all these parts importance by her action, as well as speaking ; her few defects in tragedy proceeded from a too loud and profuse expression of grief and want of grace in her manner ; her natural ease of deportment and grandeur of person generally hid the defect of this last requisite from the common spectator. Her great force in comedy lay in a middle path, between parts of a superior life and those of humour in a lower class. Cibber's *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty Modish*, and *Maria* in the “*Nonjuror*,” she conceived accurately and acted pleasantly, and with applause, but neither her person nor manner was sufficiently elegant and graceful for the high-bred woman of fashion.—*T. Davies.*

Mrs. Pritchard was before my time. She was, it seems, one of those prodigies whom the stage inspires with elegance, taste, and correctness, which she never had, or affected to despise, in private life—a dangerous trick, if it be one, or a miraculous change without an adequate cause. Faulty pronunciation has adhered in my own time to many performers of both sexes and of great excellence—and the knowledge has exceeded the practice. But vulgarity in utterance is itself a debasing thing, and is but indifferently palliated by either the toilet or the dancing-master.—*Boaden.*

We should entertain a very high opinion of Mrs. Pritchard, even had she left us nothing but the face in her portraits. She seems to have been a really great genius, equally capable of the highest and lowest parts. The fault objected to her was, that

her figure was not genteel ; and we can imagine this well enough in an actress who could pass from *Lady Macbeth* to *Doll Common*. She seems to have thrown herself into the arms of sincerity and passion, not perhaps the most refined, but as tragic and comic as need be.—*Leigh Hunt*.

Her comic vein had every charm to please,  
 'Twas Nature's dictates breath'd with Nature's ease.  
 Even when her powers sustained the tragic load,  
 Full, clear, and just th' harmonious accents flow'd.  
 And the big passions of her feeling heart  
 Burst freely forth, and shamed the tragic art.  
 Oft on the scene, with colours not her own,  
 She painted vice, and taught us what to shun.  
 One virtuous track her real life pursued,  
 That nobler part was uniformly good.  
 Each duty there to such perfection wrought,  
 That, if the precepts failed, th' example taught.

*W. Whitehead.*<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Pritchard was an actress of a different class (from Mrs. Cibber) ; had more nature, and of course more change of tone, and variety both of action and expression ; in my opinion, the comparison was decidedly in her favour.—*R. Cumberland*.

She was everywhere great, everywhere impressive, and everywhere feminine.—*Charles Dibdin*.

Mrs. Pritchard was an actress of more general abilities than Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Cibber's acting was delightful, Mrs. Pritchard's commanding. One insinuated herself into the heart, the other took possession of it. Nothing could be so fortunate for the stage as this junction of separate talents. It made acting like a picture, with grand breadths of light and shade. We have seen the excellence of Mrs. Cibber ; that of Mrs. Pritchard was unceasing variety. *Lady Macbeth*, the *Queen* in "Hamlet," *Clarinda*, *Estifania*, *Doll Common*—in

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<sup>1</sup> William Whitehead was born 1714. He wrote with small success for the stage, but his poetry gained him (1757) the laureateship, Cibber being dead. Among his dramatic works are "The School for Lovers," "Creusa," and "The Roman Father." Churchill abused him, of which the effect was, that the managers refused to bring forward his dramas. Eight years afterwards, however, he made a present of a farce called "The Trip to Scotland," to Garrick, which was produced without his name. He died 1785, aged seventy.—E.D.

short, every species of strong nature received from her a polish and a perfection than which nothing could be more truly captivating. Cibber's judicious remark, that the life of beauty is too short to form a complete actress, proved so true in relation to Mrs. Pritchard that she was seen to fresh admiration, till in advanced age she retired with a fortune, to the great satisfaction of her numerous admirers.—*Ibid.*

## John Beard.

1716-1791.

A man universally beloved for his many amiable qualities.—*T. Davies.*

Mr. Beard, celebrated for his vocal talents, being one of the most popular singers that had appeared on the British stage. He was son-in-law of Mr. Rich, manager of Covent Garden Theatre, and for some years joint proprietor and acting manager with that gentleman.—*Wine and Walnuts.*

Where tyrants rule, and slaves with joy obey,  
Let slavish minstrels pour th' enervate lay:  
To Britons far more noble pleasures spring  
In native notes, while Beard and Vincent<sup>1</sup> sing.—*Churchill.*

I consider Beard, taken altogether, as the best English singer. He was one of those you might fairly try by Shakspeare's speech to the actors. He did not mouth it, but his words came trippingly from his tongue; he did not out-Herod Herod, but he begot a temperance that gave his exertions smoothness; he never outstepped the modesty of nature, nor made the judicious grieve; in short, he never did more than was set down for him; he never set on a quantity of barren spectators to applaud while some necessary question of the song stood still: he let his own discretion be his tutor, and held the mirror up to nature. . . . He was very valuable as an actor. In the "Jovial Crew," "Love in a Village," "Comus," and

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<sup>1</sup> "Mrs. Vincent, like Lowe, depended almost upon her voice, which was very charming. In short, it was that true English voice which has an evenness, a fulness, a solidity, that one might analyze so as to show that nothing Italian can have. She was deservedly a great favourite, and sung songs of ease and sweetness with great delicacy."—*Charles Dibdin.*



“Artaxerxes,” he gave proof of this in a degree scarcely inferior to anybody.—*Charles Dibdin*.

The marriage of Beard the singer with a lady of the Waldegrave family, though he was one of the most excellent of men, was looked upon as such a degradation, that they have contrived to omit the circumstance in the peerage-books to this day.—*Leigh Hunt*.

His name first appears in the *Dramatis Pers.* of Handel's operas performed at Covent Garden in 1736. Beard had his musical education in the chapel royal under Bernard Gates. He first became a great favourite of the town by his style of singing Galliard's hunting song, “With Early Horn.” His voice was a rich tenor. Soon after Beard appeared on the stage he married the Earl of Waldegrave's only daughter, with whom he lived very happily during fourteen years, when she died. His second wife was the daughter of Rich. Beard was a highly esteemed character in private life.—*Dictionary of Musicians*, 1824.

## David Garrick.<sup>1</sup>

1716-1779.

I see him now in a dark blue coat, the button-holes bound with gold, a small cocked hat laced with gold, his waistcoat very open, and his countenance never at rest, and, indeed, seldom his person; for in the relaxation of the country he gave

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Garrick died in 1822, and I have found the following notice of her death in a contemporary journal:—

“On the 16th of October, died at her house on the Adelphi Terrace, the relict of the British Roscius, in her ninety-ninth year. Her maiden name was Violetta, and she was a native of Vienna, where she was a dancer highly admired. Mrs. Garrick was remarkably beautiful in her face and person, and till her death she retained that erect deportment which she derived from her original profession. She was married to Garrick in 1749, and survived her husband forty-three years and upwards, he having died in 1779. Mr. and Mrs. Garrick were a very happy couple, and enjoyed the highest society in the kingdom, till the close of his life; and it is remarkable, that during the whole period of their marriage, whatever invitations they received, or excursions they took, they never once slept asunder. By the death of Mrs. Garrick, the library of the British Museum will be further enriched by the addition of her husband's valuable collection of old English plays, besides which, the celebrated statue of Shakspeare, by Roubilliac (of which the one over the fireplace in the rotunda of Drury Lane Theatre is a cast) will grace the hall of that national establishment. The chair, too, made from Shakspeare's mulberry tree, will also, it is supposed, be there deposited.

way to all his natural volatility, and with my father was perfectly at ease; sometimes sitting on a table, and then if he saw my brother at a distance on the lawn, shooting off like an arrow out of a bow in a spirited chase of them round the garden. I remember, when my father having me in his hand, met him on the common riding his pretty pony, his moving my compassion by lamenting the misery of being summoned to town in hot weather (I think August) to play before the King of Denmark. I thought him sincere, and his case pitiable, till my father assured me that he was in reality very well pleased, and that what he groaned at as labour was an honour paid to his talents. The natural expression of his countenance was far from placidity. I confess I was afraid of him; more so than I was of Johnson, whom I knew not to be, nor could suppose he ever would be thought to be, an extraordinary man. Garrick had a frown, and spoke impetuously.—*Miss Hawkins*.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson: "Sir, it is wonderful how little Garrick assumes. No, sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet*. Consider, sir, celebrated men such as you have mentioned have had their applause at a distance; but Garrick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his cranium. Then, sir, Garrick did not *find*, but *made* his way to the tables, the levées, and almost the bedchambers of the great. Then, sir, Garrick had under

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It is richly carved, and would, if put up to auction, fetch an enormous price; as would, doubtless, many other articles of *virtù*, as having once belonged to the 'best living commentator' on the works of the Bard of Avon. Among these must not be forgotten four originals by Hogarth, of the Election. Mrs. Garrick was interred in Westminster Abbey, close by the remains of her husband, on the 25th of October."

<sup>1</sup> Garrick's first appearance was at Goodman's Fields Theatre, in October, 1741. This theatre, according to Mr. Jesse, "was founded in 1729 by one Thomas Odell, in spite of declamations from the pulpit and the opposition of many grave and respectable citizens, who dreaded that their daughters and servants might be contaminated by its close vicinity. Neither would they seem to have been very wrong in their apprehensions, inasmuch as Sir John Hawkins informs us that the new theatre was soon surrounded by a 'halo of brothels.' The clamour of the citizens for a time closed the theatre in Goodman's Fields, but on the 20th of October, 1732, it was reopened by one Henry Giffard, an actor." Garrick's first appearance was as *Richard III*. "Such was his success, and with such rapidity did his fame spread, that notwithstanding the distance of Goodman's Fields from the *fashionable* part of London, the long space between Temple Bar and Goodman's Fields is said to have been nightly blocked up by the carriages of the 'nobility and gentry.'"—*Jesse's "London."*

him a numerous body of people ; who, from fears of his power, or hopes of his favour, or admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character."<sup>1</sup> Scott : "And he is a very sprightly writer too." Johnson : "Yes, sir ; and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down everybody that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or to Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to *us*" (smiling). Boswell : "And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man." Johnson : "Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed ; but he has shown that money is not his first object." Boswell : "Yet Foote used to say of him, that he walked out with the intention to do a generous action, but turning the corner of a street, he met the ghost of a halfpenny, which frightened him."<sup>2</sup> Johnson : "Why, sir, that is very true, too ; for I never knew a man of whom it could be said with less certainty to-day what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick ; it depends so much on his humour at the time." Scott : "I am glad to hear of his liberality. He has been represented as very saving." Johnson : "With his domestic saving we have

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson's assumed or veritable contempt for the dramatic profession was continually bursting out. When mention was made of Garrick becoming a member of the Literary Club, "If Garrick does apply," said Johnson, "I'll blackball him. Surely one ought to sit in a society like ours,

'Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or player.'

"Sir," he once said when Garrick begged him to respect his feelings, "Punch has no feelings."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "There is a story of poor dear Garrick—whose attention to his money stuff never forsook him—relating that when *his* last day was drawing to an end, he begged a gentleman present to pay his club-forfeits ; 'And don't let them cheat you,' he said, 'for there cannot be above nine, and they will make out ten.'"—*Piozzi*.

There was no end to Foote's jokes about Garrick's parsimony. "Garrick," said Foote, "lately invited Hurd to dine with him in the Adelphi, and after dinner, the evening being very warm, they walked up and down in front of the house. As they passed and repassed the dining-room windows, Garrick was in a perfect agony, for he saw that there was a thief in one of the candles which was burning on one of the tables ; and yet Hurd was a person of such consequence that he could not run away from him to prevent the waste of his tallow."—*S. Rogers*.

nothing to do. I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong. He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it."—*Life of Johnson.*

Jack Bannister told me that one night he was behind the scenes of the theatre when Garrick was playing *Lear*; and that the tone in which Garrick uttered the words, "O fool, I shall go mad!" absolutely thrilled him.—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

If manly sense, if nature link'd with art;  
 If thorough knowledge of the human heart;  
 If powers of acting vast and unconfin'd;  
 If fewest faults with greatest beauties join'd;  
 If strong expression, and great powers which lie  
 Within the magic circle of the eye;  
 If feelings which few hearts like his can know,  
 And which no face so well as his can show;  
 Deserve the preference: Garrick, take the chair,  
 Nor quit it, till thou place an equal there.—*Churchill.*

That young man never had his equal as an actor, and he will never have a rival.—*Alexander Pope.*<sup>1</sup>

To the most eloquent expression of the eye, to the handwriting of the passions on his features, to a sensibility which tears to pieces the hearts of his auditors, to powers so unparal-

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<sup>1</sup> This was Pope's verdict on seeing Garrick. What Garrick felt on seeing Pope he has himself told us: "When I was told that Pope was in the house, I instantly felt a palpitation at my heart, a tumultuous, not a disagreeable emotion in my mind. I was then in the prime of youth, and in the zenith of my theatrical ambition. It gave me a particular pleasure that *Richard* was my character when Pope was to see and hear me. As I opened my part, I saw our little poetical hero dressed in black, seated in a side box near the stage, and viewing me with a serious and earnest attention. His look shot and thrilled like lightning through my frame, and I had some hesitation in proceeding from anxiety and from joy. As *Richard* gradually blazed forth the house was in a roar of applause, and the conspiring hand of Pope shadowed me with laurels." Sir Joshua Reynolds when a youth once saw Pope at an auction-room. He was, he told Malone, "About four feet six inches high, very humpbacked and deformed: he wore a black coat, and, according to the fashion of that time, had on a little sword. He had a large and very fine eye, and a handsome nose: his mouth had those peculiar marks which are always found in the mouths of crooked persons, and the muscles which run across the cheek were so strongly marked that they seemed like small cords."—ED.

leled, he adds a judgment of the most exquisite accuracy, the fruit of long experience and close observation, by which he preserves every gradation and transition of the passions, keeping all under the control of a just dependence and natural consistency. So naturally, indeed, do the ideas of the poet seem to mix with his own, that he seemed himself to be engaged in a succession of affecting situations, not giving utterance to a speech, but to the instantaneous expression of his feelings, delivered in the most affecting tones of voice, and with gestures that belong only to nature. It was a fiction as delightful as fancy, and as touching as truth. A few nights before I saw him in *Abel Drugger*; and had I not seen him in both, I should have thought it as possible for Milton to have written "*Hudibras*," and Butler "*Paradise Lost*," as for one man to have played *Hamlet* and *Drugger* with such excellence.—*Hannah More*, 1776.<sup>1</sup>

All the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player, at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not say it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it; but it is heresy to say so. The Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton.—*Horace Walpole*, 1742.

Did I tell you about Mr. Garrick, that the town are horn-mad after? There are a dozen dukes of a night at Goodman's Fields, sometimes; and yet I am stiff in the opposition.—*Gray*.

He never could stand still—he was a great fidget.—*George III.*

You should see him. He is the completest little doll of a figure—the prettiest little creature—*Colley Cibber*.<sup>2</sup>

The Whitfield of the stage.—*Quin*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Writing of Garrick's death Hannah More says: "I can never cease to remember with affection and gratitude so warm, steady, and disinterested a friend; and I can most truly bear this testimony to his memory, that I never witnessed in any family more decorum, propriety, and regularity than in his; where I never saw a card, or even met (except in one instance) a person of his own profession at his table; of which Mrs. Garrick, by her elegance of taste, her correctness of manners, and very original turn of humour, was the brightest ornament."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Spoken, of course, contemptuously. Old Cibber had been made sourly jealous of Garrick by Pope's praise. Besides, Garrick had totally eclipsed Cibber's son Theophilus—a man who had no other merit than the possession of a great actress as a wife.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> Quin's sarcasm will be understood by recollecting what Johnson said

Whenever Mr. Garrick chose to throw off dignity and acting, and was not surrounded by business to perplex him, he had it in his power to render himself a most pleasing, improving, and delightful companion.—*Tate Wilkinson.*

“Mr. Murphy, sir, you knew Mr. Garrick?” “Yes, sir, I did, and no man better.” “Well, sir, what did you think of his acting?” After a pause: “Well, sir, *off* the stage he was a mean sneaking little fellow. But *on* the stage”—throwing up his hands and eyes—“oh, my great God!”—*Rogers’s “Table Talk.”*

It is not for the qualities of his heart that this little parasite is invited to the tables of dukes and lords, who hire extraordinary cooks for his entertainment; his avarice they see not, his ingratitude they feel not, his hypocrisy accommodates itself to their humours, and is of consequence pleasing; but he is chiefly courted for his buffoonery, and will be admitted into the choicest parties for his talent of mimicking Punch and his wife Joan.—*Smollett.*<sup>1</sup>

Nobody but you and Pope ever knew how to preserve the dignity of your respective employments. — *Warburton to Garrick.*

Here lies David Garrick: describe me who can  
 An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man.  
 As an actor, confess'd without rival to shine;  
 As a wit, if not first, in the very first line.  
 Yet with talents like these and an excellent heart,  
 This man had his failings—a dupe to his art;  
 Like an ill-judging beauty his colours he spread,  
 And bespattered with rouge his own natural red.  
 On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,  
 'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.

*Goldsmith.*

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of Whitfield: “His popularity, sir, is chiefly owing to the peculiarity of his manner. He would be followed by crowds were he to wear a nightcap in the pulpit, or were he to preach from a tree.”—*ED.*

<sup>1</sup> Long afterwards Smollett wrote, in his continuation of “Hume’s History”:—“The exhibitions of the stage were improved to the most exquisite entertainment by the talents and management of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and perhaps every other nation, in his genius for acting, in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magic of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude, and the whole pathos of expression.”—*ED.*

The grace of action, the adapted mien—  
 Faithful as nature to the varied scene ;  
 Th' expressive glance—whose subtle comment draws  
 Entranc'd attention and a mute applause ;  
 Gesture that marks, with force and feeling fraught,  
 A sense in silence and a will in thought ;  
 Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone  
 Gives verse a music scarce confess'd its own.—*Sheridan.*

In the height of the public admiration for you, when you were never mentioned but as Garrick the charming man, the fine fellow, the delightful creature, both by men and ladies ; when they were admiring everything you did, and everything you scribbled, at this very time, I, *the Pivy*, was a living witness that they did not know, nor could they be sensible of half your perfections. I have seen you with your magic hammer in your hand, endeavouring to beat your ideas into the heads of creatures who had none of their own. I have seen you, with lamb-like patience, endeavouring to make them comprehend you, and I have seen you when that could not be done—I have seen your lamb turned into a lion ; by this your great labour and pains the public was entertained ; *they* thought they all acted very fine ; they did not see you pull the wires.—*Mrs. Clive.*<sup>1</sup>

His eye was dark, but not characteristic of any passion but the fierce and the lively. To friendship with man, or love and friendship with woman, he never was disposed ; for love of himself always forbid it. Envy was his torment ; ever dreading merit in the lowest of his brethren, and pining at the applause and fortune that their labours procured them. . . . He had a hackneyed kind of metaphorical, theatrical, tinselled phraseology, made out of rags and ends, quotations and imitations of English poets ; and, indeed, from the Greek and Latin authors as often as his memory served him with the scraps and mottoes it had quaintly picked up ; for he knew no book of antiquity, nor indeed of modern note, Prior, La Fontaine, Swift's poetry, and a few more of that kind excepted—these he constantly imitated, plundered, disguised, and frittered in occasional prologues,

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, another actor under Garrick, long after that great man's death, wrote : " I never can speak of him but with idolatry, and have ever looked upon it as one of the greatest blessings of my life to have lived in the days of Garrick."—ED.

epilogues, and complimentary poems upon parrots, lap-dogs, monkeys, birds, growing wits, patrons, and ladies.<sup>1</sup>—*Macklin.*

Few men had such natural advantages to lead them to the stage. The popular notion that he was "little" was one of the vulgar topics of depreciation. . . . He had great and expressive play of features.<sup>2</sup> He was neatly and elegantly made; handsome, with a French grace, yet combined with perfect manliness. His frame had a surprising flexibility and even elasticity, which put all his limbs under the most perfect control; there was an elegant freedom in every motion, regulated by the nicest propriety. . . . He was a gentleman by birth and training. His features were wonderfully marked; the eyebrows well-arched, ascending and descending with rapid play; the mouth expressive and bold; and the wonderful eyes, bright, intelligent, and darting fire.—*Fitzgerald.*

He was not so shining nor exuberant in his manner of discoursing as his acquaintance Foote; but he was more agreeable, not only from his not overpowering the company with the superiority and brilliancy of his wit, but by his moderation in the use of those talents of which he was master. Foote was not satisfied without subduing his guests; Mr. Garrick confined

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<sup>1</sup> Sour old Macklin is wrong. Nearly all Garrick's *jeux-d'esprit* are good. Take his lines on Hill:—

"In physic and farces his equal there scarce is;  
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is."

Or the well-known couplet on Goldsmith:

"Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,  
Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll."

Or his more elaborate summary of the poet's character called "Jupiter and Mercury." It may be remembered too that Johnson highly praised Garrick for the sprightliness and variety of his prologues and epilogues, whilst he pronounced him for conversation the best company in the world. Foote's dislike of Garrick was equal to Macklin's. He mimicked, he abused him whenever he could get a listener; he borrowed his money and repaid him in lampoons. He loved to annoy him to his face. "I am going to bring out a new Roscius," he told him. Garrick was uneasy. "What! jealous of Punch!" cried Foote, which was the Roscius he meant. A lady asked Foote if his figures at the Haymarket were to be the size of life. "No, madam," he answered, "about the size of Garrick."

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Clive was one night seen standing at the wing, weeping and scolding alternately at Garrick's acting. Angry at last at finding herself so affected, she turned on her heel, crying, "D— him, he could act a *grid-iron!*"—ED.



his power of conversing to the art of making every man pleased with himself.—*T. Davies.*

The man who of all men that ever lived presents the most perfect type of the actor. Quick in sympathy, vivid in observation, with a body and mind so plastic that they could take every mould, and give back the very form and pressure of every fashion, passion, action; delighted to give delight, and spurred to every higher effort by the reflection of the effect produced on others—no matter whether his audience were the crowd of an applauding theatre, a table full of noblemen and wits, a nursery group of children, or a solitary black boy in an area; of inordinate vanity—at once the most courteous, genial, sore, and sensitive of men; full of kindness yet ever quarrelling; scheming for applause even in the society of his most intimate friends; a clever writer, a wit, and the friend of wits, yet capable of mutilating “*Hamlet*” and degrading the “*Midsummer Night’s Dream*” into a ballet-opera.—*Leslie’s “Life of Reynolds.”*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A graphic account of Garrick has been bequeathed to us by Cumberland. It is made thrice valuable by its other excellent portraits. The play he witnessed was Rowe’s “*Fair Penitent*.” “*Quin*,” he says, “presented himself upon the rising of the curtain in a green velvet coat embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottom periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes; with very little variation of cadence, and in deep, full tones, accompanied by a sawing kind of motion which had more of the senate than the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics with an air of dignified indifference that seemed to disdain the plaudits bestowed on him. Mrs. Cibber, in a key high-pitched, but sweet withal, sung, or rather recitativèd Rowe’s harmonious strain, somewhat in the manner of the improvisatore’s. It was so extremely wanting in contrast that though it did not wound the ear it wearied it; when she had once recited two or three speeches, I could anticipate the manner of every succeeding one—it was like a long legendary ballad of innumerable stanzas, every one of which is sung to the same tune, eternally chiming to the ear without variation or relief. Mrs. Pritchard was an actress of a different cast, had more nature, and of course more change of tone, and variety both of action and expression. In my opinion, the comparison was decidedly in her favour. But when, after long and eager expectation, I first beheld little Garrick, then young and light, and alive in every muscle and in every feature, come bounding on the stage, and pointing at the wittol *Altamont* (Ryan) and heavy-paced *Horatio* (Quin), Heavens, what a transition! It seemed as if a whole century had been stepped over in the changing of a single scene—old things were done away, and a new order at once brought forward, light and luminous, and clearly destined to dispel the barbarisms and bigotry of a tasteless age, too long attached to the prejudices of custom, and superstitiously devoted to the illusions of imposing declamation.”

No remark was ever more true than that Garrick “acted both on and off the stage.” He was a glutton in praise; and after gorging upon the applause of thundering audiences and judicious critics, his unsatiated grovelling appetite hungered for the admiration of a shoe-black or an infant; he would steal a side-long look at a duke’s table, to ascertain whether he had made a hit upon the butler and the footmen; such was the littleness of the great Roscius! . . . I have mentioned the uncommon brilliancy of his eye, but he had the art of completely quenching its fire; as in his acting *Sir Anthony Branville*, a dramatic personage, who talks passionately with the greatest *sang-froid*, and whose language, opposed to his temperature, breathes flame like Hecla, in Iceland. In this part, I have been told, he made the twin stars, which nature had stuck in his head, look as dull as two coddled gooseberries. But his *Deaf-man’s* eye (of which I once witnessed a specimen at Hampton) evinced his minuteness of observation and gift of execution. There is an expression in the eye of deaf persons (I mean of such as have not lost all perception of sound) which, difficult as it may be to exhibit in mimicry, it is still more difficult to define in writing: it consists of a mixture of dulness and vivacity in the organs of vision, indicating an anxiety to hear all, with a pretending to hear more than is actually observed, and a disappointment in having lost much; an embarrassed look between intelligence and something approaching to stupidity—all this he conveyed admirably; and if I could convey it in words one tithe as well, I should have made myself more intelligible.—*Colman’s “Random Records.”*

In *Lear* Garrick’s very stick acted, Bannister said. The scene with *Cordelia* and the physician, as Garrick played it, was the most pathetic he ever saw on the stage. Garrick instructed Barry in *Romeo*; and afterwards, when Barry played it in rivalry with him, he was obliged to alter his own manner, notwithstanding which, he beat Barry. A lady (I forget her name), who had performed *Fuliet* with them both, said she thought she must have jumped out of the balcony to Barry; and that she thought Garrick would have jumped into the balcony to her.<sup>1</sup>—*Leslie’s “Autobiography.”*

<sup>1</sup> Walpole is seldom more cynical than when he handles the name of Garrick. “I think the pomp of Garrick’s funeral perfectly ridiculous,” he writes; “it is confounding the immense space between pleasing talents

Garrick has the reputation of improving the stage costume ; but it was Macklin that did it. The late Mr. West, who was the first (in his picture of the "Death of Wolfe") to omit the absurdity of putting a piece of armour instead of a waistcoat upon a general officer, told us that he himself once asked Garrick why he did not reform the stage in that particular. Garrick said, the spectators would not allow it—"they would throw a bottle at his head."—*Leigh Hunt*.

Of all persons near our own time, Garrick's name was received with the greatest enthusiasm, who was proposed by J. F——. He presently superseded both Hogarth and Handel, who had been talked of, but then it was on condition that he should act in tragedy and comedy, in the play and the farce, *Lear* and *Wildair* and *Abel Drugger*. What a sight for sore eyes that would be ! Who would not part with a year's income at least, almost with a year of his natural life, to be present at it ? Besides, as he could not act alone, and recitations are unsatisfactory things, what a troop he must bring with him—the silver-tongued Barry, and Quin, and Shuter, and Weston, and Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, of whom I have heard my father speak as so great a favourite when he was young ! This would indeed be a revival of the dead, the restoring of art ; and so much the more desirable, as such is the lurking scepticism mingled with our overstrained admiration of past excellence, that though we have the speeches of Burke, the portraits of Reynolds, the writings of Goldsmith, and the conversation of Johnson, to show what people could do at that period, and to confirm the universal testimony to the merits of Garrick ; yet, as it was before our time, we have our misgivings, as if he was probably after all little better than a Bartlemy-fair actor, dressed out to play *Macbeth* in a scarlet coat and laced cocked-hat. For one, I should like to have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears. Certainly, by all accounts, if any one was ever moved by the true histrionic *æstus*, it was Garrick.

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and national service. What distinctions remain for a patriot hero when the most solemn have been showered on a player ?" He allows that he was a real genius in his way, but he cannot believe "that acting, however perfectly, what others have written is one of the most astonishing talents." He praises him that he may the better censure. He pronounces his *Kitely* and *Ranger* capital and perfect ; but "in declamation I confess he never charmed me, nor could he be a gentleman. His *Lord Townly* and *Lord Hastings* were mean."—ED.

When he followed the *Ghost* in "Hamlet," he did not drop the sword as most actors do behind the scenes, but kept the point raised the whole way round, so fully was he possessed with the idea, or so anxious not to lose sight of his part for a moment. Once at a splendid dinner party at Lord ——'s, they suddenly missed Garrick, and could not imagine what was become of him, till they were drawn to the window by the convulsive screams and peals of laughter of a young negro-boy, who was rolling on the ground in an ecstasy of delight to see Garrick mimicking a turkey-cock in the courtyard, with his coat-tail stuck out behind, and in a seeming flutter of feathered rage and pride.<sup>1</sup> Of our party only two persons present had seen the British Roscius; and they seemed as willing as the rest to renew their acquaintance with their old favourite.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826.

During my two years' residence in London I often saw Garrick. The delight his acting gave me was one of the silken cords that drew me to the theatre. I liked him best in *Lear*. His saying in the bitterness of his acting, "I will do such things—what they are I know not;" and his sudden recollection of his own want of power, were so pitiable as to touch the heart of every spectator. The simplicity of his saying, "Be these tears wet?—yes, faith!" putting his finger to the cheek of *Cordelia*, and then looking at his finger, was exquisite. Indeed, he did not get his fame for nothing. I saw him do *Abel Drugger* the same night; and his appalled look of terror where he drops the glass drew as much applause from the audience as his *Lear* had done.—*O'Keefe*.

I saw Garrick act *Othello* that same night, in which I think he was very unmeaningly dressed, and succeeded in no degree of comparison with Quin, except in the scene where *Iago* gives

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<sup>1</sup> "Garrick," says Charles Dibdin, "would indulge some few friends—but it was very rare—with what he used to call his *rounds*. This he did by standing behind a chair, and conveying into his face every kind of passion, blending one into the other, and as it were shadowing them with a prodigious number of gradations. At one moment you laughed, at another you cried; now he terrified you, and presently you conceived yourself something horrible, he seemed so terrified at you. Afterwards he drew his features into the appearance of such dignified wisdom that Minerva might have been proud of the portrait; and then—degrading, yet admirable transition—he became a driveller. In short, his face was what he obliged you to fancy it—age, youth, plenty, poverty, everything it assumed."

him the first suspicion of *Desdemona*. He endeavoured throughout to play and speak everything directly different from Quin, and failed, I think, in most of his alterations.—*George Selwyn's "Correspondence."*<sup>1</sup>

Garrick at any time, on or off the stage, alone or in company, about whatever study, occupation, or pursuit—in short, employed in any manner he might, was an actor, a complete actor, and nothing but an actor; exactly as Pope, during the whole course of his life, was a poet, and nothing but a poet.—*Charles Dibdin.*

## Henry Woodward.

1717-1777.

He is a very thriving comedian and a very peaceable mimic, for he never strikes first; but if he receives the first blow, he generally returns it with double the strength of his adversary. He is an excellent Harlequin, and has what most of the motley coat gentry want, an excellent head to his heels; and if his black mask should be thrown aside for a whole age (though levity will hardly be so long obscured), yet as a just and pleasing actor in comedy he can never want encouragement anywhere, if theatres are in use.—*Chetwood.*

A speaking Harlequin made up of whim,  
He twists, he twines, he tortures every limb,

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<sup>1</sup> In times not long since passed it was possible to make a reputation, even superior to that which might attend literary genius, as a conversationist. Of brilliant talkers there is a long list, which, headed perhaps by the name of Samuel Johnson, includes Jenyns, Luttrell, Mackintosh, Beauclerc, Lord Melcombe, Colman, Curran, Foote, and even Lord Sandwich, the notorious Jemmy Twitcher. Of these George Selwyn seems the most distinguished. Horace Walpole is never weary of retailing his smart sayings, and in London society "Selwyn's last" was handed round as we might now hand round an excellent number of *Punch*. Selwyn was born in 1719. His wit in early life choosing the channels of obscenity and blasphemy, he was expelled in 1745 from Oxford. He became a member of the famous Medmenham Abbey Club, which was founded for the purpose of enabling a select number of the gentlemen of the period to riot in the most licentious, profane, and ribald conversation. In Parliament he was distinguished for a happy faculty of dozing. In his tastes he was addicted to gambling and to executions. He haunted the clubs to the last, exciting roars of laughter by his jests, which he contrived to heighten by a drowsy, demure way of uttering them. Wilberforce describes him in his latter days as looking like the wax figure of a corpse. He died at a house in Cleveland Row, January 25th, 1791.—ED.

Plays to the eye with a mere monkey's art,  
 And leaves to sense the conquest of the heart.  
 We laugh indeed, but on reflection's birth,  
 We wonder at ourselves and curse our mirth.—*Churchill.*<sup>1</sup>

Since his time the part of *Bobadil* has never been justly represented ; it may be said to have died with him. At a period when correct costume was not cared for, he was ever careful regarding the proprieties of dress ; and, more fortunate than Ryan, he sustained the assaults of Time without letting the consequent ravages be seen. Charles Mathews is in many respects exactly what Woodward is said to have been ; but Woodward could play a far wider range of characters. His scamps were perfect for their cool impudence ; his modern fops for their brazen impertinence ; his fops of earlier days for their elegant rascality ; his everyday simpletons for their vulgar stolidity ; his mock-brave heroes for their stupendous but ever-suspected courage ; and his Shakspearian light characters for their truly Shakspearian spirit. He was gracefully shaped, and bore a serious dignity of countenance, but he was no sooner before the footlights than a ripple of funny emotion seemed to roll over

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<sup>1</sup> The "Rosciad," the most trenchant satire of modern times, vigorous as "Macflecknoe," more galling than the "Dunciad," appeared without its author's name in 1761. In a few days it achieved a popularity that may be paralleled by the "Pickwick Papers." Everybody read it ; everybody quoted it. When the name of the author became known, the actors whom he had attacked assumed their most tragical scowls and hoarsely talked of vengeance. But Churchill, a big, sturdy Irishman, laughed at their threats. He walked about Covent Garden with a cudgel under his arm, and repaired to the coffee-houses frequented by the actors as if eager for a scuffle. Yates, in the poet's presence, did indeed snatch a carving-knife and flourish it in the air, but laid it down again on meeting Churchill's contemptuous gaze. Foote wrote a lampoon against the "Clumsy Curate," but suppressed it. Arthur Murphy, more valiant, published an "Ode to the Naiads of Fleet Ditch," of which the sole consequence was to prove himself even a greater blockhead than Churchill had represented him. The "Rosciad" was too indiscriminating in its abuse to effect a reformation ; but it achieved for the author a reputation surpassing that of the most eminent of his contemporaries. Apologists for Churchill have not been wanting ; but little can be adduced in his favour. He was ruffianly as a man ; he was a drunkard, a spendthrift, and a sensualist of a vulgar type. As a clergyman his vices only stand out in sharper relief. Certain passages in his poems have been quoted as illustrating a sound and honest nature ; but they no more prove his possession of a single virtue than the pious declamations of Henley or a Fleet parson proved him to have been inspired by a single sentiment of Christianity. He died, 1764, aged thirty-three years.—ED.

his face ; and this, with the tones of a capital stage voice, never failed to arouse a laughter which was inextinguishable.—*Dr. Doran.*

In the green-room Garrick trained the actors himself, teaching them his own readings and inflections. These Woodward appeared to adopt with much humility. But one morning during the manager's absence, Woodward, in unusual spirits, undertook to give his brethren a specimen of the way he meant to deal with his part on the night in question, which was wholly different from the one in which he had been so carefully instructed. During this performance Garrick arrived unperceived, and listened quietly. The way in which he treated this little bit of duplicity is excellent testimony to his fairness and good humour. "Bravo, Harry!" he cried. "Upon my soul, bravo! Why, now, this is—no, no!—I can't say this is *quite* my idea of the thing. Yours is, after all, to be sure—rather—ha!" The actor was a little confused, and said with true duplicity that he meant to act the part according to the manager's views. "No, no; by no means, Harry," said the other, warmly: "you have actually clinched the matter. But why, dear Harry, would you not communicate before?"—*P. Fitzgerald, "Life of Garrick."*

He was an actor who, for various abilities to delight an audience in comic characters, had scarcely an equal. His person was so regularly formed, and his look so serious and composed, that an indifferent observer would have supposed that his talents were adapted to characters of the serious cast: to the real fine gentleman, to the man of graceful deportment and elegant demeanour, rather than to the affecter of gaiety, the brisk fop, and pert coxcomb. But the moment he spoke on the stage a certain ludicrous air laid hold of his features, and every muscle of his face ranged itself on the side of levity. The very tones of his voice inspired comic ideas; and though he often wished to act tragedy, he never could speak a line with propriety that was serious.—*T. Davies, "Life of Garrick."*

Woodward, the best *Petruccio*, *Copper Captain*, *Captain Flash*, and *Bobadil* of his day, had brisk and genuine if rather brassy humour. In spite of his sense, and with the best intentions, he never could utter a line of tragedy.—*Lcsie's "Life of Reynolds."*

In the comedy of "Twelfth Night," Woodward always sustained *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* with infinite drollery, assisted by

that expression of *rueful dismay*, which gave so peculiar a zest to his *Marplot*. In the latter character I have always understood that he wore "this rue for a difference" between himself and Garrick, who, it has been said, on high critical authority, was not quite at home in *Marplot*. Great efforts were made in the circle of his humble friends to force this performance to a rivalry with Woodward, but the "son of whim" remained unshaken. His unappeasable curiosity, his slow comprehension, and annihilation under the sense of his dilemmas, were so diverting, that even the great master soon dropped the contest, and left him the decided *Marplot* of the stage. In the year 1728, when the "Beggars' Opera" was acted by Lilliputians, Harry Woodward performed the *Beggar*,—Mrs. Vincent, then Miss Binks, being *Macheath* on that occasion; so early did the humour appear for indecent travesty in this piece, brought out only the year before at Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was soon after his study of these beggarly elements of his profession that he became in due form Rich's apprentice, who taught him all that he knew of pantomime, and Woodward had cultivated the arts of writing, and was rather fond of controversy. I believe him to have been commonly *right*—though the press is a public medium of display which I should always exhort the actor most strenuously to avoid. Woodward had been careful beyond the measure of the comedian, and died in remarkably good circumstances.—*Boaden*, "*Life of Siddons*."

Woodward, besides being so fine a comedian, was excellent in *Harlequin*. In one of the pantomimes he had a scene in which he acted as if eating different kinds of fruit. Soft music was played: he came on, sat at a table (on which there was placed *nothing*), and made pretence of taking up the stalk of a bunch of currants. Then, holding high his hand, with the points of finger and thumb compressed, he seemed to shake the stalk, and to strip off the currants with his mouth. In like manner he would appear to hold up a cherry by the stalk, and after eating it, to spurt the stone from his lips. Eating a gooseberry, paring an apple, sucking an orange or peach—all were simulated in the same marvellous fashion. In short, the audience perfectly knew what fruit he seemed to be eating by the highly ingenious deception of his acting. Woodward's chief excellence lay in his attitudes, which he adapted to the music, according to the vicissitudes demanded by the various passions represented. Hence he was called the "attitude



*Harlequin.*" There was always another Harlequin for jumping through walls and windows, and such matters of routine. One night, by some blunder, the two Harlequins met each other full in the centre of the stage, which set the audience in a clamour of laughter.—*O'Keefe.*

Woodward, though indifferently gifted by nature, except as to his person, which was so complete that he could not throw himself into an inelegant attitude, possessed such sound principles of acting that he is for ever to be regretted. There are characters in real life which appear out of nature. These are fair game for authors; and, when they are well drawn, did we not meet with performers of the admirable description of Woodward, we should lose the pleasure of seeing such characters well acted. These characters are not general, but particular nature, and therefore it requires strong art and judgment to delineate them. The great point is to steer between extravagance and vapidty, a knowledge of effect completely understood by Woodward.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Margaret Woffington.

1718-1760.

Since Margaret Woffington's day, now one hundred and four years, there has never been a comic actress capable of sustaining such a character as *Lady Macbeth* before a London audience. This, the most difficult of all Shakspearian parts, was considered by the critics a first-rate performance; and in regard to her genius for comedy, Garrick, who was so popular in *Harry Wildair*, gave up the part when Woffington appeared in it. This extraordinary Irish actress was also celebrated for her acting of *Queen Katherine*, *Henry III.*, and *Constance* in "King John."—*W. Donaldson*, "*Recollections.*"

In every sense of comic humour known,  
 In sprightly sallies wit was all thy own.  
 Whether you seem'd the *cit's* most humble wife,  
 Or shone in *Townly's* higher sphere of life,  
 Alike thy spirit knew each turn of wit,  
 And gave new force to all the poet writ.  
 Nor was thy worth to public scenes confin'd;  
 Thou knewest the noblest feelings of the mind;

Thy ears were ever open to distress,  
Thy ready hand was ever stretch'd to bless.

*Hoole.*<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Woffington, though pleasing to the eye, used to bark out the "Fair Penitent" with most dissonant notes.—*T. Campbell's "Life of Siddons."*

From her portraits we can see that this notorious lady was not a bold, rosy-cheeked hoyden, as we might expect, but had an almost demure, placid, and pensive cast of face. She wore her hair without powder, and turned back behind the ear, nearly always with a cap carelessly thrown back, or a little flat garden hat set negligently on, *à la* Nelly O'Brien. Certainly, a deeply interesting face, but with a little hint of foolishness and air of lightness in all its calm, pale placidity.—*P. Fitzgerald's "Life of Garrick."*

Forgive her one female error, and it might fairly be said of her, "that she was adorned with every virtue; honour, truth, benevolence, and charity were her distinguishing qualities." Her conversation was in a style always pleasing, and often instructive. She abounded in wit.—*A. Murphy.*

She appeared for the first time in London at the theatre in Covent Garden in 1738. Her choice of character excited the curiosity of the public. *Sir Harry Wildair* acted by a woman was a novelty. This gay, dissipated, good-humoured rake, she represented with so much ease, elegance, and propriety of deportment, that no male actor has since equalled her in that part. She acquitted herself so much to the general satisfaction that it became fashionable to see Mrs. Woffington personate *Sir Harry Wildair*. The managers soon found it to their interest to announce her frequently for that favourite character; it proved a constant charm to fill their houses. . . . Her chief merit in acting, I think, consisted in the representation of females in high rank and of dignified elegance, whose graces in deportment, as well as foibles, she understood and displayed in a very lively and pleasing manner. . . . But this actress did not confine herself to parts of superior elegance; she loved to wanton with ignorance when combined with absurdity, and to play with petulance and folly, with peevish-

<sup>1</sup> John Hoole is chiefly known as the translator of Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered." He was born in 1727, and was for forty-two years a clerk in the India House. He died 1803.—ED.

ness and vulgarity. Those who remember her *Lady Pliant* in Congreve's "Double Dealer," will recollect with pleasure her whimsical discovery of passion, and her awkwardly assumed prudery. In *Mrs. Day*, in "The Committee," she made no scruple to disguise her beautiful countenance by drawing on it the lines of deformity and the wrinkles of old age; and to put on the tawdry habiliments and vulgar manners of an old hypocritical city vixen.—*Thomas Davies*.

When Woffington took up the part of *Harry Wildair*, she did what she was not aware of—namely, that the audience permitted the actress to *purify* the character, and enjoyed the language from a woman which might have disgusted from a man speaking before women—as I have heard spoiled children commended for what would, a few years after, shut them out of the room if they ventured so far. No, Mrs. Woffington, in spite of Quin's joke, upon your supposing that "*half the house took you for a man*"—I am convinced that no creature there supposed it for a moment; it was the *travesty* seen throughout that really constituted the charm of your performance, and rendered it not only gay but innocent.—*Boaden's "Life of Jordan."*

In 1755 the celebrated Mrs. Woffington acted in the first play I ever saw—*Alicia*, in "Jane Shore." I remember some years after seeing her mother, whom she comfortably supported—a respectable-looking old lady, in her short black velvet cloak, with deep rich fringe, a diamond ring, and small agate snuff-box. She had nothing to mind but going the rounds of the Catholic chapels, and chatting with her neighbours. Mrs. Woffington, the actress, built and endowed a number of almshouses at Teddington, Middlesex; and there they are to this day. She is buried in the church, her name on the tombstone.—*John O'Keefe*.

I have heard Quick (the actor) speak in raptures of Peg Waffington (*sic*), though she must have been old when he saw her.—*Records of a Veteran*.

Mrs. Woffington was an actress of all work, but of greater talents than the phrase generally implies. Davies says she was the handsomest woman that ever appeared on the stage, and that Garrick was at one time in doubt whether he should not marry her. She was famous for performing in male attire. . . . She was the only woman admitted into one of the Beef-steak clubs, and is said to have been president of it.—*Leigh Hunt*.

She possessed captivating charms as a jovial, witty bottle companion, but few remaining as a mere female.—*Victor.*

Mrs. Woffington had held *Rosalind* as her own for ten years, when, on the 3rd of May, 1757, she put on the dress for the last time. She was then at Covent Garden. Some prophetic feeling of ill came over her as she struggled against a fainting fit, while assuming the bridal dress in the last act. She had never disappointed an audience in her life; her indomitable courage carried her on to the stage, and the audience might have taken her to be as radiant in health and spirit as she looked. She began the pretty saucy prologue with her old saucy prettiness of manner; but when she had said, "If I were among you I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me," she paused, tried to articulate, but was unable—had consciousness enough to know she was stricken, and to manifest her terror at the catastrophe by a wild shriek, as she tottered towards the stage door. On her way she fell, paralyzed, into the arms of sympathizing comrades, who bore her from the stage, to which she never returned.—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1867.

There is much in vogue a Mrs. Woffington, a bad actress; but she has life.—*Walpole*, 1741.

Mrs. Woffington was an actress of a most extraordinary kind, and in some parts must have been unrivalled. She had a bad voice, but this seems to have been the only impediment to her becoming superlatively excellent; for though it is universally allowed to have prevented her from interesting the passions in so eminent a degree as either Mrs. Pritchard or Mrs. Cibber, yet her superior beauty and grace, the industry with which she cultivated her profession by observing the instructions of Cibber, getting introduced to Mademoiselle Dumesnil, the attention she paid to Garrick, and every other eligible opportunity to improve, which she seized with solicitude and avidity, established for her a solid and firm reputation. She is said in *Cleopatra*, *Jane Shore*, and *Calista*, and all other parts which require a form of commanding and majestic beauty, to have interested her auditors to a degree of astonishment. She also greatly excelled in comic characters, but I cannot think it an addition to her fame, or to female delicacy, that the most prominent of those characters was *Sir Harry Wildair*.—*C. Dibdin.*

This agreeable actress, in the part of *Sir Harry*, coming into

the green-room, said pleasantly, "In my conscience! I believe half the men in the house take me for one of their own sex." Another actress replied, "It may be so; but, in my conscience! the other half can convince them to the contrary."—*Chetwood*.

## Spranger Barry.

1719-1777.

What man like Barry with such pains can err,  
 In elocution, action, character?  
 What man could give, if Barry were not here,  
 Such well-applauded tenderness to *Lear*?  
 Who else could speak so very, very fine,  
 That sense may kindly end with every line?—*Churchill*.

Fox said that Barry's *Romeo* was superior to Garrick's.<sup>1</sup>—*S. Rogers's "Table Talk."*

The splendid paintings and engravings extant of bygone actors give the present generation an idea of how such gifted sons of Thespis looked; but how the finest of them all, the beau-ideal of an *Othello* and *Romeo*—Barry—escaped the notice of the artist, is inconceivable; for we have not a likeness of this elegant and accomplished actor in existence.—*Donaldson's "Recollections."*

This fascinating actor was making fresh progress every day (1745). Playgoers and writers seem at a loss for words to describe the charm; but setting all the portraits side by side—Churchill's, Davies's, and many more—the features resolve themselves in a noble and graceful figure, a face of calm manly beauty, an expression of soft interest and tenderness, and a touching and musical voice. These are gifts that would carry any actor through, and most likely they carried him over the mannerisms hinted at by the bitter Churchill, and the affectation with which, the satirist unfairly says, "he conned his passions

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<sup>1</sup> "It was nicely and accurately decided that Barry was superior in the garden scene of the second act, and Garrick in the scene with the *Friar*; Barry, again, superior in the other garden scenes, and Garrick in the portrait of the *Apothecary*. Barry was also preferred in the first part of the tomb, and Garrick in the dying part. Some said that Barry was an Arcadian, Garrick a fashionable lover. But the best test is, that after an interval Garrick, with that excellent good sense which distinguished every act of his, quietly dropped the part out of his *repertoire*."—*Fitzgerald*.

as he conned his part." The ladies were his warm patrons, whom "he charmed by the soft melody of his love-complaints and the noble ardour of his courtship." Lord Chesterfield also admired his figure, but forecasted his sudden withdrawal from the stage, carried off by some smitten rich widow.<sup>1</sup>—*P. Fitzgerald*, "*Life of Garrick*."

Of all the tragic actors who have trod the English stage for these last fifty years, Mr. Barry was unquestionably the most pleasing. Since Booth and Wilks, no actor had shown the public a just idea of the hero or the lover; Barry gave dignity to the one and passion to the other. In his person he was tall without awkwardness; in his countenance he was handsome without effeminacy; in his uttering of passion, the language of nature alone was communicated to the feelings of an audience. If any player deserved the character of an unique, he certainly had a just claim to it. Many of the principal characters in our best plays must now be either suffered to lie dormant until another genius like him shall rouse them into life and spirit, or the public must be content to see them imperfectly represented.—*T. Davies*, "*Life of Garrick*."

On his last appearance, in 1776, he was so infirm that before the curtain rose it was thought he could not support himself through the play; but in spite of decay he played *Jaffier* with such a glow of love and tenderness, and such a heroic passion as thrilled the theatre, and spread even to the actors on the stage with him, though he was almost insensible when, after the fall of the curtain, he was led back to the green-room. There was, we are told, in Barry's whole person such a noble air of command, such elegance in his action, such regularity and expressiveness in his features, in his voice such resources of melody, strength, and tenderness, that the greatest Parliamentary orators used to study his acting for the charm of its stately grace and the secret of its pathos.<sup>2</sup>—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

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<sup>1</sup> Sour old Cibber, who praised nobody, praised Barry. It is said he preferred his *Othello* to Betterton's or Booth's. Davies remembered seeing Cibber in the boxes on the first night of Barry's *Othello* "loudly applauding him by frequent clapping of his hands; a practice by no means usual with the old man, even when he was very well pleased with an actor." In his autobiography, F. Reynolds tells us he remembers seeing Barry act *Othello* "in a full suit of gold-laced scarlet, a small cocked-hat, knee breeches, and silk stockings, conspicuously displaying a pair of gouty legs."

<sup>2</sup> In 1747, we find Gilly Williams writing to George Selwyn:—"I con-

I was once asked by Spranger Barry (who knew my skill in drawing) to make his face for *Lear*. I went to his dressing-room and used my camel-hair pencil and Indian ink with, as I thought, a very venerable effect. When he came into the green-room royally dressed, asking some of the performers how he looked, Isaac Sparks, in his Lord Chief Joker way, remarked, "As you belong to the London Beef-steak Club, O'Keefe has made you peeping through a gridiron." Barry was so doubtful of his own excellence, that he used to consult the old experienced stage carpenters, at rehearsals, to give him their opinion how he acted such-and-such a passage; but used to call them aside for this purpose. This diffidence was more remarkable in Barry, who was the finest actor in his walk that has appeared on the English stage: *Alexander, Romeo, Faffier!*—*John O'Keefe's "Recollections."*

Barry was one of the old artificial school, who made his way more by person than by genius.—*Leigh Hunt.*

Harmonious Barry! with what varied art

His grief, rage, tenderness, assail'd the heart!

Of plaintive Otway now no more the boast!

And Shakspeare grieves for his *Othello* lost!—*A. Murphy.*

An actor of most extraordinary merit, which was confined, however, to tragedy and serious parts in comedies. In some respects it is questionable whether he did not excel every actor on the stage. These were in scenes and situations full of tender woe and domestic softness, to which his voice, which was mellifluous to wonder, lent astonishing assistance. In scenes of an opposite description he threw a majesty and a grandeur into his acting which gave it a most noble degree of elevation. These peculiar qualities, which he possessed in a very striking degree, were greatly manifest in the tender conflicts of the heart-wounded *Othello* and the haughty ravings of the high-minded *Bajazet*; and they were exquisitely blended in the fond yet kingly *Alexander*; but certainly, beyond these requisites, Barry's acting did not extend in any eminent degree.—*C. Dibdin.*<sup>1</sup>

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gratulate you on the near approach of Parliament, and figure you to myself before a glass at your rehearsals. I must intimate to you not to forget closing your periods with a significant stroke of the breast, and recommend Mr. Barry as a pattern, who I think pathetically excels in that beauty."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> The following curious letter, pretended to have been written by a

West Digges.<sup>1</sup>

1720-1786.

He had studied the antiquated style of acting; and Davies, in his "Dramatic Miscellanies," states him to have been the nearest resemblance of *Cardinal Wolsey* he had ever seen represented, if he had not sometimes been extravagant in gesture and quaint in elocution. In short, he was a fine bit of old stage buckram; and *Cato* was therefore selected for his first

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French officer, who was prisoner of war in Ireland in 1759, offers an illustration of the Irish stage of that period:—

"I have been vid my friend, Mr. Moatlíe, veri often at de Comedie, where is dam high price; two livres and more for de gallerie; von half carry you to de opera at de Parterre; but, I am inform, dat de chef comedians trait demselve like de men of qualite, and de actrices have large sallairie, vich make de grand price. Dey be juste as vid us, some good, some baad. De principals are Messrs. Barrie, Voodvar, Mosope, Spaarke. Barrie be de fine person, tall and vell made, and do veri vell in de tragedie, when he no take too much pain how he valk, staand, or torn about; dat often spail all. Voodvar, when he do vell, is de inimitable; but he chuse to please de canaile too often, vich bring de most monie. Mosope be de excellent for de tragedie, vich agree vell vid his phisonomie, person and vaice. 'Tis pity, vat I am told, dat he vas taght by anoder at de first, vich keep down his own genie. Spaarke be de camical dog, an make laaf all de varld vid his grimace. Dey could no do vidout him. Dere be oder comedians, who have deir merite. Dere is von Foote; but I no like him, for mimique de Frenchman. Dere is anoder, I forget his name, who mimique nothing but one kettledrum, romble, romble, romble, toujours.

"De vomen are all, vidout exceptions, dam ogly, vid ded eyes, for vant of red on de cheeck, no brilliancy, no life 'tall, or concupiscence vatever; but in deir vay of playing (which be much vorse dan de French vay) von, too, or tree, be very good actrices. Von madam Fizenrie, morbleu! fright me in von tragedie. 'Tis de Franch tragedie pot in Englis, de Andromache, vich do vunderfully peint de power of love in voman's heart, in all de variete of strange pashons dat come, von after t'oder, or all togeder, when she resolves on von man, and no oder for spouse. Mon dieu! von time adore, von time hate de poor man; vill have him kill, because she love: den kill de man dat kill dim, because she hate! veri fine all! but heven garde me from de like love. In oder parts, madam Fizenrie do vell, but is beste in von furie. Madame D'Ancere vid a leetle more red, would be veri lovely; and is justly de Belle Angloise, but no de Franche beaute; and yet de most gaillarde among dem. She please moch all de milors always, de meny parts vel 'nough, an may have vat sallaire she please; dat is, from de maistre of de comedie as actrice."

<sup>1</sup> "Digges's real name was West. He was born in 1720, and was supposed to be the natural son of a nobleman. He was in the army, which he quitted for the stage, and made his first appearance as an actor at Dublin,



essay. He "discharged the character" in the same costume as, it is to be supposed, was adopted by Booth, when the play was originally acted; that is, in a *shape*, as it was technically termed, of the stiffest order; decorated with gilt leather upon a black ground, with black stockings, black gloves, and a powdered perwig. Foote had planted himself in the pit when Digges stalked on before the public, thus formidably accoutred; the malicious wag waited till the customary round of applause had subsided, and then ejaculated in a pretended undertone, "*A Roman chimney-sweeper on May-day!*" The laughter which this produced in the pit was enough to knock up a *débutant*, and it startled the old stager personating the stoic of Utica. The sarcasm was irresistibly funny; but Foote deserved to be kicked out of the house for his cruelty and his insolence in mingling with the audience for the purpose of disconcerting a brother actor.—*George Colman.*

In my juvenile days some one gave me a note to Digges the actor, that he might put me in to see the play. I was brought through the dark lobbies and up and down many stairs and windings to his dressing-room, where I found him preparing himself for his part that night of *Young Norval*. There were six large wax candles burning before him, and two dressers in attendance. I was struck with awe, almost to veneration. After suffering me for a sufficient time to stare at him with astonishment, he said, "Take the child to the slips," and I was led through the carpenter's gallery, the cloudlings and thunder-boxes, and placed in a good seat, where I saw the play with great delight. Digges was the best *Macheath* I ever saw in person, song and manner.—*O'Keefe.*

It gives me the greatest satisfaction to say that Digges was the very absolute *Caratach* of Fletcher ("Bonduca"). The solid bulk of his frame, his action, his voice, all marked him with identity. I mean assuredly to honour him when I say that it was quite equal to Kemble's *Coriolanus* in bold original conception and corresponding felicity of execution.—*Boaden*, "*Life of Siddons.*"

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in 1749. In 1764 he acted in Edinburgh under the name of Bellamy, which cognomen he borrowed from the celebrated Mrs. Bellamy, with whom he was at that time living. He was here thrown into prison by his creditors, whence he escaped; and eloped with a merchant's wife, leaving Edinburgh deeply involved in debt. In July, 1784, he was seized with paralysis while rehearsing *Pierre* to Mrs. Siddons's *Belvidera*, on the Dublin stage. He was removed from the theatre and never acted more."—*Random Records.*

Thomas Sheridan.<sup>1</sup>

1721-1788.

. . . . In return I will tell you of Sheridan, who at this instant is playing *Cato*, and has already played *Richard* twice. He had more company the second than the first night, and will make, I believe, a good figure on the whole, though his faults seem to be very many; some of natural deficiency, and some of laborious affectation. He has, I think, no power of assuming either that dignity or elegance which some men, who have little of either in common life, can exhibit on the stage. His voice when strained is displeasing, and when low is not always heard. He seems to think too much on the audience, and turns his face too often to the galleries.—*Dr. Johnson.*<sup>2</sup>

His action's always strong, but sometimes such  
That candour must declare he acts too much.  
Why must impatience fall three paces back?  
Why paces three return to the attack?  
Why is the right leg too, forbid to stir,  
Unless in motion semicircular?  
Why must the hero with the Nailor lie,  
And hurl the close-clench'd fist at nose or eye?  
In Royal John, with Philip angry grown,  
I thought he would have knock'd poor Davies down.  
Inhuman tyrant! was it not a shame  
To fright a king so harmless and so tame?

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<sup>1</sup> Father of Richard Brinsley. His wife was a popular authoress; a woman amiable and accomplished, of whom Dr. Parr wrote: "She was *quite celestial!*—both her virtues and her genius were highly esteemed."—*ED.*

<sup>2</sup> Johnson always professed great contempt for Sheridan. "He laughed heartily," says Boswell, "when I mentioned to him a saying of his concerning Mr. Thomas Sheridan, which Foote took a wicked pleasure to circulate. 'Why, sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity is not in nature.'—'So,' said he, 'I allowed him all his own merit.' He now added, 'Sheridan cannot bear me. I bring his declamation to a point. I ask him a plain question, 'What do you mean to teach?' Besides, sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to show light at Calais.'"

But spite of all defects his glories rise,  
 And art, by judgment form'd, with nature vies. . . .  
 Where he falls short 'tis nature's fault alone,  
 Where he succeeds, the merit's all his own.—*Churchill.*

He for many years presided over that theatre at Dublin, and at Drury Lane; he in public estimation stood next to David Garrick. In the literary world he was distinguished by numerous and useful writings on the pronunciation of the English language. Through some of his opinions ran a vein of singularity mingled with the rich ore of genius. In his manners there was dignified ease, in his spirit invincible firmness, and in his habits and principles unsullied integrity.—*Dr. Parr.*<sup>1</sup>

Sheridan, an excellent actor, a man of strict honour, and a perfect gentleman, who, during a life of great credit and public utility, managed one of the theatres in Dublin, for the better purpose of conducting that kind of undertaking, wrote one dramatic piece, and altered three plays, the productions of other authors.—*C. Dibdin.*

To this gentleman we owe the decency that has been long wanting in the Hibernian stage, a difficulty no one person could have surmounted but himself; and though merit does not always meet its proper reward, yet the seeds of flowers and roots he had planted and sown in this theatrical garden, flourish sweet and amiable, and like a master in the art, reward follows his pains and judgment in culture.—*Chetwood.*

Poor Sherry has been acting mad, haranguing mad, teaching mad, reading mad, managing mad. England soon found out his incapacity, the dissonance of his voice, the laboured quaintness of his emphasis, the *incessant* flux of his speech, his general appearance. He has been despised as an actor. His audiences laughed him to scorn.—*Macklin.*

Neither in person nor voice had Nature been very kind to Mr. Sheridan; but his judgment, his learning, and close application to study, compensated in some degree for the want of external advantages. His manner, though certainly not very pleasing, was supposed to be his own, and not borrowed from an imitation of other actors. He had besides, the advantage of an excellent character in private life.—*T. Davies.*

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<sup>1</sup> Parr was a bad repetition of Johnson. He prefaced his speeches with "Sir," and rounded his colloquial phrases in a manner that to the ear seemed good Johnsonese. But the metal was base; the remarks emitted no

## Samuel Foote.

1721-1777.

Boswell: "Foote has a great deal of humour." Johnson: "Yes, sir." Boswell: "He has a singular talent for exhibiting character." Johnson: "Sir, it is not a talent, it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers; it is farce, which exhibits individuals." Boswell: "Did not he think of exhibiting you, sir?" Johnson: "Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off."<sup>1</sup> Boswell: "Pray, sir, is not Foote an infidel?" Johnson: "I do not know, sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject." Boswell: "I suppose, sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions that occurred to his mind." Johnson: "Why then, sir, still he is like a dog that snatches the piece next him. Did you ever observe that dogs have not the power of comparing? A dog will take a small bit of meat as readily as a large, when both are before him."—*Life of Johnson*.

We have had frequent occasions for observing how the passing events of the day were carried on the stage in comedies

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ring. He had not a spark of Johnson's sagacity. Besides, he was a better-tempered man. His simulated acerbity was laughable. In English literature I know nothing more foolish than his conversation which many years ago was published in the *New Monthly Magazine* by some little Boswell under the title of *Parriana*. Sydney Smith has celebrated his literary honesty; this seems the only feature of his character that deserves praise.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> "While upon a party of pleasure along with the Duke of York and some other noblemen, Foote met with an accident both adverse and fortunate. He was thrown from his horse and his leg broken, so that an amputation became necessary, which he endured with uncommon fortitude. In consequence of this accident, the Duke obtained for him the patent of the Haymarket Theatre during life. Strange as it may appear, with the aid of a cork leg he performed his former characters with no less agility and spirit than he had done before, and continued exhibiting his very laughable pieces, with his more laughable performances, to the most crowded houses."—*Percy Anecdotes*.

and pantomimes, as objects of satire. This species of farce was brought to perfection by Foote, whose great talent was that of mimicry, and who delighted his audience by the exact manner in which he imitated the peculiarities and weaknesses of individual contemporaries. He was in all respects the great theatrical caricaturist of the age. The personality of the satire was the grand characteristic of Foote's performances, and one which rendered them dangerous to society, and certainly not to be approved. An affront to the actor was at any time enough to cause the offender to be dragged before the world; and matter in itself of the most libellous description was published without danger, under the fictitious name of a character, the resemblance of which to the original was sufficiently evident to the town. From such tribunals, neither elevation in society nor respectability of character is a protection.<sup>1</sup>—*Thomas Wright*.

Fox told me that Lord William Bentinck once invited Foote to meet him and some others at dinner in St. James's Street; and that they were rather angry at Lord William for having done so, expecting that Foote would prove only a bore, and a check on their conversation. "But," said Fox, "we soon found that we were mistaken; whatever we talked about—whether fox-hunting, the turf, or any other subject—Foote instantly took the lead, and delighted us all."—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*<sup>2</sup>

By turns transform'd into all kinds of shapes,  
Constant to none, Foote laughs, cries, struts, and scrapes;

<sup>1</sup> "I found fault," says Boswell, "with Foote for indulging his talent of ridicule at the expense of his visitors, which I colloquially termed, making fools of the company." Johnson: "Why, sir, when you go to see Foote, you do not go to see a saint; you go to see a man who will be entertained at your house, and then bring you on a public stage; who will entertain you at his house for the very purpose of bringing you on a public stage. Sir, he does not make fools of his company; they whom he exposes are fools already; he only brings them into action."

<sup>2</sup> Rogers tells another story of Foote. "One day Foote was taken into White's by a friend who wanted to write a note. Foote, standing in a room among strangers, appeared to feel not quite at ease. Lord Carmarthen, wishing to relieve his embarrassment, came up to speak to him; but himself feeling rather shy, he merely said, 'Mr. Foote, your handkerchief is hanging out of your pocket;' upon which Foote, looking suspiciously round, and hurriedly thrusting the handkerchief back into his pocket, replied, 'Thank you, my lord; you know the company better than I do.'"

Now in the centre, now in van or rear,  
 The Proteus shifts, bawd, parson, auctioneer.  
 His strokes of humour and his bursts of sport  
 Are all contain'd in this one word, distort.  
 Doth a man stutter, look asquint, or halt?  
 Mimics draw humour out of nature's fault;  
 With personal defects their mirth adorn,  
 And hang misfortunes out to public scorn.—*Churchill.*

Everything we hear of Foote is in keeping. Behind him, on the Irish stage, he had left recollections of his harsh voice, his wink, and the smile that fitted "one corner of his mouth." The Irish players noted the theatrical selfishness with which he would never "give or take," never once thinking of his fellows when in presence of the audience, but trying to engross all the applause and attention. Even in acting this spirit made him always turn his full face to the audience, and never address his brethren. There was something gratuitous even in the manner of his buffoonery, as though he would have liked to *know* that it went home and annoyed the object of it. One instance, not hitherto known, is very characteristic. He was very pressing with the actor, Sheridan, to come to his theatre and see a new piece, placed him in a conspicuous box, and in the front row. He also got Sheridan's family to attend. The actor's amazement and anger may be conceived when he found that he had been brought to see a picture of himself, and that all the audience recognised him and his known peculiarities in *Peter Primmer*.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

Foote was by far a better scholar than Garrick; and to this superiority he added also a good taste, a warm imagination, a strong turn for mimicry, and a constant fresh supply of extensive occasional reading, from the best authors of all descriptions. He could likewise supply all these advantages with great readiness; so that either with his pen, or in conversation, he was never at a loss.—*Cooke.*

Mr. Foote, after he had successively presented his whimsical exhibitions, under the title of "Giving Tea," at the unusual time of twelve o'clock at noon, in the little theatre in the Haymarket,<sup>1</sup> began to apply himself to the writing of farces, or

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<sup>1</sup> The little theatre in the Haymarket was built in 1720 by Mr. Potter. Occupied for some time during the summer months by virtue of licences

short comedies of two acts. These were some of his introductory pieces to many others more regular and permanent. Before he obtained the royal patent for acting plays in the theatre in the Haymarket, he frequently acted his pieces at Drury Lane, in the beginning of the winter. Sometimes he ventured upon some important parts in old comedies, such as *Fondlewife* in the "Old Bachelor," *Sir Paul Pliant* in the "Double Dealer," and *Ben* in "Love for Love." His intimacy with people of the first rank contributed to support him in his feeble attempts upon the masterly characters of Congreve; and it will scarce be credited that for three nights the boxes were crowded to see Foote blunder the part of *Ben*; for his acting bore no resemblance to nature and character. He was even destitute of what no man could suppose him to want, a proper confidence in his own abilities; for sure his *Ben* was as unentertaining a lump of insipidity as ever a patient audience was presented with; it was not even a lively mistake of humour. In his *Fondlewife* he had luckily remembered that great master of acting, Colley Cibber. In the course of the first scene, he drew the attention of the audience, and merited and gained much applause; but, in the progress of the part, he forgot his exemplar, and degenerated into buffoonery. His *Sir Paul Pliant* was worse, if possible, than his *Ben*; for fear restrained him from being outrageous in the sailor; but in the knight he gave loose to the most ridiculous burlesque and vilest grimace. However, the people laughed heartily, and that he thought was a full approbation of his grotesque performance. In short, Foote was a most despicable player in almost all parts but those which he wrote for himself.—*T. Davies.*

By Foote's buffoonery and broad-faced merriment, private friendship, public decency, and everything estimable among men were trod under foot.—*Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

He was a very extraordinary man, and had talents which he abused. He abounded in wit, humour, and sense, but he was so fond of detraction and mimicry, that he might be properly called a buffoon; and they were a great blemish in his reputa-

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from the Lord Chamberlain, it became in 1766 a theatre royal. The patent was granted to Foote, who pulled it down and rebuilt it, opening it in the following year. In 1777 Foote transferred it to the Elder Colman, who was succeeded by his son George Colman in 1794. It was once again pulled down, and rebuilt as we now have it.—ED.

tion, though he entertained you. He was generally civil to your face and seldom put you out of humour with yourself; but you paid for his civility the moment you turned your back, and were sure of being made ridiculous. He was not so malignant as some I have known, but his excessive vanity led him into satire and ridicule. He was vain of his classical knowledge (which was but superficial) and of his family, and used to boast of his numerous relations in the west of England.<sup>1</sup> He was most extravagant and baubling, but not generous. He delighted in buying rings, snuff-boxes, and toys, which were a great expense to him; and he lost money at play, and was a dupe with all his parts. He loved wine and good living, and was a mighty pretender to skill in cookery, though he did not understand a table so well as he thought; he affected to like dishes and *ragoûts*, and could not bear to eat plain beef or mutton, which showed he had a depraved appetite; he spared no expense in his dinners, and his wine was good. He was very disgusting in his manner of eating, and not clean in his person, but he was so pleasant and had such a flow of spirits, that his faults and foibles were overlooked. . . . He had a flat vulgar face, without expression; but where a part was strongly ridiculous he succeeded, for he always ran into farce; so that I have often been surfeited with him on the stage, and never wished to see him twice in the same character.—*Gahagan*,<sup>2</sup> “*Life of Siddons*.”

Foote's earliest notices of me were far from flattering; but though they had none of Goldsmith's tenderness, they had none of Johnson's ferocity; and when he accosted me with his usual salutation of “Blow your nose, child,” there was a whimsical

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<sup>1</sup> Foote's uncle, Captain Goodere, was hanged for the murder of his brother, Sir J. Dinely Goodere, Bart. Cooke, the translator of Hesiod, in introducing Foote into a club, said, “This is the nephew of the gentleman who was lately hung in chains for murdering his brother.”—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Gahagan was the original of *Aircastle*, in Foote's “Cozeners.” His habit of rambling in conversation is thus burlesqued by Foote:—“*Aircastle*: Did I not tell you what Parson Prunello said? I remember Mrs. Light-foot was by—she had been brought to bed that day was a month of a very fine boy—a bad birth; for Dr. Seeton, who served his time with Luke Lançet, of Guise's—there was also a talk about him and Nancy, the daughter—she afterwards married Will Whitlow, another apprentice, who had great expectations from an old uncle in the Grenades; but he left all to a distant relation, Kit Cable, a midshipman aboard the *Torbay*—she was lost coming home in the channel—the captain was taken up by a coaster from Rye, loaded with cheese,” &c.—ED.



manner and a broad grin upon his features which always made me laugh. The paradoxical celebrity he maintained upon the stage was very singular;—his satirical sketches were scarcely dramas, and he could not be called a good legitimate performer. Yet there is no Shakspeare or Roscius upon record who, like Foote, supported a theatre for a series of years by his own acting, in his own writings, and for ten years of the time upon a *wooden leg*! This prop to his person I once saw standing by his bedside, ready dressed in a handsome silk stocking, with a polished shoe and gold buckle, awaiting the owner's getting up. It had a kind of tragi-comical appearance; and I leave to inveterate wags the ingenuity of punning upon a Foote in bed and a leg out of it.—*Colman*,<sup>1</sup> "*Random Records*."

Foote set out for the Continent, but died at an inn in Dover, October 21st, 1777. In the church of St. Mary, in that town, there is a monument to his memory; and it has been generally imagined that Foote was buried there. Such, however, is not the fact. Mr. Jewell, at the representation of half the actors and dramatists of the day, brought the body to London, in order that it might be publicly interred in Westminster Abbey; but after he had taken this step, no funds were forthcoming, and he buried his friend at his own expense in the cloisters.—*Recollections of Bannister*.

Foote, of all men the most caustic, furnishes an anecdote illustrative of his having been not wholly the compound of cayenne and vitriol for which the world gave him credit. He had regard probably but for a few; but among those few was Weston the actor, a man of considerable ability in his profession. Foote had his portrait painted, and on leaving town for his journey to Dover in search of health—a journey which was his last—he went into the room where the picture hung, made a full stop before it, firmly fixed his eyes on the countenance until the tears started into them, and then turning away, exclaimed, "Poor Weston!" Then, as if in reproach of his

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<sup>1</sup> George Colman was born in 1762. He was a prolific play-writer, and it is said that he received for one of his plays a larger sum than was ever before given for a dramatic performance: this was his "John Bull." His most popular pieces were, "The Surrender of Calais," "The Mountaineers," "The Iron Chest" (taken from Godwin's novel of "Caleb Williams"), "The Heir-at-Law," and the "Poor Gentleman." He died in 1836, aged seventy-four. He was long manager of the Haymarket Theatre.—ED.

own seeming security, after a moment's meditation he uttered, "Poor Weston!—it will be soon 'Poor Foote!' or the intelligence of my spirits deceives me." It did not deceive him.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1841.

Foote's talents are generally admitted, though we think not fully appreciated, for we believe him to be, after Molière (and not *longo intervallo*), the greatest master of comic humour that ever lived; and he acted incomparably what he wrote inimitably.—*Quarterly Review*.<sup>1</sup>

Foote, as all of the old school know full well, could transform himself into almost every remarkable character, from the court

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<sup>1</sup> Foote's wit is well illustrated by the following anecdotes:—One night, at his friend Delaval's, one of the party would suddenly have fixed a quarrel upon him for his indulgence of personal satire. "Why, what would you have?" exclaimed Foote, good-humouredly putting it aside. "Of course I take all my friends off, but I use them no worse than myself. I take *myself* off." "Gadso!" cried the gentleman, "that I should like to see." Upon this, Foote took his hat and left the room.—The Duke of Cumberland came one night into the green-room. "Well, Foote," said he, "here I am, ready, as usual, to swallow all your good things." "Really," replied Foote, "your royal highness must have an excellent digestion, for you never bring up any again."—"Why are you for ever humming that air?" he asked a man. "Because it haunts me?" "No wonder," said Foote; "you are for ever murdering it."—Much bored by a pompous physician at Bath, who confided to him as a great secret that he had a mind to publish his own poems, but had so many irons in the fire he really did not know well what to do. "Take my advice, doctor," said Foote, "and put your poems where your irons are."—"There is a witty, satirical story of Foote," says Dr. Johnson. "He had a small bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. 'You may be surprised,' said he, 'that I allow him to be so near my gold; but you will observe he has no hands.'"—Garrick and Foote, leaving a hotel, the latter dropped a guinea. Impatient at not immediately finding it, "Where on earth can it be gone to?" he said. "Gone to the devil, I think," said Garrick, who had sought for it everywhere. "Well said, David," cried Foote; "let you alone for making a guinea go further than anybody else."—Macklin's topic, one evening, at his tavern, was the employment of memory in connexion with oratory. He took occasion to say that he had brought his memory to such perfection that he could recite anything at once hearing it. The lecture being concluded, Foote handed Macklin the following sentences, desiring he would read them once, and then repeat them:—"So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf, to make an apple-pie; and at the same time a great she-bear coming up the street, pops its head into the shop. 'What! no soap?' So he died, and she very imprudently married the barber; and there were present the Picinnies, and the Joblillies, and the Garynlies, and the Grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round button at top; and they all fell to playing the game of catch-as-catch-can till the gunpowder ran out of the heels of their boots." The laugh was not with Macklin.—ED.

end of the town to Whitechapel. I mean those characters who were distinguished by some *super-eminent* qualities that fitted them for his caricatura, in that age of humorists. His imitation of French-broken-English, as I have heard my uncle Zachary say, was very lively, not equal to Jemmy Spiller's, but as good as Ned Shuter's upon the whole, being rather more polite. But his Anglo-German was inimitable. It is true he was apt to abuse this original faculty, and sought, as his temper or his interest suited, to play off his ridicule at the expense of friend and foe alike.—*Wine and Walnuts.*

Mr. Foote was a man of wonderful abilities, and the most entertaining companion I have ever known.—*Garrick.*

Sure if ever one person possessed the talents of pleasing more than another, Mr. Foote was the man.—*Tate Wilkinson.*

Foote, an admirable but a most mischievous writer, who emulated Aristophanes with less genius and less feeling, who seemed fondly to fancy that to torture individuals was the only way to delight their fellow-creatures, measuring their pleasure by his malignity, who knew no quality of satire but personality, who would sacrifice his best friend for the gratification of tormenting him, and who, after all, was perpetually the cat's-paw to his own vanity, created, among the fastidious, the sour, and the heart-burnt, a sort of veneration for that exotic from Greece, the middle comedy, which, greatly to the honour of the manly and benevolent character of the English, may have a dwindling and a rickety existence, but can never flourish to maturity in this country.—*C. Dibdin.*

Foote sent a copy of his farce, "The Minor," to the Archbishop of Canterbury, requesting that if his friend should see anything objectionable in it, he would strike it out or correct it. The Archbishop returned it untouched, observing to a friend that he was sure Foote had only laid a trap for him, and that if he had put his pen to the manuscript, Foote would have advertised the play as "corrected and prepared for the stage by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury."—*Theatrical Anecdotes.*

## Thomas Weston.

1727—1776.

Poor Weston! *Hurry* was one of his last parts, and was taken from real life. I need not tell those who remember this genuine representer of nature, that in *Hurry*, as in all other characters which he acted, he threw the audience into loud fits of mirth, without discomposing a muscle of his features. Weston has left no resemblance of his indefinable simplicity.—*T. Davies.*

This actor has always been placed at the head of his class, and had merely to *show* himself to accomplish the full task of the low comedian. Weston was *Abel Drugger* himself; so that, as of later days in the case of Emery, it might be almost questioned whether it were acting at all, since the man exerted precisely the same feeling *in* his profession and out of it.—*Boaden.*

Weston was another of nature's wonders. He seemed as if he possessed neither idea nor conception, yet was he endowed with so many chaste and felicitous gifts, that he uttered rather than acted; but it was such utterance that the most accomplished acting never excelled. The French know nothing of such actors as Shuter and Weston.—*C. Dibdin.*

One evening, when Weston was announced to play *Scrub* and Garrick *Archer*, in the course of the day he sent to Mr. Garrick, in a letter requesting a loan of money, as he was continually in the practice of doing, under the impression that he was arrested. This Garrick at last discovered, and in consequence refused sending at that time what Weston had requested; upon which the latter neglected going to the theatre at his usual time; and when the hour of performance arrived, Garrick came forward and said as follows:—"Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Weston being taken suddenly ill, he is not capable of appearing before you this evening; and therefore, if it meets your approbation, I will perform the part of *Scrub* in his stead." Weston being in the two-shilling gallery with a sham bailiff, hallooed out, "I am here, and can't come; I am arrested." Upon which the audience sided with Weston, by insisting he should play the part, which the manager was obliged to acquiesce in, by paying the supposed debt, to the no small mortification of David.—*Spirit of the Public Journals, 1825.*

## Edward Shuter.

1728-1776.

Shuter, who never cared a single pin  
 Whether he left out nonsense or put in ;  
 Who aim'd at wit, though levell'd in the dark,  
 The random arrow seldom hit the mark.—*Churchill.*

There was Shuter, whom it was said Mr. Garrick pronounced the greatest comic genius he had ever seen. It struck one who had seen him in his leading parts that a simplicity and a luxurious humour were his characteristics. Yet it must have been disfigured by what is known to stage slang as gagging.—*Fitzgerald.*

A late comic actor of great merit, whose overflow of comic vivacity often degenerated into buffoonery.—*T. Davies.*

Poor Ned was indeed the delight of the galleries. His humour was broad and voluptuous, but never seemed richer than conviviality produces : the bottle was the sun of his table, and he neither had nor sought any higher inspiration. Yet he was an enthusiast in his worship, and enthusiasm led him into excess—unthinking levity commonly borders on vice. Shuter, I have heard, added gaming to ebriety, and lost his money commonly soon after his wits. The supplies would frequently run low, and friends, however wanted, were not always at home. On such occasions the irregular son of merriment is apt to trust to the common refuge of the needy ; but he kept up his spirits only to the forty-eighth year of his age, and then dropped into that receptacle of *humour*, St. Paul's, Covent Garden.—*Boaden.*<sup>1</sup>

This performer was once engaged for a few nights in a principal city in the north of England. It happened that the stage that he went down in (and in which there was only an old gentleman and himself) was stopped on the road by a single highwayman. The old gentleman, in order to save his own money,

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<sup>1</sup> “When Woodward and Garrick and Ned Shuter and old Parsons,” we are told, “met at the same table, there was more hilarity, more quaint and comical development of character, than ever was seen exhibited on the stage.” Barry was another who told a story well ; though Garrick used to say, “At an Irish story I will yield the palm to Spranger ; but I’ll beat him any day in every other walk.”

pretended to be asleep; but Shuter resolved to be even with him. Accordingly, when the highwayman presented his pistol, and commanded Shuter to deliver his money instantly, or he was a dead man—"Money!" returned he, with an idiotic shrug, and a countenance inexpressibly vacant—"oh! Lud, sir, they never trust me with any; for nuncle here always pays for me, turnpikes and all, your honour!" Upon which the highwayman gave him a few curses for his stupidity, complimented the old gentleman with a smart slap on the face to awaken him, and robbed him of every shilling he had in his pocket; while Shuter, who did not lose a single farthing, pursued his journey with great satisfaction and merriment, laughing heartily at his fellow-traveller.—*Theatrical Anecdotes.*

The celebrated Ned Shuter delighted to exhibit his eccentricities amongst the lowest company in St. Giles's, where he has been known more than once to treat a dozen of the rabble with drams and strong beer. His sober apology for such absurdities was, that in his walk of the drama it was necessary he should know life from the prince to the beggar, in order to represent them as occasion might require.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

This gay spark, when a lad about twelve or fourteen years old, was a livery servant to Lampe, composer for Covent Garden Theatre. "Shuter was a *special Pickle*," says Dr. Burney, "who took off all the performers. At this time Lampe was with a provincial company of players at Chester, among whom was Jemmy Worsdale, the painter, celebrated for being the go-between in the affair between Pope and Curll. Worsdale was also an actor who was famed for singing Harry Carey's song of 'Young Roger came Tapping at Dolly's Window.' Master Ned took the liberty of mimicking his master in this, and hit him off so much to the admiration of the wits, that it was with difficulty he escaped broken bones."<sup>1</sup>—*Wine and Walnuts.*

The origin of Shuter, the great comedian, is unknown; one Chapman, an actor and dramatist, who died at an advanced

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<sup>1</sup> The following story may be given as a specimen of Shuter's wit. A friend overtaking him one day in the street, said to him, "Why, Ned, aren't you ashamed to walk the streets with twenty holes in your stockings? Why don't you get them mended?" "No, my friend," said Shuter, "I am above it; and if you have the pride of a gentleman, you will act like me, and walk rather with twenty holes than have one darn." "How do you make that out?" "Why," said Shuter, "a hole is the accident of the day, but a darn is *premeditated poverty.*"

age in 1757, was the only person who professed to know anything of him. Shuter himself said, "I suppose I must have had parents, but I never remember having friends."—*Records of a Veteran.*

Shuter, whose strong nature and irresistible humour were highly and peculiarly diverting, must be ranked as a theatrical wonder. Neither on the French nor on the English stage do we find any one to whom we can compare him. His strong conception, his laughable manner, his perpetual diversity, were his own, and were displayed in a thousand various forms; always extraordinary, and yet always in nature. The extremes of life were never so critically displayed as by Shuter. His performance of the *Miser* and *Master Stephen* are incontrovertible proofs of this remark. Has any one seen him in *Corbaccio*, and will he tell me that acting ever went beyond it? When he went out of his way, so the question was humour, could anything be superior to Shuter? I look upon him, as far as it went, to have been one of the best burletta singers in the world. Nothing on earth could have been superior to his *Midas*. His great fault was indolence, but eccentric qualities will naturally be accompanied by eccentric conduct. Thus we perceive in his acting great inequalities, but those parts of it that were sterling were invaluable so.—*C. Dibdin.*

Shuter, who was the fiddle of every company he went into, had notwithstanding an aversion to be considered merely a buffoon and a jester; for the fact is, Shuter uttered a great many brilliant things, some of them far beyond the comprehension of those whose society he frequented. He happened to dine in a promiscuous company who were on tiptoe in expectation of hearing something witty from him; or, in their own words, that he would be comical. He began, in his own language, "to twig them," and was determined not to open his mouth. At length, the cloth having been removed, one of the company could no longer bear to be tantalized, and chuckled out, "Come, Mr. Shuter, when do you intend to begin to be comical?" "Gad!" said Shuter, "I forgot my fool's dress; however, I'll go and fetch it, if you will be my substitute until my return." The man thought this very comical, and declared he would. Shuter then took his hat and cane and went away, and did not return at all.—*Dibdin's "Professional Life."*

## John Moody.

1728-1813.

Long from a nation<sup>1</sup> ever hardly used,  
 At random censured, wantonly abused,  
 Have *Britons* drawn their sport with partial view,  
 Form'd general notions from the rascal few ;  
 Condemn'd a people, as for vices known,  
 Which, from their country banish'd, seek our own.  
 Taught by thee, MOODY, we now learn to raise  
 Mirth from their foibles—from their virtues praise.

*Churchill.*

There was a dry, sluggish determination about Moody that rendered his *Strap* very efficient. His manner was peculiar, but he was a valuable actor and most respectable man.—*Boaden.*

Mathews was one day invited to dine at the house of a friend at Chiswick, where Moody, once a celebrated actor, was to be of the party. Moody had long left the stage, and was then a very old, but very fine remnant of what he had been. During dinner he talked with great animation, brought back his theatrical reminiscences, and, in short, exhibited no sign whatever of mental decay. Mathews exerted himself to amuse this Nestor of the boards, and was honoured by the declaration "that Garrick himself was not greater in what he did." At length Moody was asked for a song ; he complied, singing in strong though uneven tones the old Scottish "We're a' noddin," which, however, he gave with a strong Irish accent. When he had reached nearly the end of the second verse, he suddenly stopped. All waited awhile, thinking that he was pausing to revive his memory. At length his host gently said, "Mr. Moody, I am afraid the words have escaped you." "Words, sir! what words?" asked the old man, with a look of great surprise. "The words of your song." "Song! what song, sir?" "The rest of the song you have been so kind as to favour us with—'We're a' noddin,' of which you have sung one verse." "Heaven bless you, sir!" said Moody, hastily, "I have not sung a song these ten years, and shall never sing again: I am too old to sing, sir." "Well, but you have been singing, and very well, too." To this Moody, with agita-

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<sup>1</sup> Ireland.



tion and earnestness, replied, "No, no, sir; I have not sung for years. Singing is out of the question at my time of life." All looked at each other, and then at the old man, who exhibited in his face and manner such an evident unconsciousness that it was felt unfit to advert any further to the subject. This was an affecting evidence of partial decay.—*Life of Mathews.*

The immovable features of Moody, who, afraid of o'erstepping nature, sometimes stopped short of her.—*Mrs. Mathews.*

Among the traits of stupidity put to the account of actors, by which droll unrehearsed effects have been produced on the stage, there is none that is supposed to convey greater proof of stupidity than that which distinguished the actor who originally represented *Lord Burghley* in the "Critic." The names of several players are mentioned, each as being the hero of this story; but the original *Lord Burghley*, or *Burleigh*, was Irish Moody, far too acute an actor to be suspected for a fool. When Sheridan selected him for the part, the manager declared that Moody would be sure to commit some ridiculous error, and ruin the effect. The author protested that such a result was impossible; and, according to the fashion of the times, a wager was laid, and Sheridan hurried to the performer of the part to give him such instructions as should render any mistake beyond possibility. *Lord Burghley* has nothing to say, merely to sit awhile; and then, as the stage directions informed him, and as Sheridan impressed it on his mind, "*Lord Burghley* comes forward, pauses near *Dangle*, shakes his head, and exit." The actor thoroughly understood the direction, he said, and could not err. At night he *came* forward, *did* pass near *Dangle*, shook his—*Dangle's*—head, and went solemnly off.—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1867.

## Henry Mossop.

1729-1773.

With studied impropriety of speech  
 He soars beyond the hackney'd critic's reach;  
 To epithets allots emphatic state,  
 Whilst principals, ungrac'd, like lacqueys wait.  
 In ways first trodden by himself excels,  
 And stands alone in undeclinables.  
 Conjunction, preposition, adverb join,  
 To stamp new vigour on the nervous line.

In monosyllables his thunders roll,  
He, she, it, and, we, ye, they, fright the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill.

His port was majestic and commanding, his voice strong and articulate, and audible even in a whisper, and a fine, speaking, dark hazel eye.—*Tate Wilkinson.*

Mr. Mossop was an actor of so established a reputation, and of such eminent merit, that his history and misfortunes deserve to be recorded. . . . Notwithstanding he was utterly void of grace in deportment and dignity in action, that he was awkward in his whole behaviour, and hard sometimes in his expression, I observed that he was, in degree of stage excellence, the third actor—a Garrick and a Barry only were his superiors; in parts of vehemence and rage he was almost unequalled, and in sentimental gravity, from the power of his voice, and the justness of his conceptions, he was a very commanding speaker. It is not to be wondered that Mossop wished to act the lover and the hero. To aim at general excellence is laudable; but repeated unsuccessful trials could not convince him that he was utterly unfit for tenderness or joy, for gaiety and vivacity. . . . He was always best where he could conceal by the disguise of age or dress his shambling walk and his ungainly action.<sup>2</sup>—*T. Davies.*

<sup>1</sup> There has been preserved one of Mossop's parts, interlined with his ideas as to how the sentences should be delivered. It is an odd illustration of the bad mechanic acting of the school of Quin. For instance, over the sentence,

“This paper has undone me—'tis the account!”

Mossop writes, *Vast throbs of feeling.* Over

“Is there no way to cure this?”

No new device to beat this from his brains?”

*Face full to audience. Side look. Cunning, fretful, and musing. Swelling inward.* Over

“I have toucht the highest pinnacle of my greatness,”

*G tone, with feeling, but low.* Clearly Mossop knew nothing of spontaneity of acting; of the enthusiasm that abandons all sense of identity, and is prompted only by the immediate impulse of the moment.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> One of Henderson's imitations was a conversation between a nobleman and Garrick, relative to the merits of Mossop's acting. The satire is twofold, as it not only represents Mossop as a noisy declaimer, whilst it calls him a Bull, a Paviour, a Teapot, but it exhibits Garrick as a sycophant, labouring against his own judgment, to agree with the nobleman.—ED.

While Garrick's sun was verging to its decline, Mossop came before the public with extraordinary promise. He had been educated at the Irish University, and intended for the Church; but Garrick was his tempter. He had seen this memorable actor on the Irish stage, and thenceforth determined to be an actor, or nothing. His first appearance was in *Zanga*. His talents in that part surprised every one, and he was eminent at once; but with striking abilities he had the great drawback of an irritable temper. He quarrelled with mankind, beginning with the manager. He soon after left Ireland, and made his first step on the London boards in "Richard III." His style of acting seems strongly to have resembled that of Kean in the present day—singularly vivid, subtle, and forcible, but with the defects of abruptness of delivery and irregularity of performance. He had another grand imperfection—that of believing that his talents were as unlimited as his ambition. He grasped at all the leading characters without discrimination, and of course played many of them without effect. Quitting Drury Lane in high displeasure, he returned to Ireland. There was but another step to ruin, and he took it without delay. Inflamed with the mania of management, he declared "there should be but one theatre in Ireland, and that he would be at the head of it." A declaration of this kind was a declaration of war with the theatrical world. Mossop found himself wrapped in universal hostility. He began his career with flying colours, disdained to listen to an offer of 1000*l.* a year to remain with Barry and Woodward, and rushed headlong into ruin. After seven years of hopeless toil he became bankrupt, abandoned Ireland, and returned to England. His health sank rapidly; he roved about with a drooping countenance and a worn-out frame, answering every inquiry for his health by saying "that he was better," and every inquiry into the state of his finances by saying "that he wanted nothing." If his life had been prolonged, he would probably have lived a lunatic; but he was suddenly found dead in his bed, with only fourpence in his possession.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1841.

One night in the green-room, while Mossop stood talking to some of the other performers, with his back to the fire, and himself dressed in full puff as *Cardinal Wolsey*, with rich crimson satin robe, lace apron, and cardinal's hat, the call-boy, in the course of his duty, came to the door, and after first looking at the paper he had in his hand for the names he had to call,

said aloud, as was proper, "Mr. Mossop."—"Gone up the chimney!" was the thoughtless answer of the great actor and manager. "Glad of it, sir!" was the pert reply of the call-boy, who went his way immediately. Mossop, with whom it was at that time a point of strong expediency to maintain his dignity and keep on the stilts, was suddenly struck with confusion at his imprudence. He turned away from the half-averted looks of the vexed performers, and inwardly censured himself for thus absurdly lowering his own importance.—*O'Keefe*.

Mossop was so correct and particular, that in the parts he studied from (one of which I saw and heard) he had marked in the margin even the expression of the face, the raising and lowering of an eyebrow, and the projection of an under lip. In his acting he had a certain distinct spot upon the stage for almost every speech. One night, "Venice Preserved" being the play, Knight, who was the *Reinhold*, being rather imperfect, requested the prompter to take care and watch him. "I will," said the prompter, "when you are at my side; but when you are O. P., I cannot be bawling to you across the stage."—"Never mind *that*," replied Knight; "that's my business." All went on well until the scene of the meeting of the conspirators, when Mossop (the *Pierre*), according to settled business, had to cross over to the prompter's side. Accordingly he would have advanced exactly to the spot; but there stuck *Reinhold*! Mossop in an under tone desired him to get out of his way. "I cannot, sir," he replied, still keeping his ear as close as possible to the prompter and his book. This rather heightened the fury of the embarrassed *Pierre*. After a few ineffectual attempts to drive Knight from his post, Mossop went on; and never was the reproof against the conspirators, particularly *Reinhold*, spoken by Mossop with more spirit and bitterness than upon that night.—*Ibid.*

Mossop, from all I can collect, was a commanding but never an agreeable actor. There are various ways of convincing the mind. We are convinced by subtlety, by plausibility, by blandishment, and by eloquence; but we can also be convinced by perseverance, by confidence, by earnestness, and even by vehemence. These latter qualities seem to have been Mossop's mode of convincing an audience with an admiration of him, which, with all his pomp, his stiffness, his peculiarity, and his affectation, he contrived to bring about. I have heard Mossop praised for great and commanding powers in tragedy, such as

no other actor ever possessed ; and it has been insisted that if he was quaint and starched at times, he was at other times grand and energetic, and indeed that his influence over the feelings of his auditors was irresistible. The mind, however, is not very fond of being threatened into pleasure ; nor are those confessions very sincere that are effected by compulsion. We cannot, therefore, reasonably acquiesce in the opinions of either the admirers or disciples of Mossop.—*C. Dibdin.*

An iron-throated tragedian. He was a man of education—reared in Trinity College, Dublin, which had thus turned out no less than four first-class tragedians ; gifted with a strong and unmelodious declamation, and a physical strength that would have carried him through such tremendous parts as *Sir Giles* or *Richard*. But his action was singularly ungraceful, and in the more level passages fell into the wearying monotony which was the curse of old stage-declamation.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

The late Mr. Mossop always spoke in heroics. A cobbler in Dublin who once brought him home his boots, refused to leave them without the money. Mossop returned during the time he was disputing, and looking sternly, exclaimed, “Tell me, are you the noted cobbler I oft have heard of?”—“Yes,” says the fellow ; “and I think you are the diverting vagabond I have often seen.”—*Wewitzer’s “Dramatic Reminiscences.”*

## Mrs. Hamilton.

1730-1788.

Mrs. Hamilton belonged to Covent Garden Theatre in 1758. This lady and Mrs. Bellamy had a violent altercation. The latter’s benefit being fixed on a night that happened to be Mrs. Cibber’s at the other house, she requested Mrs. Hamilton to let her have her Monday, and take in exchange her Saturday ; who, as her interest did not lie among the box people, and for the credit sake of having the first benefit in the season, complied. She accordingly fixed on “*The Rival Queens* ;” and notwithstanding it happened to be a wet afternoon, a great concourse of people for the second gallery attended. As soon as that part of the house was full, she disposed of the overflow in the boxes and on the stage, wisely preferring their two shillings apiece to empty benches. In the words of Mrs. Bellamy, “The heat of the house occasioned the wet clothes of the dripping audience to send forth odours not quite so sweet as

those of Arabia." This lady having cast some reflections on the vulgarity of Mrs. Hamilton's audience, the latter took the following mode of revenge on the night of Mrs. Bellamy's benefit:—The play which she had fixed on was the "Careless Husband," thus cast: *Sir C. Easy*, Mr. Ross;<sup>1</sup> *Lord Foppington*, Mr. Smith; *Lord Morelove*, Mr. Ridout;<sup>2</sup> *Lady Easy*, Mrs. Elmy;<sup>3</sup> *Edging*, Mrs. Nossister; *Lady Graveairs*, Mrs. Hamilton. With the entertainment of "Florizel and Perdita;" *Florizel*, Mr. Smith; *Autolycus*, Mr. Shuter; *King*, Mr. Ridout; *Shepherd*, Mr. Sparks;<sup>4</sup> *Clown*, Mr. Costello; and *Perdita*, Mrs. Bellamy. At half an hour after six, just before the play should have begun, she sent Mrs. Bellamy word that she would not perform the character of *Lady Graveairs*. It became necessary, from so late a disappointment, to make an apology to the audience for the delay that must ensue. Ross, who loved mischief as well as he had done while at Westminster School, and in which he had generally a share, as he had this evening, by having stimulated Mrs. Hamilton to the refusal of her services, enjoyed the storm, and consequently would not make an apology. Smith was so agitated, it being the first time of his attempting *Lord Foppington*, that he could not do it. Poor *Lady Betty Modish* was therefore obliged to show her flounces and furbelows before their time, in order to request the patience of the audience until Mrs. Vincent could dress for the part which Mrs. Hamilton was to have performed. Mrs. Bellamy's petition was granted, as she herself relates, "with repeated plaudits, and with an assurance from Mr. Town and his associates that they would revenge her cause." This they did the very next night, when Mrs. Hamilton played *Queen*, in the "Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> David Ross, born 1728, is described by Dibdin as a voluptuous man, and particularly a great eater; therefore he had not the perseverance to give the necessary attention to his profession, and thus he happened to be admirable or insufferable in proportion as he was more or less plethoric.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Ridout died in 1760.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> Her maiden name was Mors. Her qualifications for the stage, which were considerable, were marred by a weak voice. She does not seem to have been happy as a wife, to judge from a little note of Chetwood: "Mr. Elmy, her husband, I know, was born at Norwich; but where he is now, I believe neither she nor I can tell."—ED.

<sup>4</sup> There were two Mr. Sparks's—Luke and Isaac. Luke was distinguished by his amiability and his general usefulness; Isaac for his commanding form and flow of humour.—ED.

Fryar," and Mrs. Bellamy *Elvira*, for the benefit of Mr. Sparks. The majesty of Spain then appeared in all the pomp of false jewels. She was so remarkably fond of these gems, that Colley Cibber compared her head to a furze-bush stuck round with glow-worms, as her hair was extremely dark, and she had an objection to wearing powder. Upon her entrance she was saluted in a warmer manner than she wished, and was prevented for some time from speaking by hisses. At length, on the tumult ceasing, she advanced and addressed the audience thus:—"Gemmen and ladies: I suppose as how you hiss me because I did not play at Mrs. Bellamy's benefit. I would have performed, but she said as how my audience stunk, and were all tripe people." When the fair speechifier got thus far the pit roared out, "Well said, *Tripe!*" a title which she retained until she quitted the theatre.—*Memoir of Mrs. Hamilton*, 1803.

## Arthur Murphy.

1730-1805.

As one with various disappointments sad,  
 Whom dulness only kept from being mad,  
 Apart from all the rest great Murphy came—  
 Common to fools and wits, the rage of fame.  
 What tho' the sons of nonsense hail him sire,  
 Auditor, author, manager, and squire,  
 His restless soul's ambition stops not there—  
 To make his triumphs perfect, dub him player.  
 In person tall, a figure form'd to please,  
 If symmetry could charm, deprived of ease;  
 When motionless he stands we all approve;  
 What pity 'tis the thing was made to move! . . . .  
 Still in extremes he knows no happy mean,  
 Or raving mad, or stupidly serene.  
 In cold-wrought scenes the lifeless actor flags;  
 In passion, tears the passion into rags.  
 Can none remember? Yes—I know all must—  
 When in the Moor he ground his teeth to dust,  
 When o'er the stage he folly's standard bore,  
 Whilst common-sense stood trembling at the door.

*Churchill.*

Murphy, in his early life, acted *Othello*, *Archer*, *Faffier*, and

other parts at Covent Garden, where he was engaged for a season or two ; but as his success was not great, he left the stage for the bar, and in after life became a Commissioner of Bankrupts. He made some remark on Lewis's acting that displeased the latter, who said, "Tell Mr. Murphy, if justice instead of law had been consulted, he would not have gone to the bar, but have been sent to it." "Murdering a Moor" (*i.e.*, *Othello*) was the crime imputed to him by Lewis.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

He lived upon *potted stories*, and made his way as Hannibal did, by vinegar ; having begun by attacking people, especially the players.—*T. Davies.*

Mr. Murphy was intended for business, has been a party man, was an actor, a dramatic writer, and at length a barrister, about which a great deal has been said ; but how any part of it can, as fact, tell to his disadvantage is beyond the admission of my capacity. All professions are honourable, if they are honourably borne ; but the *ipse dixit*s of Churchill have found their low and dirty level ; and it would be well for the societies of the Inns of Court if they never had admitted among them men whose pursuits had been more dishonourable than those who have followed the profession of an actor.—*C. Dibdin.*

On the first night of any of his plays, if the slightest symptoms of disapprobation were shown by the audience, Murphy always left the house, and took a walk in Covent Garden Market ; then, having composed himself, he would return to the theatre. One thing ought to be remembered to Murphy's honour : an actress with whom he had lived, bequeathed to him all her property ; but he gave up every farthing of it to her relations.—*Rogers.*

A kind of "Bohemian," he was to be a player, a barrister, and a hack writer for the booksellers ; to live freely, and not very decorously, to jumble together circuit and the green-room, the bar and the stage ; to write "opinions" and successful plays. Almost within a few weeks he had appeared on the stage at Drury Lane, and on the no less dramatic boards of Westminster Hall. Yet, with this curious unsteadiness, he ended with respectability, and was offered high legal office three times.—*P. Fitzgerald.*



## William Smith.

1730.

Smith the genteel, the airy, and the smart.—*Churchill.*

All agree that he was one of the most elegant men of the day. His acquirements were of no ordinary kind. He had received a first-rate education, and had completed his studies with much credit to himself at Cambridge. He was admitted into the highest circles of society, and was particularly remarkable for the elegance of his manners. He had many of those qualifications which enabled him to perform respectably in tragedy; but he never obtained anything like excellence in that walk. In comedy, however, as the fine gentleman, his powers were universally acknowledged. The graces of his person, the elegance of his manners, and the dignity of his deportment, admirably qualified him for that character. The style of the man moving in good society was essentially different, it must be remembered, from what it is now. The dress, the distinctions, the acquirements necessary, were so unlike anything which we now see, that we can form but an indifferent idea of the qualifications demanded for the accomplished actor in this walk. There was more stage effect then even in private life; the powdered hair, the folding hat, the sword, the short breeches with buckles, the embroidered coat, the ruffles, and all the accessories of dress, served to distinguish the class; dancing a minuet, fencing, and fashionable raillery were among the indispensable accomplishments. To portray upon the stage a man of the true school of gentility required pretensions of no ordinary kind, and Smith possessed these in a singular degree, giving to *Charles Surface* all that finish for which he was remarkable. He had acquired the distinction of "Gentleman Smith" from his unvarying exhibition of an air of distinction without any false assumption. He had made it an indispensable article of agreement with managers that his face was never to be blackened, and that he was never to be lowered through a stage-door. He retired from the stage in 1787.—*"Life of Sheridan," Bohn's Edition.*

Smith has been immortalized by Churchill as a gentlemanly actor; but his forte was comedy. His person was agreeable, his countenance engaging, and his voice smooth and powerful though monotonous. A potent physical personage he must

have been, who could swim a league at sea, drink his bottle of port, and after fatigue and conviviality, commit his part distinctly to memory. He was respectable in *Richard III.*, and a tolerable *Hotspur*.—*Thomas Campbell.*

Smith had been educated at college and lived in the best society; his correspondence with his great master (Garrick) is frequently graced by quotations from Ovid and Virgil; and Catullus and Mrs. Hartley concur in reminding the manager of his own attachment to Mrs. Woffington. He would often beg from Mr. Garrick an hour's attention to his rehearsals; but I never could see that he had profited from his teacher, for his tragedy was uniformly hard and unvaried, whereas the very vital principle of Roscius was *point*, and he could no more endure a character set to one tune, than he could bear the slightest inattention to the stage-business. Smith's heroes in tragedy all more or less reminded you of *Bajazet*—it was the tyrant's vein that he breathed. He looked upon tragedy as something abstract, to which all character was to bend; so that he had but one manner for *Richard* and *Hamlet*. But his nerve and gentlemanly bearing carried him through a world of emotion without exciting a tear, and you were some way satisfied, though not much "moved." In comedy, his *manliness* was the chief feature, yet it was combined with *pleasantry* so perfectly well-bred, that I am unable to name any other actors who have approached him.—*Boaden.*

Smith, better known as "Gentleman Smith," married the sister of Lord Sandwich; for some time the union was concealed, but an apt quotation of Charles Bannister elicited the truth. Smith, who was very reserved, evaded the banter of Foote upon the subject, when Charles exclaimed:

"Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?"

Smith was proof against curiosity, but not against wit, and acknowledged his marriage. "Well," said Bannister, "I am rejoiced that you've got a *Sandwich* from the family, but if ever you get a dinner from them, d— me!" Charles proved himself a prophet as well as a punster.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

He took the eye with a certain gaiety of person. He brought with him no sombre recollections of tragedy. He had to expiate the fault of having pleased beforehand in lofty declamation. He had no sins of *Richard* or of *Hamlet* to atone for.—*Charles Lamb,*

Smith's industry being alive to his duty, he sought every possible opportunity of improving by a correct study of the method and manner of Garrick. . . . The public in consequence, in their commendation of perfectness, industry, attention, and gentlemanly demeanour, strongly applauded those particular merits in this actor which he possessed, and passed by trifling impediments, which could not be called faults, with the candour due to warm devotion and active exertion. — *C. Dibdin.*

Mr. Smith, from his first attempt in *Theodosius* in 1753 to the present time, has by uniform good conduct supported himself in the general esteem of the people, whose favourite he certainly is, and deserves to be; for no man is more indefatigable in the exertion of his talents in a great variety of characters in tragedy and comedy. To examine his merit minutely would be uncandid; especially when in the aggregate it is very considerable. I believe the best judges prefer his action in the sock to that of the buskin. His *Iachimo*, in "Cymbeline," is easy, spirited, and artful; and he almost in *Kitely* makes us forget the loss of Garrick. He is distinguished among the players by the name of "Gentleman Smith." — *T. Davies.*

## Thomas King.

1730-1805.

No one could deliver such dialogue as is found in *Lord Ogleby* and in *Sir Peter Teazle* with greater point than Mr. King. He excelled in a quiet sententious mode of expressing feeling and sentiment. There was an epigrammatic style in everything he uttered; for although he could, when occasion required, give rapid utterance to his thoughts, he seemed generally to dwell upon his words, and then make all the happy points tersely and cleverly. His voice was musical, his action slow, his countenance expressive of benignity, and yet of firmness. He had the reputation of speaking prologues and epilogues better than any actor of the day, rendering them, when written with spirit, little dramas perfect in themselves. His delivery in the couplet was in the true spirit of poetry; and, without any mixture of buffoonery or mimicry, he painted the ludicrous and the gay with great felicity and tact. — *Life of Sheridan.*

Behind came King. Bred up in modest lore,  
 Bashful and young he sought Hibernia's shore ;  
 Hibernia famed, 'bove every other grace,  
 For matchless intrepidity of face.  
 From her his features caught the gen'rous flame,  
 And bid defiance to all sense of shame.  
 Tutor'd by her all rivals to surpass,  
 'Mongst Drury's sons he comes, and shines in brass.

*Churchill.*

His acting left a taste on the palate sharp and sweet like a quince ; with an old, hard, rough, withered face, like a john-apple, puckered up into a thousand wrinkles ; with shrewd hints and tart replies.—*Lamb.*

King had been a town actor for the amazing period of fifty-four years. His first appearance was in *Alworth*, in the "New Way to Pay Old Debts," on the 19th October, 1748. King had more of Garrick's friendship than any other actor ever enjoyed ; he was respectful, but never servile, before his great master, who sent him his dress foil when he quitted the stage, as the legacy of professional death. I saw him from the pit, and he played the character (of *Sir Peter Teazle*) extremely well, and in the language was quite perfect. King had a habit of repeating without voice everything addressed to him by *another* actor, so that he never remitted his attention to the business for a moment. His lips were always employed, and he was probably master of the language of every scene he was engaged in. His old men have been supplied with kindred and sometimes equal power ; but his saucy valets have never been approached.—*Boaden.*

It is difficult to liken King to any English actor. Those who performed characters in his style at the time of Cibber seem to have been followed by Yates, who, though he was, as I have with pleasure observed, an admirable actor, had a manner perfectly distinct. King is a performer who has thrown novelty into old characters, consequence into new, and nature into all. Indeed, his leading feature is integrity ; which quality having been invariably his guide during his whole public and private conduct, he has most respectably endeared himself to the world in general by a display of truth and nature from the stage, and to a large circle of admiring friends, by an exercise of benevolence, good humour, and every other social virtue.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Mrs. Abington.

1731-1815.

She is below the thought of any honest man or woman ; she is as silly as she is false and treacherous.<sup>1</sup>—*Garrick*.

No one could deliver a smart speech with such severity ; yet she could not touch the highest point of airy comedy. She had been pitched out of the dregs of the town, and lived for years as a tavern girl. It was infinitely to the credit of her tact and *esprit* that she should have raised herself, and, like Woffington, have learned refinement and accomplishments. She could tell of the strange society in Dublin, where ladies of first fashion were at her feet, imploring hints about their dress. The "Abington cap" was in all the milliners' shops. Her manner was bewitching. No one could play a fan so delightfully ; and it was noticed that she had some odd little tricks in her acting, such as turning her wrist, and "seeming to stick a pin at the side of her waist."<sup>2</sup>—*P. Fitzgerald*.

Mrs. Abington (the original performer of *Lady Teazle*), in the latter portion of her dramatic life, was tempted to throw aside feminine grace and delicacy so far as to exhibit herself as *Scrub*, in the "Beaux' Stratagem," for her (pecuniary) benefit—a character which, it may be said, she acted but too well. Grotesque portraits of her as this man-of-all-work are extant, and which might pass for tolerable likenesses of our inimitable Liston in the same character."<sup>3</sup>—*Mrs. Charles Mathews*.

<sup>1</sup> Garrick hated her. He never speaks of her without calling her *that most worthless creature, or that worst of bad women*.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Johnson was solicited by Mrs. Abington to attend her benefit. He went. Boswell's inquisitiveness broke out—the word "good nature" might have kept him quiet. "Why, sir, did you go to Mrs. Abington's benefit? Did you see?" "No, sir." "Did you hear?" "No, sir." "Why then, sir, did you go?" "Because, sir, she is a favourite with the public ; and when the public cares a thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to *your* benefit, too."

<sup>3</sup> Peter Pindar thus alludes to this performance :—

"The courtly Abington's untoward star  
Wanted her reputation much to mar,  
And sink the lady to the washing-tub—  
So whisper'd, 'Mistress Abington, play SCRUB.'  
To folly full as great some imp may lug her,  
And bid her slink in FITCH and ABEL DRUGGER."

Her person is formed with great elegance, her address is graceful, her looks animated and expressive. To the goodness of her understanding, and the superiority of her taste, she is indebted principally for her power of pleasing; the tones of her voice are not naturally charming to the ear, but her incomparable skill in modulation renders them perfectly agreeable. Her articulation is so exact that every syllable she utters is conveyed distinctly and even harmoniously.—*T. Davies.*

She, I think, took more entire *possession* of the stage than any actress I have seen. There was, however, no assumption in her dignity. She was a lawful and grateful sovereign, who exerted her full power, and enjoyed her established prerogatives. The ladies of her day wore the hoop and its concomitant train. The *Spectator's* exercise of the fan was really no play of fancy. Shall I say that I have never seen it in a hand so dexterous as that of Mrs. Abington? She was a woman of great application: to speak as she did required more *thought* than usually attends female study. Far the greater part of her sex rely upon an intuition which seldom misleads them: such discernment as it gives becomes habitual, and is commonly sufficient, or sufficient for common purposes. But commonplace was not the station of Abington. She was always beyond the surface: untwisted all the chains which bind ideas together, and seized upon the exact cadence and emphasis by which the point of the dialogue is enforced. Her voice was of a high pitch, and not very powerful. Her management of it alone made it an organ. Yet this was so perfect that we sometimes converted the mere effect into a cause, and supposed it was the sharpness of the tone that gave the sting. . . . Her deportment is not so easily described: more womanly than Farren; fuller, yet not heavy, like Younge,<sup>1</sup> and far beyond even the conception of modern fine ladies, Mrs. Abington remains in memory as a thing for chance to restore to us rather than design, and revive our polite comedy at the same time.—*Boaden.*

Mrs. Abington can never go beyond *Lady Teazle*, which is a second-rate character.—*Walpole.*

With Mrs. Abington came a species of excellence which the stage seems never before to have boasted in the same perfection. The higher parts in comedy had been performed chastely

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Mrs. Pope.—ED.

and truly; perhaps in these particulars more so than by this actress. There was a peculiar goodness gleamed across the levity of Mrs. Pritchard, and by what we can learn of Mrs. Bracegirdle, who seems to have possessed the same captivating sort of manner which distinguished Mrs. Abington, she was in these characters natural and winning. But it remained for her successor to add a degree of grace, fashion, and accomplishment to sprightliness, which was no sooner seen than it was imitated in the politest circles. . . . In addition to the grace, the ease, and the elegance with which Mrs. Abington personated characters in high life, and aped politeness in chambermaids, her taste for dress was novel and interesting. She was consulted by ladies of the first distinction, not from caprice, as we have frequently seen in other instances, but from a decided conviction of her judgment in blending what was beautiful with what was becoming. Indeed, dress took a sort of *ton* from her fancy, and ladies both on the stage and off piqued themselves with decorating their persons with decency and decorum.—*Charles Dibdin.*

## Robert Baddeley.

1732-1794.

Mr. Baddeley, who died in 1794, is not less known for his benevolence than for his comic talents. By his will he left his cottage at Hampton to the Theatrical Fund in trust that they should elect four fund pensioners who might not object to live sociably under the same roof; and in order that the decayed actors who should be chosen by the committee as tenants of the house might not appear in the eyes of the neighbourhood like dependents on charity, he left a sum to be distributed by those tenants to the needy around them. He also left money for erecting a small summer-house for them, which was to be situated so as to command a view of the Temple of Shakspeare erected by Mr. Garrick. The summer-house was to be formed of part of the wood that belonged to Old Drury Lane Theatre, the scene of Garrick's fame and excellence; and the wood was bought on purpose for this object. He also bequeathed the interest of 100*l.* Three per Cents. to be annually expended in a Twelfth-cake, with wine and punch, to be distributed in the green-room on Twelfth-night, to make the future

sons and daughters of Thespis remember an old friend and member of the profession.—*The Percy Anecdotes.*

The accommodating civility of Baddeley, than whom nobody ever performed that particular foreigner, a Swiss, so well, as Garrick perfectly well knew.—*C. Dibdin.*

Baddeley, previous to his becoming a player, was a cook. The first character he happened to appear in, it was necessary he should wear a sword. Foote, seeing him thus equipped, immediately exclaimed, “Ha, Baddeley, I am heartily glad to see you in the way of complete transmigration—you have turned your *spit* into a *sword* already!”—*R. Wewitzer.*

## Charles Holland.

1733–1769.

Holland, to speak in familiar phrase, was what we call a good-looking man; he had an affectation of carrying his head either stiffly erect, or leaning towards one shoulder, which gave an awkwardness to his person, which was not otherwise ungentle. . . . His ear was perfectly good, and he had a moderate share of sensibility. By a constant attention to the voice, manner, and action of Mr. Garrick, he did not displease when he represented some of his most favourite characters: particularly *Hamlet*, *Chamont*, *Hastings*, and *Tancred*. In the last he manifested an uncommon degree of spirit.—*T. Davies.*

Next Holland came. With truly tragic stalk  
 He creeps—he flies. A hero should not walk.  
 As if with Heaven he warred, his eager eyes  
 Planted their batteries against the skies;  
 Attitude, action, air, pause, start, sigh, groan,  
 He borrow'd, and made use of as his own.  
 By fortune thrown on any other stage,  
 He might, *perhaps*, have pleas'd an easy age.  
 But now appears a copy, and no more,  
 Of something better we have seen before.  
 The actor who would build a solid fame  
 Must imitation's servile arts disclaim;  
 Act from himself, on his own bottom stand;  
 I hate e'en Garrick thus at second hand.

*Churchill.*



So just thy action with thy part agrees,  
 Each feature does the office of a tongue ;  
 Such is thy native elegance and ease,  
 By thee the harsh line smoothly glides along.  
 At thy feign'd woe we're really distress'd,  
 At thy feign'd tears we let the real fall ;  
 By every judge of nature 'tis confess'd,  
 No single part is thine—thou'rt all in all.

*Chatterton.*<sup>1</sup>

Holland was extremely different from Powell, both as an actor and a man. Though his natural talents were not so strong, yet he kept as respectable a situation, and through the propriety of his conduct, his company was coveted by the wise and the celebrated, while Powell's weakness led him into the society of the vain and the frivolous. Holland had not, nor had Powell received a very liberal education ; but his intellects were of that strong, clear, and decided kind, they performed for him the task of a tutor so well, that his decisions upon all occasions were founded in sound judgment and critical experience. He was free, good-natured, cheerful, and generous ;

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<sup>1</sup> Chatterton was born at Bristol in 1752. At the first school he was sent to he was listless and morose. His master thought him so unpromising a boy that he sent him back to his mother before his ignorance, which even the cane failed to enlighten, should injure the pedagogue's reputation as a teacher. At fifteen he was apprenticed to one Lambert, an attorney, where he worked for twelve hours a day, dined with the servants, and slept with the foot-boy. In 1769 he wrote Horace Walpole a letter, in which he offered to furnish him with an account of some great painters and engravers who had flourished in Bristol. In this letter were enclosed some stanzas on the death of Richard I., as a specimen of some poems which he had found in that city. Walpole submitted the verses to Gray, who pronounced them forgeries, and they were returned. Chatterton was not disheartened. The spacious arena of London was before him, and into that amphitheatre he resolved to descend, and to contest for fame. In April, 1770, he bade farewell to his mother, and started for the capital. Before long he writes that his prospects are glorious. He composes songs, essays, poetry, political pamphlets, rather scandalous addresses and squibs. He had made up his mind to become as a writer more formidable than Junius, and an instrument more obnoxious to power than Wilkes. Beckford, Lord Mayor, patronized him, and his death seems to have dealt Chatterton his first formidable blow. Disappointments thronged ; he retired to meaner apartments, and fell into great want. He could not return home ; his pride would not suffer him to face his sister and mother. Broken-hearted, famished, mad, this great genius committed suicide, 1770, aged eighteen.—ED.

nor had he an unkind wish to any human creature. He indulged himself as much as any young man reasonably ought to do; yet with his purse and his heart ever open, though not sprung from an opulent origin, which circumstance he had too much sense to conceal, at the age, I believe, of thirty-three, he left his family 6000*l.*<sup>1</sup>—*C. Dibdin.*

“Holland,” said old Charles Macklin, “I shall live longer than Garrick, and if he will deposit 500*l.* in the hands of a banker, I will deposit the same sum, and the longest liver shall be entitled to the 1000*l.* You may tell him so from me.” “No,” replied Holland, “I will not tell him so; but I will take the wager myself.” “Not so,” rejoined Shylock, “not so—*Sir, I will have the benefit of his fears.*”—*R. Wewitzer.*

## Mrs. Jefferson.

1733–1776.

*Britannia*<sup>2</sup> was represented by Mrs. Jefferson, the most complete figure in beauty of countenance and symmetry of form I ever beheld. This good woman (for she was as virtuous as fair) was so unaffected and simple in her behaviour, that she knew not her power of charming. Her beautiful figure and majestic step in the character of *Anna Bullen*, drew the admiration of all who saw her. She was very tall; and, had she been happy in abilities to act characters of consequence, she would have been an excellent partner in tragedy for Mr. Barry. In the vicissitudes of itinerant acting, she had often been reduced, from the small number of players in the company she belonged to, to disguise her lovely form, and to assume parts very unsuitable to so delicate a creature. When she was asked what characters she excelled in most, she

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<sup>1</sup> Holland and Powell were bosom friends. When Powell died, Holland had a presentiment he should soon follow him. Dibdin says that the last time he ever performed he was in high spirits, full of anecdote, all of which contained some reference to Powell. He said that the first time he ever saw Powell was at a spouting club, where they performed *Posthumus* and *Iachimo* together. These characters were also the first and the last they personated together on the stage. “What makes this matter singular almost beyond belief,” says Dibdin, “was that he was then dressed for *Iachimo*, and he died a few days after.”

<sup>2</sup> In Mallet’s masque of that name, produced in 1755.—ED.

innocently replied, "*Old men, in comedy.*" meaning such parts as *Fondlewife* in the "*Old Bachelor*," and *Sir Jealous Traffic* in "*The Busybody.*" She died suddenly at Plymouth as she was looking at a game that was practising for the night's representation. In the midst of a hearty laugh, she was seized with a sudden pain, and expired in the arms of Mr. Moody, who happened to stand by, and saved her from falling to the ground.—*T. Davies.*

## George Ann Bellamy.

1733<sup>1</sup>—1788.

Bellamy leaves nothing to be desired.—*Dr. Johnson.*

The charming George Ann Bellamy had procured from Paris two gorgeous dresses wherein to enact *Statira* in the "*Rival Queens.*" *Roxana* was played by Peg Woffington; and she was so overcome by malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness, when she saw herself eclipsed by the dazzling glories of the resplendent Bellamy, that Peg at length resolved to drive her off the stage, and with upheld dagger had well nigh stabbed her at the side-scenes. *Alexander* and a posse of chiefs with hard names were at hand, but the less brilliantly clad *Roxana* rolled *Statira* and her spangled sack in the dust, pommelling her the while with the handle of her dagger, and screaming aloud:—

"Nor he, nor heaven shall shield thee from my justice;  
Die, sorceress, die! and all my wrongs die with thee."<sup>2</sup>

*Dr. Doran.*

Mr. Quin, the comedian, in whose dramatic corps the

<sup>1</sup> Chetwood dates her birth 1727; but as the biographical dictionaries I have consulted agree in fixing it at 1733, I have adopted that year.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> This story is told by Campbell, in his "*Life of Mrs. Siddons,*" of Mrs. Boutwell. "She was," he says, "the original *Statira* of Lee's '*Alexander*,' and acted the '*Rival Queens*' successively with Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Barry. Once when playing with the latter of the ladies, she was in danger of dying on the stage in earnest. Before the curtain drew up the two Queens, *Statira* (Boutwell) and *Roxana* (Barry) had a real rivalry about a lace veil, which was at last awarded to the former by the property-man. This decision so enraged *Roxana* that she acted her part rather too naturally, and in stabbing *Statira* sent her dagger, though it was a blunted one, through Mrs. Boutwell's stays, about a quarter of an inch into the flesh." It is in this fashion that history is written.—ED.

celebrated Mrs. Bellamy was then performing, once after the rehearsal desired to speak with her in his dressing-room. As he had always carefully avoided seeing her alone, she was not a little surprised at so unexpected an invitation. Her apprehensions made her fear that she, by some means or other, had offended the worthy man; but her fears were not of long duration, for as soon as she entered his room, he took her by the hand, and with a smile of great benignity, thus addressed her:—"My dear girl, you are vastly followed, I hear. Do not let the love of finery, or any other inducement, prevail on you to commit an indiscretion. Men, in general, are rascals. You are young and engaging, and therefore ought to be doubly cautious. If you want anything in my power, which money can purchase, come to me and say, 'James Quin, give me such a thing,' and my purse shall always be at your service." "The tear of gratitude," says Mrs. B., in her "Memoirs," "stood in my eye at this noble instance of generosity; and his own glistened with that of humanity and self-approbation."—*Percy Anecdotes*.

Then comes Bellamy, so "very beautiful," as she seemed to young O'Keefe, "with her blue eyes, and very fair." "I often saw her splendid state sedan-chair, with superb silver-lace liveries, waiting for her at the door of Liffey Street Catholic Chapel."—*Life of Garrick*.

I dwell for a moment on a last appearance which I witnessed—namely, that of Mrs. Bellamy, who took her leave of the stage May 24th, 1785. On this occasion Mrs. Yates, who had retired from the profession, performed the part of the *Duchess of Braganza*, and Miss Farren, the present Countess of Derby, spoke an address, which concluded with the following couplet:

"But see, oppress'd with gratitude and tears,  
To pay her duteous tribute she appears."

The curtain then ascended, and Mrs. Bellamy being discovered, the whole house immediately arose to mark their favourable inclinations towards her, and from anxiety to obtain a view of this once celebrated actress, and, in consequence of the publication of her life, then celebrated authoress. She was seated in an armchair, from which she in vain attempted to rise, so completely was she subdued by her feelings. She, however, succeeded in muttering a few words, expressive of her gratitude, and then sinking into her seat, the curtain dropped before her.

. . . . Mrs. Bellamy was not only a beautiful woman, but a most accomplished actress. She was the successful rival of Mrs. Nossiter, during the tedious "Romeo and Juliet" contest between Garrick and Barry. She also established Dodsley's play of "Cleone," refused by Garrick; . . . . and in the opinion of Quin, Garrick, and other critical contemporaries, she surpassed even Mrs. Woffington in conversational powers.—*Frederick Reynolds*.

Mrs. Bellamy played *Alicia* in "Jane Shore," in presence of the King of Denmark (who was then on a visit to George III.), who, wearied with very fast living, was in a sound sleep during one of her finest scenes. The angry lady had to exclaim, "Oh, thou false lord!" and she drew near to the slumbering monarch, and shouted it close to his ears with such astounding effect that he started up, rubbed his eyes, became conscious of what was going on, and how it had come about, and remarked that he would not have such a woman for his wife though she had no end of kingdoms for a dowry.—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1863.

We can say of Mrs. Bellamy that she was natural, easy, chaste, and impressive; that as far as person, features, voice, and conception went, none of which were by any means of an inferior description, she highly pleased and never offended; but these commendations, respectable as they rank her, would be cold and negative applied to Mrs. Cibber or Mrs. Pritchard, who commanded attention, who seized the passions, and modelled them at their will. But with all this deduction, the public would be a good deal astonished to see such an actress as Mrs. Bellamy at this moment, were Mrs. Siddons out of the question.—*C. Dibdin*.

She has a most admirable improving genius: therefore it will be no wonder if she soon reaches the top of perfection. She has a liberal, open heart, to feel and ease the distresses of the wretched.—*Chetwood's "History of the Stage,"* 1749.

## Mrs. Crawford.<sup>1</sup>

1734-1801.

Though once most elegant in her deportment, she became at last rough and coarse; and her person had the ap-

<sup>1</sup> This actress was three times married. Her first husband was a Mr.

pearance rather of an old man than one of her own sex.—*J. Taylor.*

Though even in her best days it appears that she was too vehement in action, and that she neglected to insinuate herself into admiration from her ambition to create surprise, yet still it is allowed that she could produce astonishment deep and thrilling. The effect of her question, as *Lady Randolph* in “*Douglas*,” to the peasant respecting the child, “*Was he alive?*” was perhaps never surpassed on the stage. Bannister told me that it made rows of spectators start from their seats.—*Campbell.*<sup>1</sup>

She looked still a fine woman, though time, while it had taken something from the elegance of her figure, had also begun to leave its impression on her features. Her voice was somewhat harsh, and what might be termed broken. In level speaking it resembled the tone of passion in other speakers. It was at no time agreeable to the ear; but when thrown out by the vehemence of her feeling, it had a transpiercing effect that seemed absolutely to wither up the hearer—it was a flaming arrow—it was the lightning of passion. Such was the effect of her almost shriek to *Old Norval*, “*Was he alive?*” It was an electric shock that drove the blood back from the surface suddenly to the heart, and made you cold and shuddering with terror in the midst of a crowded theatre.—*Boaden’s “Life of Kemble.”*

Mrs. Crawford I remember well: “a fine woman, a sweet woman,” doubtless she had been—nay, still was when I first beheld her; but a *good* actress she never *could* have been.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

Mrs. Crawford acted from 1759 to 1797. She was the daughter of an apothecary at Bath, and was of an amorous temperament. Somebody or other jilted her, it is said, in her seventeenth year, and the misfortune so deeply affected her that, in the vain attempt to reconcile herself to it by going to the theatre, she fell in love with an actor of the name of

Dancer, her second the well-known actor, Spranger Barry, the third a Mr. Crawford, who ill-treated her. She lies by the side of her second husband in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Boaden says, speaking of Mrs. Siddons, that “perhaps the most serious moment of her professional life was that in which she resolved to contest even that character (*Lady Randolph*) with her rival, Mrs. Crawford.”—ED.

Dancer. Him of course the poor forsaken girl, who appeared in a consumption, married in spite of her physician and all her high-born relations, who thought the connexion a disgrace to the pestle and mortar. Mrs. Dancer soon became the star of the Dublin Theatre, and a widow. She lost but little time in giving her hand to the handsomest man on the stage, Spranger Barry, then called the Irish Roscius and the silver-tongued. With him she led a life of happiness and fame, and for many years, under Garrick's management, was the delight of Drury Lane. In 1777 Barry died, and she married a third husband, who was a brute, as third husbands generally are, and broke her heart. She was then no longer young—though not old—and domestic distress cast such a damp over her genius, that frequently she could only be said to walk through her parts. On the appearance of Mrs. Siddons she came from Dublin to act at Covent Garden; but a faded beauty, some years on the wrong side of forty, “paled her ineffectual fires” before the blaze of those resplendent charms, and her genius showed like a dying lamp in the meridian sun.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1834.

Mrs. Barry (Mrs. Crawford) had more of Garrick's merit in tragedy, and was equal to quickness, passion, rage, and an exposition of all the terrible and turbulent passions. Common grief was too tame for her expression. She knew not how to insinuate herself into the heart—her mode was to seize it. Admiration was not enough: she must beget astonishment. This difficult effect, it must be confessed, her acting very often produced; but it seldom happens that such bold and forcible strokes of art are free from inequality.—*C. Dibdin*.

## Tate Wilkinson.

1736-1803.

Mr. Wilkinson was indeed a polished gentleman in private life; and even as a manager his liberality was conspicuous. In the course of the year certain removes occurred, such as a nine-mile journey from Pomfret to Wakefield, which many of the actors would walk, if the weather permitted, in summer. Tate, on such occasions, preceded them in his carriage; and on their arrival at a certain point of the road he would invite them to an excellent dinner, which he had ordered ready for their refreshment; and towards the whole of the performers, from the

highest to the lowest, on these occasions, in manner and conduct he would be a Chesterfield in all he said and did.—*Life of Mathews.*

Tate had been a little too merry in his youth, and was very melancholy in old age. He had had a wandering mind, and a decrepit body; and being manager of a theatre, a husband, and a ratcatcher, he would speak in his wanderings “variety of wretchedness;” he would interweave, for instance, all at once the subject of a new engagement at his theatre, the rats, a veal-pie, Garrick and Mrs. Siddons, and Mrs. Tate and the doctor.—*Leigh Hunt.*

One of the most extraordinary mimics that ever lived.—*T. Campbell.*

With not a single comic power endued,  
The first a mere mere mimic's mimic stood.

*Churchill.*

One morning a letter was brought in at Southampton Street, introducing a young man who wished to go on the stage. Garrick received him kindly, listened to his declamation, which was poor enough, and comforted the aspirant by telling him that his shyness was a very good sign of success. This young fellow had hung about the green-room in Covent Garden, and for all this shyness was a pert, forward, impudent *gamin*, whose precocious talents of mimicry had been overpraised by friends. He offered to “take off” some of the well-known actors, to show the manager his gifts. “Nay, now,” said Garrick, in his peculiar mixture of hesitation and repetition, which made his “talk” a favourite subject of imitation. “Nay, now, sir, you must take care of this; for I used to call myself the first at this business.” But the young fellow knew the manager's weak place. He began, leading off with Foote. The likeness amused the manager immensely, and the performance was repeated. “Hey, now! now—what—all,” went on Mr. Garrick. “How—really this—this—is—why, well, well, well, do call on me on Monday, and you may depend on my doing all I can for you.” . . . On the Monday the youth came again, and was welcomed warmly. He was told that inquiries had been made about his widowed mother, and that he was to be put on the books at thirty shillings a week—a fortune indeed. The youth's name was Tate Wilkinson, who has left behind a very curious history of himself and other players, which is a



mass of truth, blunders, and falsehoods—a mass, too, of meanness, vanity, and egotism.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

The disjointed state of Wilkinson's memory gave rise to a hundred anecdotes, which were rather what he might have said than what he actually did say. Stories of this sort are generally arranged in a manner too antithetical: this it was that detracted from Mr. Mathews's admirable imitation of the veteran manager. The following sentences, *verbatim et literatim*, were noted down as Tate uttered them:—"But if he (alluding to Melvin) don't come to rehearsal, how can he rehearse? . . . . Nor was Hope's *Warner* what it might have been. . . . And a very dull spring meeting it will be. . . . No letters from London, and the farce is called at one, is it? . . . . If 'Blacklock' runs second even, Mr. E—— will be a large winner. . . . So call Hope's scenes again." Imagine a pause between each paragraph, such as occurs in the speech of a stutterer, and you have an image of Tate. Well might Mathews say that he seemed to have cut his words separately out of a dictionary, thrown them loose into a sack, and shaken them forth again promiscuously.—*Records of a Veteran.*

Tate Wilkinson was a humorist by nature, and a great deal more of the humorist by art. Possessing some natural faculty for imitation, his manners were a perpetual burlesque; yet with all this affected eccentricity, he had a perfect sense of his own interest, had a subtle knowledge of mankind, managed his theatre with considerable dexterity, and contrived to live handsomely on the profits of a pursuit which has probably produced more broken fortunes than any employment on record.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1839.

When Tate Wilkinson first appeared on the stage, he applied himself principally to mimicry, which he succeeded so well in as to meet with universal applause. Among the various characters he took off was Luke Sparks the player,<sup>1</sup> who felt it so powerfully that he made a formal complaint to Mr. Garrick. Garrick, who himself smarted under the lash of the mimic, laughed it off, and said, "Come, come, Luke, you had better take no notice of it; consider, if you are mimicked, it is in *good company*." "True," said Luke, very gravely, "but I have known many a man ruined by keeping good company."—*Wewitzer.*

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<sup>1</sup> Luke Sparks was a well-known actor, equally good in tragedy and

## William Parsons.

1736-1795.

Parsons was born a comic actor : the tones of his voice, and the muscles of his face proclaim it ; his humour is genuine and pleasant ; nobody can forbear laughing either *with* him or *at* him, whenever he opens his mouth.—*T. Davies.*

He was an actor of great merit, but he never appeared to greater advantage than he did in the "Critic." He was the original *Sir Fretful Plagiary*, and from his delineation most of our modern actors have borrowed their idea. A compliment paid to his memory on the opening of the Haymarket Theatre in the summer (after his death) was caught at by the audience with loud expressions of their concurrence in the sentiment. A prelude was written by Colman, entitled "New Hay at the Old Market ;" the audience was supposed to be made acquainted with the wants of the concern, and a dialogue between Prompter and Carpenter occurs, during which the following expressions were used :—

"Carpenter : ' We want a new scaffold for the "Surrender of Calais."'

"Prompter : ' Ah, where shall we get such another hangman ? Poor fellow, poor Parsons ! the old cause of our mirth is now the cause of our melancholy ; he who so often made us forget our cares, may well claim a sigh to his memory.'

"Carpenter : ' He was one of the comicallest fellows I ever see.'

"Prompter : ' Ay, and one of the honestest, Master Carpenter. When an individual has combined private worth with public talent, he quits the bustling scene of life with twofold applause, and we doubly deplore his exit.'"

The allusion here was to the play of the "Surrender of Calais," in which Parsons performed the chief workman at the gallows, erected for the patriots who were to be hung by the decree of King Edward. The scene was an imitation of the grave-diggers in "Hamlet." On an occasion when the King (George III.) had commanded the play, Parsons, instead

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comedy. Chetwood says, "He may be accounted a person in the highest second-class." He died in 1767.—ED.

of saying the words set down for him, "So the king is coming ; an the king like not my scaffold, I am no true man," gave a new reading, which, as it was expressed with peculiar humour, and a saucy assumption of independence, excited great laughter, more especially from the monarch. Parsons exclaimed, "An the king were here, and did not admire my scaffold, I would say d—n it, he has no taste !"—*Life of Sheridan.*

I can hardly *now* convince myself that his place has been supplied. He never could be tempted to quit the standard of his master Garrick, and he passed as an heir-loom into the possession of Sheridan. Let me bear witness to his rich and singular power of telling a story. One of his best has been versified by a very dear old friend, and called "Parsons, the Actor and the Lion," and it is done as well as a very humorous pen can do it ; but the *face* of the actor must be wanting ; the *manner* of him whose toe had touched a lion at the bed's foot ; the shaggy mane ; the verification of the fact ; the agony of suspense ; the knocks that might wake the savage to their distraction ; all this should be seen and heard.—*Boaden.*

None who ever saw Parsons in "Volpone," in "The Confederacy," and in "The Village Lawyer," can forget his effective mode of exclaiming, while representing the character of the avaricious *Corbaccio* :

"Has he made his will?  
What has he given me?"

*Mosca.*—No, sir—

*Corbac.*—"Nothing !—ha?"

And again, as the amorous old *Money Trap* :

"Eh ! how long will it be, Flippanta?"

And lastly, as the roguish *Sheepface*, when consulting the lawyer *Scout* :

"Let's try it t'other way."

His rivals, Edwin and Quick, undoubtedly possessed one great advantage over him—that of singing. Yet, in spite of this powerful aid to his competitors, Parsons, relying more on mental than on vocal talents, maintained his ground, and for year after year the original *Sir Fretful Plagiary* and *Crabtree* contrived to make successful play against the original *Lingo* and *Peeping Tom*, and what is still more to Parsons's credit, against the original *Tony Lumpkin* and *Isaac.*—*F. Reynolds.*

The discrimination of Parsons in "Parents and Guardians"

was his own, and he went over this walk in a manner perfectly original, which was the more admirable, coming as he did after Yates; besides, he had treasured up a great fund of knowledge, and was capable of speaking with taste and judgment to every question concerning the arts, a congenial feeling with those enlarged ideas which particularly belong to acting.—*C. Dibdin.*

## William Powell.

1736–1769.

Few actors have for these twenty years displayed such talents for tragic passion as Powell. It is less to be admired that he did not succeed in some parts than that he should come off triumphantly in so many. Among his worst failings we may reckon an inclination sometimes to rant and bluster, and sometimes a propensity to whine and blubber.—*Thomas Davies.*

I saw the great actor Powell make his first appearance on the stage; it was in *Philaster* at Drury Lane. He had been apprentice to Sir Robert Lanbrook in the City. He had, I thought, more power over the passions than any actor I ever beheld. King spoke a kind of prologue to introduce him to the audience. Powell died at Bristol, where they conferred upon him great funeral honours.—*John O'Keefe.*

Mr. Powell, so eminent for his tragic powers, may be literally said to have felt the ruling passion strong in death. When he was on his death-bed, and Mrs. Powell had left the room, Mrs. Hannah More, who sat by his bedside, was alarmed by observing his cheek suddenly assume a lively colour. He at the same time threw himself into the proper attitude, and exclaimed:

“Is that a dagger that I see before me?”

A moment after this, as if sensible of his danger, he cried out, “O God!” and instantly expired.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

Powell's acting was strong nature, luxuriant as a wilderness. It had a thousand beauties and a thousand faults. He felt so forcibly that in any impassioned scene tears came faster than words, and frequently choked his utterance. If Garrick had not gone to Italy, but had stayed at home and honestly taught him, there is certainly no height of perfection in tragedy to which such abilities could not have reached; but he hurried

over so many characters for the short time he was on the stage, that it was impossible, even had his understanding been as great as his conception, for him to have digested any of them into anything like form.—*C. Dibdin.*

## Mrs. Yates.

1737–1787.

Her countenance, with the beauty of the antique statue, had also something of its monotony, and she was defective in parts of tenderness. But it is confessed, even by her censurers, that her fine person, haughty features, and powerful voice, carried her well through rage and disdain, and that her declamation was musical. Taylor himself told me that she was the most commanding personage he had ever looked upon before he saw Mrs. Siddons. She was a superb *Medea*; and Wilkinson compares her *Margaret of Anjou* with Mrs. Siddons's *Zara*. Davies says that she was an actress whose just elocution, warm passion, and majestic deportment excited the admiration even of foreigners, and fixed the affection and applause of her own countrymen.—*Thomas Campbell.*

What I seem best to remember her in is *Violante*, in “The Wonder;” and though it is sixty years since I saw Garrick and her in that play, I remember a great deal of it, as if it had occurred yesterday. It is an admirable acting play, and the two principal performers seemed to leave nothing to be desired. What I recollect best of Mrs. Yates is the scene in which Garrick, having offended her by a jealousy, not altogether without an apparent cause, the lady, conscious of her entire innocence, at length expresses a serious resentment. *Felix* had till then indulged his angry feelings; but finding at last that he had gone too far, applies himself with all a lover's arts to soothe her. She turns her back to him, and draws away her chair; he follows her, and draws his chair nearer; she draws away further; at length by his winning, entreating, and cajoling, she is gradually induced to melt, and finally makes it up with him. Her condescension in every stage, from its commencement to its conclusion, was admirable. Her dignity was great and lofty, and the effect highly enhanced by her beauty; and when by degrees she laid aside her frown—when her lips began to relax towards a smile, while one cloud vanished after another, the

spectator thought he had never seen anything so lovely and irresistible, and the effect was greatly owing to her queen-like majesty. The conclusion, in a graceful and wayward beauty, would have been comparatively nothing; with Mrs. Yates's figure and demeanour, it laid the whole audience, as well as the lover, at her feet.—*William Godwin.*<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Yates was ever overstepping the modesty of nature to produce stage effect.—*A. M. Seward.*

Might figure give a title unto fame,  
 What rival should with Yates dispute her claim?  
 But justice may not partial trophies raise,  
 Nor sink the actress in the woman's praise.  
 Still, hand in hand her words and actions go,  
 And the heart feels more than the features show.  
 For, through the region of that beauteous face,  
 We no variety of passions trace.  
 Dead to the soft emotions of the heart,  
 No kindred softness can those eyes impart.  
 The brow still fix'd in sorrow's sullen frame,  
 Void of distinction, marks all parts the same.

*Churchill.*

Her great beauty, fine presence, and immature talent made a deep impression; and later, wisely listening to careful instruction, and furnished with opportunities by the illness of rivals, she took her place as one of the grand actresses of the century.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

Too much stumping about and too much flumping about.—*Mrs. Clive.*

Mrs. Yates had but little expression to animate a form and countenance almost as perfect as the model which she perpetually brought to mind; her voice too had a monotony in perfect consent with her person; as the latter was eminently grand and beautiful, so the former was exquisitely harmonious. But passion was now the great desideratum, and of this soul of tragedy she had infinitely less than Miss Younge, then acting

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<sup>1</sup> William Godwin, best remembered now by his novel of "Caleb Williams," on which the younger Colman founded his bombastic melodrama, "The Iron Chest." He was born in 1756, and died in 1836. He married the celebrated Mary Wollstonecraft. His daughter was Mrs. Shelley. Hazlitt, in the "Spirit of the Age," has ably discriminated his talents.—*Ed.*

with her at the same theatre. She repeated the *Grecian Daughter* on the 28th of October (1782), as a sort of anticipation of the character then to be immediately acted by Mrs. Siddons; that performance having decidedly appropriated the play to Drury Lane, Miss Younge and she acted on the 31st *Hermione* and *Andromache* in the "Distressed Mother," and then all *their* tragedy became strictly confined in the "Castle of Andalusia" for some time. Mrs. Yates next acted *Lady Macbeth* to the *Macbeth* of Henderson, and at that time passed for the greatest that had been seen since Mrs. Pritchard. In the *sleeping scene*, however, I am satisfied that Miss Younge had more speaking terrors, and in all but the commanding action with the daggers, had more nature and more effect than her beautiful rival.—*Boaden's "Life of Siddons."*

Mrs. Yates was a performer of extraordinary merit. If she had a fault it was an emulation of the best French actresses, which gave a declamatory air to her delivery, but in her it was less a fault than it could have been in any other actress, because her voice was so wonderfully well calculated for this part of acting, that what would have appeared monotonous in any other, was in her penetrating to admiration. In all the complaints of suffering innocence, she was pathetically affecting; her melancholy and despondency excited generous pity, and her grief was repaid with the tear of commiseration. This however was not the boundary to her acting. In scenes of animated passion and haughty fierceness her manner was commanding and her expression majestic. She had all the grand and noble requisites of tragedy in great perfection. If she personated pride, she maintained it even in disappointment: if greatness, she never lost sight of its dignity, however fallen. Her merits were in the nature of those of Barry. Her queens were full of elevation, and her lovers of strong sensibility; but here we must stop. Grandeur and tenderness comprised the whole of her talents; the intermediate passions had nothing to do with them. They entirely consisted of the power to awe her auditors into admiration or melt them into tears.—*C. Dibdin.*

## William Bensley.

1738-1817.

Of all the actors who flourished in my time—a melancholy phrase if taken aright, reader—Bensley had most of the swell of soul, was greatest in the delivery of heroic conceptions, the emotions consequent upon the presentment of a great idea to the fancy. He had the true poetical enthusiasm—the rarest faculty among players. None that I remember possessed even a portion of that fine madness which he threw out in *Hotspur's* famous rant about glory, or the transports of the Venetian incendiary at the vision of the fired city. His voice had the dissonance, and at times the inspiring effect of the trumpet. His gait was uncouth and stiff, but no way embarrassed by affectation; and the thoroughbred gentleman was uppermost in every movement. He seized the moment of passion with greatest truth, like a faithful clock, never striking before the time, never anticipating or leading you to anticipate. He was totally destitute of trick and artifice. He seemed come upon the stage to do the poet's message simply, and he did it with as genuine fidelity as the nuncios in Homer deliver the errands of the gods.—*Charles Lamb*.<sup>1</sup>

He had to play *Henry VI.* in “Richard the Third.” After the monarch's death in the early part of the play, he had to appear for a moment or two as his own ghost, in the fifth act. The spirits were at that time exhibited *en buste* by a trap. Now our Henry was invited out to supper, and being anxious to get there early, and knowing that little more than his shoulders would be seen by the public, he retained his black velvet vest and bugles, but discarding the lower part of his stage costume, he drew on a jaunty pair of new, tight, nankeen pantaloons, to be as far dressed for his supper company as he could. When he stood on the trap, he cautioned the men who turned the crank not to raise him as high as usual, and of course they promised to obey. But a wicked low comedian was at hand, whose love of mischief prevailed over his judgment, and he suddenly applied himself with such goodwill to

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<sup>1</sup> “Charles Lamb,” says a writer, “awards to Bensley a meed of praise at which the few who remember that sensible but stiff performer are enforced to smile.”—*Quarterly Review*, 1854.



the winch, that he ran King Henry up right to a level with the stage; and moreover, gave his majesty such a jerk that he was forced to step from the trap on to the boards to save himself from falling. The sight of the old Lancastrian monarch in a costume of two such different periods—mediæval above, all nankeen and novelty below—was destructive of all decorum both before the stage and upon it. The audience emphatically “split their sides,” and as for the tyrant in the tent, he sat bolt upright, and burst into such an insane roar that the real Richard could not have looked more frantically hysterical had the deceased Henry actually so visited him in the nankeen spirit.<sup>1</sup>—*Dr. Doran, “Table Traits.”*

Bensley delivered dialogue with a propriety of emphasis and a nicety of discrimination that evinced a sound and comprehensive judgment; but when we are told that his voice and manner were well-suited to *Malvolio* and to the *Ghost* in “*Hamlet*,” we are naturally prepared for what is added by his most candid describers—that he showed a mind labouring against natural defects. He had an ungainly solemnity of action, and a nasal pronunciation. A good judge of acting who remembers him, tells me, that in seeing him on the stage his mind alternated between admiration of Bensley’s sagacity as an actor, and regret that one so unfitted by nature for acting should have chosen it for his profession.—*T. Campbell, “Life of Siddons.”*

Bensley was a gentleman and a scholar. He used to glare upon Kemble sometimes in the green-room with a savage glee while repeating a caustic quotation from Horace. As a military man he knew the “right-hand file” of any description of troops.—*Boaden, “Life of Inchbald.”*<sup>2</sup>

Bensley had been in the army, and when he thought proper

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<sup>1</sup> This joke is told by Hook (see the “*Life of Hook*,” by R. H. D. Barham), as having been played off on Murray by Jack Johnstone. Page 312-13.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> His first appearance was at Drury Lane in 1765, as *Pierre*, in “*Venice Preserved*.” One day, travelling in a hack post-chaise, he came in violent collision with a lady on horseback, who was thrown. They took a fancy to each other, and married. He left the stage in 1796, and was appointed to the post of a barrack-master, for which he was probably fitted by having served as lieutenant in the Marines. He had the luck, some years before his death, to come into a large fortune, bequeathed to him by Sir William Bensley, a Baronet, and an East Indian Director. He is spoken of as “a perfect gentleman.”—ED.

to unbend from his dignified stateliness was prone to the relation of his moving accidents by flood and field. Whenever the name of any foreign station occurred in conversation, Bensley would exclaim, "I was there in — such a year, and served under (such a General) as lieutenant, &c. &c."<sup>1</sup> C. Bannister (against whose punning propensities Bensley waged war) had noted down all these assertions for many months, and on one particular evening, after a coolness for some days between the tragedian and himself, proposed his health in the following words:—"Gentlemen, I rise to drink the health of one who has sought the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth; who, quitting the field of fame, bespoke her trumpet to bray forth his eulogies in the path of the drama. The *scenic* powers of my friend Mr. Bensley you all know, you all appreciate" (loud plaudits, and Bensley, overcome by gratitude, fervently squeezing Bannister's hand); "but, Gentlemen," continued the relentless humorist, "it is as a defender of his country that I rise to drink his health; he has fought, he has bled for Old England!"—(tremendous applause, and Bensley bowing his acknowledgments.) "He was a Captain in the — regiment at Calcutta — in —. He was at — in —. He led the forlorn hope at — in 17—." (Here B. enumerated all the places Bensley had ever mentioned in his moments of exhilaration, to the tragedian's dismay.) "Gentlemen," concluded Charles, "my friend's age is but forty-six, he has been twenty years on the stage—I find, therefore, by accurate calculation, that he must have carried a pair of colours when only eighteen months old—an instance of precocity, power, and courage, unexampled in the history of the world." Poor Bensley took this *exposé* so much to heart that he never afterwards appeared in the room.—*Records of a Stage Veteran*, 1836.

I never laughed with Bensley but once, and then he represented *Malvolio*, in which I thought him perfection. Bensley had been a soldier, yet his stage walk entirely reminded you of the "one, two, three, hop!" of the dancing-master. This scientific progress of legs, in yellow stockings, most villainously cross-gartered, with a horrible laugh of ugly

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<sup>1</sup> He was a great egotist. Speaking of one of his own performances he said, "My acting in that play will never be forgotten in Liverpool until time runs into eternity."

conceit to top the whole, rendered him Shakspeare's *Malvolio* at all points.—Boaden,<sup>1</sup> “*Life of Jordan.*”

Bensley, who always maintained an upper rank upon the stage, both in tragedy and comedy, was respectable in all the characters he undertook, in spite of a stalk and a stare—a stiffness of manner and a nasal twang of utterance—which prevented his being very popular in most of them; but these drawbacks were advantages to him in representing the buckram nobility of *Lord Mortimer* in Miss Lee's play; and for the same reason his personation of *Malvolio*, the starched and conceited steward in “*Twelfth Night*,” was beyond all competition.—*George Colman*, “*Random Records.*”

A country gentleman dropping asleep while Bensley was repeating a long speech in his usual croaking voice, suddenly started up, and cried out, “Hullo! reach my blunderbuss this instant; I thought I had shot that croaking devil yesterday.”—*R. Wewitzer.*

## Charles Bannister.

1738—1804.

Charles Bannister was a native of Gloucestershire. When about fourteen his father obtained a good appointment in the victualling office at Deptford, and thither young Charles also repaired. This was in the year 1752. Garrick, then the star of Drury, had left a memory of his greatness at the eastern end of the metropolis. The flame that had burst forth in Goodman's Fields reached across the river. The difficulty that distance created inflamed curiosity; and the youths of that day, interdicted from late hours, were actually in a fever respecting the Roscius. Spouting clubs were as plentiful as blackberries; and Charles, who had an excellent voice, was soon seen at divers musical and theatrical meetings. In 1755-6 behold him acting *Richard*, *Romeo*, &c., &c., in a barn between Deptford and Greenwich. This came to the ears of his father, who took a very summary mode of stopping his performances, by locking

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<sup>1</sup> Writing of Bensley's *Old Norval* Boaden says: “Pathos rendered his voice ragged as well as repulsive; and he never, as to his feet, either stood or walked with the character of age. His helpless action had a character of restrained vigour; he implored pity in the noisy shout of defiance. His understanding, however, was of a superior kind, and it rendered him always respectable, and sometimes nearly excellent.”

poor Charles up, and taking all his clothes away. This treatment could not endure for ever; he got his clothes again, and again returned to Deptford and the drama; and at last went to town, met an old theatrical agent at the Black Lion, in Clare Court, and obtained an engagement at the Norwich Theatre, "for all Mr. Garrick's business, at 15*s.* a week." All his anxiety now was to conceal his vocal powers, for he dreaded being asked to play operatic characters. Whilst at Norwich he made many applications to the great powers in the metropolis, but in vain; and as ambition burned more dimly within him he wooed and wedded; and in 1758 his eldest son John Bannister was born. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bannister were each of them favourites in the Norwich circuit. In society he had unfolded his vocal and mimetic propensities. His powers as a punster had also developed themselves; his company was courted, and his benefits were immense. And Charles Bannister's boon companion was an intimate friend of Sam Foote; he named Bannister to the great man, who immediately sent him an offer of 3*l.* per week. It was in May, 1762, that Charles stood trembling beside John Palmer, the former dressed for *Will*, the latter for *Scamper*, in the "Orators:" two characters less favourable to *débutants* can scarcely be conceived. They are two Oxford scholars, who have come up to hear Foote's lecture, and who amuse themselves, ere that begins, by remarking upon the audience, and especially upon a young lady (the love of one of them) who is in the gallery. All this requires the steadiness of an old actor, and that sort of standing that enables an established favourite safely to take liberties with his auditors. Bannister's tremor was not at all reduced by seeing Garrick and O'Brien (Gentleman O'Brien)<sup>1</sup> together in the boxes. Neither of the new actors produced any extraordinary effect, but they satisfied Foote, who immediately wrote an additional scene, representing "The Robin Hood Society

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, as an actor, is highly spoken of both by Davies and Dibdin. "The ease, elegance, and grace in his deportment," says the latter, "were peculiar, and his own; and spite of his voice, which for light characters was not by any means an impediment, in the representation of a great variety of parts his acting was critically natural, his manner interestingly impressive, and his deportment uncommonly attractive." He married into Lord Inchiquin's family, and left the stage whilst still a young man. He was the author of two performances adapted from the French of La Font and Ledaine.—ED.

of Butcher Row." This was a meeting of tradesmen who devoted certain evenings to political and philosophical discussions, others to spouting and singing. Foote's ridicule upon them was very attractive. He supposed the subject of discussion to be, "The Introduction of Usquebaugh instead of Porter; the latter Fluid being beneath the Dignity of Philosophers:" in this he introduced his new actors in various characters, and made Charles give his musical imitations; but here the latter shone more as a wit than a singer, for fright so completely took possession of him that he could not make sure of a single note in his falsetto: this, as he was imitating *Tenducci*, was destruction. It is to be observed that these performances took place in *the morning*, and the habits of Charles did not make that a favourable period for his displays. Foote remarked upon his failure. "I knew it would be so," said Charles; "I am all right at night, but neither *I* nor *my voice* can *get up* in the morning." A joke excused anything with Foote; he tried Charles again and again. Thus encouraged, he gave his powers fair play, and morning after morning the great singers and musicians of the day were observed to visit the Haymarket. Charles was now in the high road to fortune; in those days of *ridottos* and *masquerades* his services were continually required, nor was any musical or convivial assemblage complete in his absence. At dinners, public and private, amid the first circles, Charles Bannister was as necessary as the wine; the custom was then not to *hire* a vocalist, as now,—a custom revolting and derogatory,—but a singer was invited as a guest by perhaps half-a-dozen or a dozen different persons at as many different times: these gentlemen then met together, and, making up a purse, enclosed it in a snuff-box or some such trifle, sending it to the vocalist, requesting his acceptance of it: this was courteous, and though only payment in another shape, spared the feelings it is now the custom to outrage. Bannister had thus the means of amassing a fortune, but he, like Macheath, "kept too much fine company." Suffering his partiality for Palmer (his boyhood's friend, who had acted in private with him, and who appeared in London in the same piece and on the same night) to outweigh his prudence, he joined with him in the *Royalty* scheme. On the 20th April, 1787, that ill-fated establishment was opened. Paper-war, informations, indictments were now rife. Palmer was supported by the Marquis of Carmarthen, and opposed most virulently by Harris and Colman. One Justice Staples,

a low illiterate fellow, was persuaded to grant warrants against the principal actors (Charles Bannister amid the number), and committed them, to use his own language, as "willians, wagrants, and wagabones," for fourteen days to Bridewell. John was present at the hearing, and implored Staples not to sign the warrant against his father; at this moment a violent thunderstorm raged: "Let him sign it," said the intrepid Charles, "if he dares, whilst he hears the voice of heaven thundering against the deed." Staples *did* sign the warrant, but the parties were ultimately admitted to bail. Palmer changed the nature of his performances, producing a burletta called "Hero and Leander," but all in vain; and the scheme ended in debt and misery to all engaged in it. The winter theatres refused to receive Charles; Colman shut the Haymarket against him, and he returned to Norwich; there, and throughout Norfolk and Suffolk, &c., he gave musical entertainments: whilst John was unceasing in his endeavours to obtain his father's recall. He at length succeeded, and Charles reappeared at the Haymarket: the cheering and waving of hats and handkerchiefs (the whole house rising) lasted many minutes. He retained his station as a leading favourite with the public until his retirement in 1797. After his retirement he took an annual benefit. That taken by him in November, 1800, was patronized by Lord Nelson; Lady Hamilton was present—the house was crowded to excess. The veteran gave his imitations of Barry, Woodward, Hull, Aickin, Holland, Garrick, Foote, Vernon, and Champness: this was his last appearance—he died in November 1804, and lies buried in St. Martin's Church.—*Abridged from "Recollections of Bannister and his Family."*

Charles Bannister had a fine voice, a fine taste, and a copious recollection of traits and tones. His song became an imitation, sometimes serious, oftener burlesque, of the principal singers of the period. In both he was excellent. Garrick once took Giordini, the famous violinist, to hear his imitations of Tenducci and Champneyo. The violinist declared the imitation perfect; sarcastically remarking, however, that "it had one fault—the voice of the mimic was better than that of the originals." He was a capital wit, and always in difficulties. A pleasantry of his told both. At the time when all the world were talking of the death of Sir Theodosius Boughton in 1781, who was poisoned by laurel-water, "Pooh," said Charles, "don't tell me of your laurel leaves. I fear none but a bay-leaf" (bailiff).

His wit was so redundant that he could afford to throw it away on his son. But Jack was a seedling of the same stock, and knew how to throw back the pleasantry fresh pointed. Once when he had caused his father some slight irritation the offence was marked by "Jack, I'll cut you off with a shilling." "I wish, father," said Jack, "you would give it to me *now*." His father, delighted at the kindred spirit, gave him much more than he had asked.<sup>1</sup>—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1839.

Old Bannister had voice enough, but he had not a particle of science, and did wonders without it.—*Boaden*.

Bannister was in many respects superior to any singer that perhaps ever lived. The body and volume of voice which he possessed were only equalled by its sweetness and interest. He had as much taste, as much playfulness, and as extensive power as the most fashionable of those singers who think singing totally consists in flexibility, and that a voice cannot be exercised to perfection unless when it is flying to the bridge of the fiddle, and sliding back again in chromatics. But Bannister had too much sense to use this power, except when he had an inclination to show how ridiculous it is. Thus in "The Son-in-Law" he sung "Water Parted from the Sea" with as much taste, as much sweetness, and as much variety as Teneducci, at the same time that he introduced a degree of burlesque into it that gave the blush to modern singing.—*Charles Dibdin*, "*History of the Stage*."

## Lee Lewes.

1740-1803.

A comedian of the Woodward class, and like him an excellent ground harlequin. Forty years had beheld him on the stage, and usually the victim of what was called the tyranny of management. But this, like most other charges, has two sides. One manager at least did not refuse him the use of his theatre, for Mr. Harris allowed him a benefit at Covent Garden, with such strength in his bill as he could assemble together. His play on this occasion was "The Wonder," in which, for the last time, he himself acted *Lissardo*, and he played it in the style of his great master, and very divertingly. The benefit proved

<sup>1</sup> This story is commonly told of Sheridan and his son Tom.—ED.

a very good one, but few indeed were the days it cheered ; for poor Lee Lewes, after supping with that entertaining man Townsend, the mimic, and some other friends, was found dead in his bed on the 23rd of July, 1803.—*Boaden*.<sup>1</sup>

I was many years in friendship with Lewes ; his gaiety of temper was perhaps congenial to my own. He was from boyhood a great favourite with the people of Dublin, Cork, and Limerick. Being very happy in his manner of speaking an epilogue called “Bucks, have at ye all,” he was frequently called upon for it whether he played that night or not. Tired at last, he endeavoured to get out of his trammels. The college students misconstrued this into obstinacy and disrespect, and threw the house into nightly tumult by insisting that he should appear and speak it. His real friends pitied him, and strove to rescue him from this unjust persecution ; amongst others, a Captain Jones, a companion of Lewes’s, who from the upper boxes used to gruff out, “No Bucks ! No Bucks !” Lewes at last told them he would speak the epilogue any certain number of nights they chose to name, but that number out he would not speak it again, unless it were specified in the play-bills. They persisted in their nightly demands, and he then listened to the proposals of the London managers. Garrick offered him a trial part at Drury Lane ; and Mr. Harris a certain engagement, and all the deceased Woodward’s characters at Covent Garden. He wisely chose the latter. Lewes modelled his fine gentleman from the life. Being an admirer of Mossop, and acting with him in his own boyhood, he involuntarily caught much of Mossop’s manner in tragedy, which brought him into some of the new tragedies in London ; among others, he acted *Percy* in Mrs. Hannah More’s play of that name.—*J. O’Keefe*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boaden calls him “always vulgar, and with a bad manner of utterance.” See “The Life of Mrs. Siddons.”—ED.

<sup>2</sup> The most brilliant of English dramatists. “His inventive powers,” says a writer, “in the construction of odd phrases and quaint burdens for songs, his extraordinary combinations of strange fancies, and the contrivance of a sort of significant gibberish, without meaning in itself, but fashioned so as to convey the most accurate and vivid idea of what he himself meant to express, are matters beyond the power of analysis ; yet his farces are obsolete, and with the dramas of Foote lost to the stage and the public, because the popular taste has become so refined that it shrinks from broadness of humour and sharpness of wit into the safe refuge afforded by prancing horses, flying horses, masked assassins, and simmering Jewesses.”



Mrs. Pope.<sup>1</sup>

1740-1797.

I shall consider her as a daughter of Garrick's theatre, because there she acquired all the resources of her arts, and they constituted her the most general actress the stage had ever seen. I can with perfect truth say that in tragedy, as well as comedy, there were characters of which she was the *most* perfect representative. Had she possessed such a face as that of Mrs. Siddons, there might have been more; but then, some of her sprightly comedy would have been awed down, and she might on the whole have been less distinguished. In the days of Yates and Barry, she established herself with unwearied diligence, and though always weak in point of chest, endured a continuance of exertion that was certainly too much for her strength. She was the universal favourite of her profession, and in private life affectionately honoured by all who were worthy of her society.—*Boaden*.

In 1770 I first saw Miss Younge (afterwards Mrs. Pope); she

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<sup>1</sup> The name of Mrs. Pope recalls that of Miss Pope, a famous actress of the Garrick school, of whom I have succeeded in collecting only the following notices:—"She had a thin, poor voice, so that her rage wanted force. Her look, to be sure, was very satisfactory, and the dropping of her chin convulsive."—*Boaden*.

The very picture of a duenna, a maiden lady, or antiquated dowager—the latter spring of beauty, the second childhood of vanity; more quiet, fantastic, and old-fashioned, more pert, frothy, and light-headed than anything can be imagined.—*Hazlitt*.

With all the merry vigour of sixteen,  
 Among the merry troop conspicuous seen,  
 See lively Pope advance in jig and trip,  
 Corinna, Cherry, Honeycomb, and Snip.  
 Not without art, and yet to nature true,  
 She charms the town with humour ever new.  
 Cheer'd by her promise, we the less deplore  
 The fatal time when Clive shall be no more.

*Churchill.*

A gentlewoman ever, with Churchill's compliment still burnishing upon her gay honeycomb lips.—*C. Lamb*.

The perfect gentlewoman as distinguished from the fine lady of comedy.—*Ibid.*

She was an actress of the highest order for dry humour; one of those who convey the most laughable things with a grave face. . . . She was an admirable *Mrs. Malaprop*.—*L. Hunt*.

came over with Macklin to Dublin, and played both in tragedy and comedy: she was universally admired and respected. Her *Lady Amaranth* in my "Wild Oats" was excellent. Her invariable method was to read over to me the parts I purposely wrote for her, before she acted them.—*John O'Keefe*.

Miss Younge (afterwards Mrs. Pope) was above the middle height, and altogether finely formed about the neck and shoulders; there was a roundness and precision in her speaking, and her manner was commanding, and though her face was not handsome, it was expressive. She was so very successful in her first appearance that her salary was raised, after a night or two of acting, to 3*l.*, and at the end of the season to 5*l.*, unsolicited! On the 8th of June 1776, Garrick played *Lear*; it was the last night but one of his appearing on the stage; the curtain fell in the usual way with his hand locked in Miss Younge's, who played *Cordelia*. In that way he led her into the green-room, and recollecting that his next performance was to be his last, he said with a sigh, "Oh, Bess! this is the last time of my being your father; you must now look out for some one else to adopt you." "Then, sir," said she, falling upon her knees, "pray give me a father's blessing." Raising her up, he said, "God bless you!" and adding to the performers (who had crowded round them) in a faltering and affectionate tone, "God bless you all!" hurried out of the room. Mrs. Pope used to relate this with great pleasure, but seldom without shedding tears.—*The Manager's Note-Book*.

In Half-moon Street, on the 15th of March, 1797, died the charming comic actress, Mrs. Pope. After having performed at Drury Lane for forty years, she retired from the stage into private life with an unblemished character and an easy fortune. She is said to have borne a strong resemblance to the beautiful Lady Sarah Lennox, the goddess of George III.'s early idolatry. Many years after the beauty of both ladies had been on the decline, the King happened to attend the performance at Drury Lane when Mrs. Pope was acting. The recollection of his youthful love came back to his mind, and in a moment of melancholy abstraction he is said to have observed to the Queen, "*She is like Lady Sarah still.*"—*Jesse's "London."*

With this lady Garrick took most uncommon pains. It was not, however, until after a variety of experiments that she gained that hold of the public which she long and deservedly kept. It is needless to say what were her particular merits; they are

too recently in the recollection of the public to be forgot. They had to the last a spice of her preceptor, and even her manner of filling the stage gave a strong idea of stage conduct in use five-and-thirty years ago.—*C. Dibdin.*

## James Dodd.

1741-1796.

Dodd was the most perfect fopling ever placed upon the stage; he was the most exquisite coxcomb, the most ridiculous chatterer ever seen; he took his snuff, or applied the quintessence of roses to his nose with an air of complacent superiority, such as won the hearts of all conversant with that style of affectation. His walk upon the boards bespoke the sweet effeminacy of the person; the pink heels, the muslin of his cravat and frills are dwelt upon by the amateurs of his day as specimens of his understanding the range of his art. He is spoken of as “the prince of pink heels, and the soul of empty eminence.”—*Life of Sheridan.*<sup>1</sup>

Dodd was a man of reading, and left at his death a choice collection of old English literature. I should judge him to have been a man of wit. I know one instance of an impromptu which no length of study could have bettered. My merry friend, Jem White, had seen him one evening in *Aguecheek*, and recognising Dodd the next day in Fleet Street, was irresistibly impelled to take off his hat, and salute him as the identical knight of the preceding evening with a “Save you, *Sir Andrew.*” Dodd, not at all disconcerted at this unusual address from a stranger, with a courteous, half-rebuking wave of the hand, put him off with an “Away, *Fool.*”—*Charles Lamb.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boaden finds fault with Dodd: “He always bestowed the whole tediousness of his author upon the audience; whereas your judicious player is alive to all the impressions he makes on the house, and cuts his matter short before it is insupportable.”

<sup>2</sup> In that charming essay of Lamb, “On Some of the Old Actors,” there occurs an exquisite description of Dodd’s appearance in his old age: “Taking my afternoon solace on a summer day upon the aforesaid terrace, a comely, sad personage came towards me, whom, from his grave air and deportment, I judged to be one of the old Benchers of the Inn. He had a serious, thoughtful forehead, and seemed to be in meditations of mortality; . . . the face turning full upon me, strangely identified itself with that of

Mr. Dodd, the *high, red-heeled* stage-dandy of the old school of comedy, was (like the generality of actors of his day) a very pompous man, and cherished no mean estimate of the dignity of human nature, and especially of his professional occupation. Indeed, he obviously *piqued* himself upon his talents and quality as an actor, and considered his public reputation entitled to as much respect as his private virtues. In short, he was proud of his profession, and valued the means by which he existed almost as highly as he did existence itself. Mr. Dodd's general demeanour and dignity of deportment off, as well as on the stage, together with his rotund person, which was ably supported upon two short, though well-formed legs, always elegantly covered with silk stockings, and his feet with Spanish leather shoes, secured by costly buckles—his hair *bien poudré*, the *queue* of which was folded curiously into a sort of knocker which fell below the collar of, oftentimes, a scarlet coat—the little man, in short, was a decided fop of his day, both off and on the stage.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

If large theatres were of detriment to fine acting—a fact which I for one do not question, since they have even demanded extravagance in the three articles of action, expression, and utterance—perhaps to no one comedian would they be more fatal than to Dodd. This excellent actor had a weak voice, but as he managed it on the stage of his great master (Garrick) it was quite adequate to a cast of *petit-mâtres*, a sort of thin essences, whom a gale too violent, or a noise too obstreperous, would seem to annihilate. Nor was he confined to the coxcomb whose wit almost redeemed his effeminacy; he was the paragon representative of all *fatuity*, through all the comic varieties, for they are no more, in the *genus* that Congreve and his successors have struggled to impart to their copies.—*Boaden.*

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Dodd. Upon close inspection, I was not mistaken. But could this sad, thoughtful countenance be the same vacant face of folly which I had hailed so often under circumstances of gaiety; which I had never seen without a smile, or recognised but as the usher of mirth; that looked out so formally flat in *Foppington*; so impotently busy in *Backbite*; so blankly divested of all meaning, or resolutely expressive of none in *Acres*, in *Fribble*, and a thousand agreeable impertinences? . . . The remembrance of the freedoms which I had taken with it came upon me with a reproach of insult. I could have asked it pardon. I thought it looked upon me with a sense of injury."

There was a gossiping anecdote told of Dodd, for the truth of which I will not be answerable. He sojourned in lodgings near the theatre with a *chère amie* belonging to the company. This perhaps he might have found to be a snug arrangement in the summer months, if the tranquillity of the *tête-à-tête* had not been daily disturbed by discussing frivolous points, upon which the fond pair very furiously differed; insomuch that the gentleman was wont to enforce his arguments more by missiles than by metaphors; in short, he threw chairs, tables, and chimney-piece crockery all about the room. In the heat of one of these domestic fracas, which happened at an early dinner upon a shoulder of mutton, while Dodd clattered, and the *chère amie* screamed, the landlord rushed upon the scene of action in hopes, if he could not prevent a further breach of the peace, to hinder their breaking more of his property. "How dare you, mister," ejaculated Dodd, who was brandishing the shoulder of mutton in his hand, "obtrude into our apartments while we are *rehearsing*?"—"Rehearsing!" cried the enraged landlord, while the broken bits of sham china were crunching under his feet, "I could have sworn you were fighting."—"No, sir," said Dodd; "we were rehearsing the supper scene in 'Catherine and Petruchio, or the *Taming of a Shrew*.'"—"Why, it does look," observed his landlord, giving a glance round the room, "as if you had been trying to tame a shrew, sure enough." "Don't you know, fellow," asked Dodd, sternly, "that we are advertised to act the parts this very night?"—"Not I, truly," returned the host.—"Then go downstairs, sir," cried the comedian, "and read the bill of the play; and read it every morning, sir, to prevent your repeating this impertinence." History records not whether the landlord read the playhouse bill; but it sets forth that he did not forget *his own*.<sup>1</sup>—George Colman.

Dodd's great merit was singularity; which, guided by a perfect knowledge of his profession, rendered his exertions very respectable.—C. Dibdin.

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<sup>1</sup> It is also told of Dodd, who was fond of a long story, that being in company one night, he began at twelve o'clock to relate a journey he had taken to Bath; and at six o'clock in the morning he had proceeded no further than *the Devises*! The company then rose to separate; when Dodd, who could not bear to be curtailed in his narrative, cried, "Don't go yet; stay and hear it out, and upon my soul I'll make it entertaining."—ED.

## Mrs. Baddeley.

1742-1780.

Her gaudy and fitful career reads like a troubled dream,<sup>1</sup> and robbed the stage of a graceful actress. No stranger picture of life can be conceived than her singular story; her short and showy course, across which flit royal dukes, infatuated lords, rough and rude colonels, and the gradual fall and degradation, when a footman winds up the procession.—*Fitzgerald.*

In opera she performed *Clarissa*, *Polly*, and *Rosetta*, and *Imogen* in the play of "Cymbeline," in which her beautiful countenance used to excite the greatest interest. Amongst her peculiarities was an immoderate addiction to laudanum, which has the power of bestowing a momentary vivacity, subsiding into an oblivion of care, succeeded by a wretchedness which itself alone can remove. It may reasonably be supposed on the night of her benefit she sought the doubtful aid in question, but it proved a treacherous ally. She was unfor-

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Baddeley lived in the days of masquerades. Two were flourishing, one in Soho Square, under the management of a Mrs. Teresa Cornelys, a German singer, and one in the Pantheon, in Oxford Street. The extraordinary licentiousness of these assemblies it would be difficult to describe in decent language. Courtezans mingled with the daughters of peers; and when, as it might happen, the attendance on some night was not great, the newspapers would lament "to see such spirited exertions so poorly rewarded, as scarcely one person of distinction, or one *fille de joie* of note, was present, to give a *ton* to the evening's entertainment." In 1778 Mrs. Cornelys failed; her establishment in Soho, called Carlisle House, was converted into a place for lectures, and the abandoned woman died in Fleet Prison in a state of utter destitution in 1797. At the Pantheon, however, the masquerades continued to flourish; growing more and more degraded in their character, it was at length resolved that no "doubtful" persons should be admitted. A number of young men, members of the aristocracy, had vowed that let who might be refused admission to the Pantheon, Mrs. Baddeley should be let in. So many as fifty gentlemen closed around her chair, and accompanied her in solemn procession to the masquerade. The constables stationed at the portico refused to let her pass; whereupon the numerous escort drew their swords, and fought a passage for her into the illuminated building. Here, sword in hand, they compelled the managers to come forward, and humbly apologise to Mrs. Baddeley for the inconvenience to which their restrictions had subjected her. Mrs. Abington, hearing of Mrs. Baddeley's triumphant entry, followed; and with her admission the line which the Pantheon people had endeavoured to draw between virtue and vice was irrecoverably erased.—ED.

unately lame at the time, and intoxicated to stupidity by the fumes of the opiates she had swallowed. The worst of it was that the habit not being generally known, the stupefaction was attributed to drunkenness, and a disgust taken which is seldom, or rather never, quite removed. The sequel of this unfortunate existence may be worth a second paragraph. She soon became idle, disordered, unsteady, and of no value in the theatre; dropped into neglect and contempt, and was plundered of the little she had by one of those attached friends which indolence is happy to find, and of which it is invariably the prey. Mrs. Baddeley had at one time her carriage, and every voluptuous enjoyment that a mere sensualist can enjoy; but her wealth mouldered away, insensibly and unaccountably, and she died at Edinburgh shortly after, in the most squalid poverty and disease, in a state of mental horror which perhaps opium only is enabled to inflict upon us. To the last she was supported by the charity of the profession, always awake to a sister's claim, though on this occasion with the dreadful reflection that either as to herself or society, it would have been better if her release had earlier arrived.—*Boaden.*

Mrs. Baddeley, more celebrated for her beauty and gallantry than for her wit or professional skill. Her picture represents the most voluptuous of faces, with large melting dark eyes and full rosy lips. The beauty is caressing a cat; the cat plays with a tress of soft hair which has fallen over the white shoulder. Cats were Mrs. Baddeley's favourite pets, and the one in her picture is no doubt a portrait.—*C. R. Leslie.*

When Holland, the tragedian, was at the point of death, Mrs. Baddeley wanted much to see him, declaring she could not exist without taking leave of her dear Charles. The nurse took every method to prevent her, but in vain. At last she said, "Madam, he desires to be composed awhile, for he has just taken the sacrament." "Has he, indeed?" replied the enamoured idiot; "then I will wait till it has *worked off*."<sup>1</sup>—*Wewitzer.*

She combined the powers of acting, speaking, and singing in the same part; her voice was not extensive, though very pleasing; her manner was delicate, her conception of each character was true, her beauty was fascinating; she displayed

<sup>1</sup> This story has its improbability diminished by Francis Grose, who in his "Olio" gives it to one of the mistresses of the Earl of Harrington.—*ED.*

a soft and gentle complacency whenever she received the tokens of affection in a love scene, and her response was truly dove-like; her *Fuliet* was never surpassed, nor was her *Fanny* in "The Clandestine Marriage" ever equalled.—*C. H. Wilson.*

## Philip Astley.<sup>1</sup>

1742—1814.

Poor old Astley used to talk of a "krockudile wat stopped Halexander's harmy, and when cut hopen, had a man in harmour in its hintellects." He (Astley) had two or three hard words that he invariably misapplied—"pestiferous" he always substituted for "pusillanimous," and he was wont to observe that he should be a ruined man, for his horses ate most *vociferously*.—*Records of a Veteran.*

Philip Astley, a celebrated horse-rider, who first exhibited equestrian pantomimes, in which his son (who survived his father but a short time) rode with great grace and agility. Astley had at once theatres in Paris, London, and Dublin, and migrated with his actors, biped and quadruped, from one to the other. Both father and son were remarkably handsome, the elder of large proportions but perfect symmetry.—*ℱ. W. Croker.*

Old Astley, when he first returned from France, was accosted by a friend, who asked him if he had seen the French Prince of Wales when he was in Paris. "Go," says he, "you ignoramus, there is no Prince of Wales in France; he's the *Dolphin*. Why, I mought have learnt him to ride if I would." "Is the young prince like his father?" "His father! Lord help your silly head! his father could never get that there child; his father's *omnipotent*."—*R. Wewitzer.*

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<sup>1</sup> Of Mrs. Astley, "a minor actress of much merit," "wife of the old gentleman called Old Astley," the "Veteran" says: "She had such luxuriant hair that she could stand upright, and it covered her to her feet like a veil. She was very proud of these flaxen locks; and a slight accident by fire having befallen them, she resolved ever after to play in a wig. She used, therefore, to wind this immense quantity of hair around her head, and put over it a capacious caxon, the consequence of which was that her head bore about the same proportion to the rest of her figure that a whale's skull does to its body; and as she played most of the heroines, the reader may judge the effect."



## Anne Catley.

1745-1789.

There was in her personal character a good deal of the careless boldness of Woffington ; like her, too, she was extremely handsome, and her eye and mouth had a peculiar expression of archness. She aimed at the almost manly frankness of speech, and acted as one superior to censure, when she raised the wonder of prudery. Catley had an understanding too sound to vindicate the indiscretions of her youth ; but her follies did not long survive that period, and she amply atoned in her maturity for the scandal she had excited formerly in society. There was a graceful propriety in her domestic concerns. She was never profuse, and could therefore be liberal in all her arrangements.—*Boaden, "Life of Jordan."*

To those who have never heard Miss Catley I must, as my manner is, try to give some notion of what was peculiar to her. It was the singing of unequalled animal spirits ; it was Mrs. Jordan's comedy carried into music—the something *more* that a duller soul cannot conceive, and a feeble nerve dare not venture. Even at the close of her theatric life, when consumptive and but the ghost of her former self, gasping even for breath, and wasting her little remaining vitality in her exertion, she would make sometimes a successful attempt at one of her former brilliant *rushes* of musical expression, and mingle a pleasing astonishment along with the pain you were compelled to suffer. No other female singer ever gave the slightest notion of her. She was bold, volatile, audacious. Saville Carey I have heard sometimes touch her manner feebly in the famous triumph of her hilarity, "Push about the Jorum."—*Ibid. "Life of Siddons."*

The first time of my venturing into a theatre after my defeat, Miss Catley, the celebrated singer, accosted me from a front row in the lower boxes, loud enough, as I was many rows back, to be heard by all and everybody. "So, O'Keefe, you had a piece damned the other night. I'm glad of it. The devil mend you for writing an opera without bringing me into it." A few moments after Miss Catley had thus accosted me, Leoni entered the box with a lady leaning on his arm. Miss Catley, catching his eye, called out, "How do you do, Leoni? I hear you're married—is that your wife? Bid her stand up till

I see her." Leoni, abashed, whispered the lady, who, with good-humoured compliance, stood up. Catley, after surveying her a little said, "Ha! very well indeed. I like your choice." The audience around us seemed more diverted with this scene in the boxes than that on the stage, as Miss Catley and her oddities were well known to all. She was one of the most beautiful women I ever saw; the expression of her eyes and the smiles and dimples that played around her lips and cheeks were enchanting. She was eccentric, but had an excellent heart. She wore her hair plain over her forehead, in an even line almost to her eyebrows. This set the fashion in Dublin, and the word was with all the ladies to have their hair *Catleified*.—*O'Keefe*.

This celebrated actress and singer was born of poor parents, her father being only a gentleman's coachman, and afterwards the keeper of a public-house near Norwood, known by the name of The Horns. At the age of fifteen she was bound apprentice to Mr. Bates, a composer of some eminence. Her first appearance in public was at Vauxhall, in 1762, and in the same year she appeared at Covent Garden. She was at this period remarkable for little more than the beauty of her person and a diffidence in public, which she soon got rid of. She was, to use the words of a diurnal writer, "the favourite of Thalia, the favourite of the town, and the favourite of fortune." She is said to have been married to General Lascelles, at whose house near Brentford she died.—*Eccentric Biography*, 1803.

## Mrs. Mattocks.

1745-1826.

Mrs. Mattocks has had no successor on the English stage. She was a highly accomplished actress, with a manner somewhat broad. She was the paragon representative of the radically *vulgar* woman, of any or no fashion, of whatever condition or age. The country Malkin, too, was taken to "Lunnun" by her with her "stumping gait" and "idiot goggle," so as to banish from her spectators the remotest suspicion that she herself could be the refined and sensible lady she was in private life. Her favourite partners on the stage were Quick and Lewis; and exquisite merriment proceeded from their union.—*Boaden*.

This distinguished actress of the old school of comedy appears to have been born about the year 1745. She was, as it may be termed, a child of the stage. Her father, Mr. Hallam, was at one period manager of Goodman's Fields Theatre; her mother was related to Beard, the principal singer of his time; and a brother of hers, some years ago, was the manager of a theatrical company in America. Her father, in a dispute with Macklin, the celebrated *Shylock*, at a rehearsal, received so severe a wound in the eye from the walking-stick of the ruffian—which, in fact, Macklin was—that he died on the spot. Macklin was tried for the offence at the Old Bailey, but acquitted, as it was deemed the effect of sudden passion, not of *malice prepense*. Receiving a superior education, Miss Hallam voluntarily adopted the stage as a pursuit, and came forward with the reputation of high accomplishments. All her early appearances were in singing characters: she was the first *Louisa* in the opera of the "Duenna." Occasionally she attempted tragedy, but with little success. In her performance of the second character in Hook's tragedy of "Cyrus," she was completely thrown into the background by the fine figure and admirable acting of Mrs. Yates in *Mandane*, the heroine of the piece. Study and observation, however, induced her to attempt the sprightly parts of low comedy, such as abigails, citizens' wives, &c.; and in these she succeeded to her wishes. The delicacy of her person, the vivacity of her temper, and a distinguishing judgment, all showed themselves to advantage in this walk, and she rapidly became a universal favourite with the town. This is no slight praise, when we consider that amongst her contemporaries were Mrs. Green (Sheridan's first *Duenna*), and Mrs. Abington; and that, in the earlier part of her career, even Mrs. Clive had not left the stage. Miss Hallam stood thus high in the estimation of the public, when Mr. Mattocks, of the same theatre, first paid his addresses to her. He was a vocal performer of some consequence, and a respectable actor. A mutual attachment appears to have ensued; and, to avoid the opposition of the lady's parents, the lovers took a trip to France, and were married. The union, however, does not appear to have been a very happy one: infidelities on both sides led to an open rupture; and, if we mistake not to a separation. Notwithstanding this, when Mr. Mattocks, some years afterwards, became manager of the Liverpool theatre, his

wife performed there all the principal characters. The speculation proving unfortunate, Mrs. Mattocks re-engaged herself at Covent Garden Theatre, where, we believe, she held an uninterrupted engagement as an actress of first-rate celebrity in her walk, until her final retirement from the stage, now more than twenty years ago. Hers was the most affecting theatrical leave-taking we ever witnessed. She had played, with all the freshness and spirit of a woman in her prime, the part of *Flora*, in "The Wonder," to Cooke's *Don Felix*. After the play, she having changed her stage dress for the lady-like attire of black silk, was led forward by Cooke in a suit of black velvet, with weepers, &c. Her feelings enabled her to utter only a few impressive words. There was scarcely a dry eye in the house: she retired amidst the most heartfelt plaudits of the theatre. Mrs. Mattocks possessed a good stage-face and figure, and her broad stare, her formal deportment, her coarse comic voice, and her high colouring, enabled her to give peculiar effect to the characters in which she excelled. In the delivery of the ludicrous epilogues of the late Miles Peter Andrews, which always required dashing spirit, and the imitation of vulgar manners, she was eminently successful. She is understood to have been a great favourite of her late Majesty Queen Charlotte. She left one daughter, who married Mr. Hewson, a barrister. That gentleman, unfortunately, lived only a few years after the union. The portion which he received with his wife was laid out in the purchase of one of the City pleaderships; the precaution of insuring Mr. Hewson's life was overlooked; and, upon his death, after holding the appointment not more than a year or two, the purchase-money was, in consequence, lost to his widow. Mrs. Mattocks died on the 25th of June, where she had long resided, at Kensington.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826.

### Charles Dibdin.

1745-1814.

In 1792 I saw Charles Dibdin's (senior) entertainment at the Strand. It was most excellent. His manner of coming on the stage was in most happy style. He ran on sprightly, and with nearly a laughing face, like a friend who enters hastily to impart some good news. Nor did he disappoint his audience;

he sung, and accompanied himself on an instrument which was a concert in itself; he was, in fact, himself his own band. A few lines of speaking happily introduced his admirable songs, full of wit and character, and his peculiar mode of singing them surpassed all I ever heard. Dibdin's music to the "Padlock," the "Jubilee," the "Waterman," the "Quaker," &c., was most successfully productive.—*John O'Keefe*.<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that his pathetic ballads were really from the pen of Bickerstaff,<sup>2</sup> who fled from England many years since, but who had been a kind friend to Dibdin in his youth and poverty. Dr. Kitchener, who was a warm admirer of Dibdin, believed that two or three songs were Bickerstaff's; but admitting, for argument's sake, thirty to have been his, enough remain to prove Charles a first-rate lyrist in his peculiar style. Poor Dibdin was very Mahomedan in his notions respecting the other sex, and he generally gave feasts on the birthdays of his Sultanas. When I knew him two feast-days per week must have been about the average. He was a shrewd man, an accurate, but not an acute observer, a good musician, had an extensive voice, but almost wholly without tone: his style of entertainment would not be endured now; it was too senti-

<sup>1</sup> It was in Thompson's shop that the elder Dibdin, together with Herbert Stopplear, planned the Patagonian Theatre—a scheme that answered for a few seasons from its novelty, as nothing of the kind had appeared in the metropolis from the beginning of the century, when the celebrated Mr. Powell's puppets divided the attention of the public with the regular theatres. Dibdin wrote little pieces for the Patagonian stage, which was about six feet wide, composed the music, and assisted in reciting the parts which the puppets, not more than ten inches high, performed. He also accompanied the singers and himself on a smooth-toned organ. Stopplear, who also spoke for the puppets, painted the scenes in conjunction with an artist of some merit. The "Padlock," which had been performed at the Haymarket, one of the first efforts of Dibdin's dramatic talent, was played by these mechanical dolls with great applause, Dibdin being *Mungo*. The whole exhibition was skilfully managed in a neat little theatre, with boxes, pit, and gallery, which held about two hundred persons.—*Wine and Walnuts*.

<sup>2</sup> Isaac Bickerstaff, the well-known author of "Love in a Village." He fled the country on suspicion of a capital crime. Mrs. Piozzi, in her anecdotes of Dr. Johnson, says: "When Mr. Bickerstaff's flight confirmed the report of his guilt, and Mr. Thrale said, in answer to Johnson's astonishment, that he had long been a suspected man—'By those who look close to the ground dirt will be seen, sir,' was the lofty reply. 'I hope I see things from a greater distance.'"—ED.

mental ; there never was a hearty laugh to be had out of him.—*Records of a Veteran.*

Charles Dibdin, to whom the army, the navy, and the whole nation were so deeply indebted for his Tyrtæan strains, as well as for his multifarious compositions calculated to inspire a love of country and a zeal to protect it in a time of imminent danger, exhibited a remarkable precocity of intellect. At sixteen years of age he brought out an opera at Covent Garden Theatre, called "The Shepherd's Wedding," written and composed by himself. Forty-six other dramas of various descriptions, with about a dozen other literary productions, and several hundred songs, many of which are the best in the English language, record the talents of Mr. Dibdin, and the disgraceful neglect with which he was treated by his ungrateful country ; for although he enjoyed a pension from Government of 200*l.* a year for a few years, yet, on a change of Administration, this was taken from him, and the man who deserved a civic crown, was left, admired it is true, but neglected in his old age.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

He had about him that *cachet* of originality which is the primary merit of a writer, whatever be his school ; to this must also be added that Dibdin exercised a lyrical influence—made an individual impression—by songs, such as English song-writers have scarcely ever attained. . . . He began by imitating the regular, conventional, feebly epigrammatic, insincerely sentimental, eighteenth-century manner. Not till he was about forty did he do justice to his true genius in the hearty, humorous, and genuinely tender nautical songs on which his real fame rests.—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1860.

## Richard Yates.

1745-1796.

An excellent comedian, one of Garrick's own school of natural actors, and whose rule was, on receiving a new part, to fix on some living person who was a little like it, study him attentively, and thus gain *vitality* for it.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

Lo ! Yates ! without the least finesse of art,  
He gets applause. I wish he'd get his part.

When hot impatience is in full career  
How vilely "Hark'e, Hark'e" grates the ear!<sup>1</sup>—*Churchill*.

Churchill had ridiculed the only fault, perhaps, which could fairly be charged on this actor, which was an occasional defect of memory. To hide this he would sometimes repeat a sentence two or three times over; and to show his courage, after the poem was published, he took particular care to reiterate the very words which Churchill had made the record of his satire.—*T. Davies*.

Yates was one of those meritorious actors who added to chaste nature becoming respectability. He had his hardnesses, and those, who like Churchill, cavil in parcels, and are too acrimonious to be candid, may on this account condemn him in the lump; but I should not despair of proving that Yates had as good an understanding as Churchill, and that as an actor he accomplished his public duty upon honester and more respectable grounds than the other as an author. I know of no French actor so good as Yates; though had he been a Frenchman, the Lisimons, Gerontes, and every species of fathers and guardians characterized by humour and caprice would have been exactly in his way. He had the best parts of Boeneval, Dessesarts, and Bellecour. On the English stage he resembled Underhill, but with considerable advantage. No actor was ever more chaste, more uniform, more characteristic; and though, perhaps, sometimes he overshot those particular spots which nature designed him to hit, yet upon the whole his acting in an eminent degree was gratifying to the public and exemplary to the stage.—*C. Dibdin*.

## John Palmer.

1747-1798.

Palmer's *Joseph Surface* seems to have been perfectly unapproachable by any competitor. So admirable a hypocrite has never yet been seen: his manners, his deportment, his address, combined to render him the very man he desired to

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<sup>1</sup> Yates's memory in early life was bad; it improved, oddly enough, when most men's memories become impaired. To give himself time to recall his part he would address his interlocutor several times with a "Hark ye, hark ye."—*Ed.*

paint. His performance on the stage bore a very strong similarity to that he was famous for in private life. He was plausible, of pleasing address, of much politeness, and even of great grace. He was fond of pleasure, which he pursued with so much avidity as to be generally very careless of his theatrical duties; but when he had committed some gross absurdity, or had been, through neglect of his duties, on the verge of hearing a loud shout of disapprobation, "he cast up his eyes with an expression of astonishment, or cast them down as if in penitent humility, drew out his eternal white handkerchief to smother his errors, and bowed himself out of his scrapes."—*Life of Sheridan.*

John Palmer, though an excellent actor, could not rise to a due conception of *Falstaff's* humour. He was heavy in it throughout.—*J. Taylor, 1814.*

Take him for all in all, he was the most unrivalled actor of modern times. He *could* approach a lady, bow to her, and seat himself gracefully in her presence. We have had dancing-masters in great profusion since his time; but such deportment they have either not known or never taught. He walked the stage in a manner peculiarly calculated to occupy it by his figure and action, with a measured and rather lingering step.<sup>1</sup>—*Boaden.*

One afternoon Palmer, who inhabited a house in Kentish Town, was nailing up a grape-vine, and while so employed was stung most severely in the eye by a wasp. The inflammation was so violent that his eye was closed by it. He sent off an express to the theatre, and an apology was made for his sudden indisposition. Upon hearing this, a gentleman of pertinacious theatrical habits rose in the pit, and stated that he was convinced this was one of Mr. Palmer's disgraceful neglects of his audience. This incensed the audience, and nothing would serve them but that Palmer must be sent for,

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<sup>1</sup> A friend complimenting Palmer one day upon the ease of his address—"No," said Jack, "I really don't give myself the credit of being so irresistible as you have fancied me. There is, however, one thing in the way of address which I think I am able to do. Whenever I am arrested, I think I can always persuade the sheriff's officers to bail me." His invariable excuse for every omission of punctuality, for every neglect of duty, for every postponement of engagement, was his wife. With handkerchief in hand, he would sigh, "My best of friends, this is the most awful period of my life. I cannot be with you, for my beloved wife, the partner of my sorrows and my joys, is just confined." Some one calculated that his wife rendered him a happy father once in every two months.—*Ed.*



and after much remonstrance the manager himself—paint, pumps, and all—set off in a carriage to Kentish Town, where he found Palmer suffering much from the accident, and not shamming. He explained the urgency of the case, popped him into the glass coach, and carried him as he was to the theatre, where, in a few minutes and in his *déshabille*, he made his appearance before the audience, who, seeing Palmer walk in apparently perfectly well, the light and the distance rendering the sting almost imperceptible, began to hiss and laugh, and cheer the obstinate little man in the pit for having brought the culprit before them. Palmer advanced to the front of the stage, and having assumed an imploring attitude, was at length—not till after a heavy fire of orange-peel and other missiles—permitted to explain. “Ladies and gentlemen,” said Palmer, “I am aware of the odd effect my appearance here may produce after the apology which has been made for my illness, which I thought it hardly possible to describe by communication to the theatre.” “*No wonder!*” “*Shame!*” “*What’s the matter?*” “The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, my illness—was—all—my eye!”—*Cyrus Redding*.<sup>1</sup>

The elder Palmer (of stage-treading celebrity) commonly played *Sir Toby* in those days; but there is a solidity of wit in the jests of that half Falstaff which he did not quite fill out. He was as much too showy as Moody (who sometimes took the part) was dry and sottish. In sock or buskin there was an air of swaggering gentility about Jack Palmer. He was a *gentleman* with a slight infusion of the *footman*. His brother Bob,<sup>2</sup> of recenter memory, who was his shadow in

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<sup>1</sup> The story goes of Palmer’s end, that he dropped dead after speaking the words, “There is another and a better world,” from the “Stranger.” The words he did endeavour to articulate were, not as the above are, in the second act, but in the fourth act: “I left them at a small town hard by.” *Last words* ought to be received with great caution. A characteristic sentence may be pronounced by a man, and repeated as his “last words,” when in reality he did not die until long after they were spoken. The awful significance claimed for “last words” can be imparted only by death immediately following their delivery, as in the case of Paterson, who dropped dead in Moody’s arms, after repeating from “Measure for Measure” the lines—

“Reason thus with life :  
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing  
That none but fools would keep : a breath thou art.”

<sup>2</sup> Of Robert Palmer, George Colman says, he was “unique in a

everything while he lived, and dwindled into less than a shadow afterwards, was a *gentleman* with a little stronger infusion of the latter *ingredient*: that was all. It is amazing how a little more or less makes a difference in these things. When you saw Bobby in the *Duke's Servant* you said, "What a pity such a pretty fellow was only a servant." When you saw Jack in *Captain Absolute*, you thought you could trace his promotion to some lady of quality, who fancied the handsome fellow in his top-knot, and had bought him a commission. There, Jack in *Dick Amlet* was insuperable.—*Charles Lamb*.

"What is your opinion of Mr. Palmer's *Shylock*?" MACKLIN: "Why, sir, my opinion is that Mr. Palmer played the character of *Shylock* in *one style*. In this scene there was a sameness, in that scene a sameness, and in every scene a sameness. It was all same! same! same!—no variation. He did not look the character, nor laugh the character, nor speak the character of Shakspeare's Jew. Indeed, sir, he did not *hit* the *part*, nor the *part* hit *him*."—*Kirkman's "Life of Macklin."*

The two Palmers were actors of great merit; the only drawback on both was manner, which in the first was too refined, and in the other too vulgar.—*C. Dibdin*.

His embarrassed circumstances caused him at one time to live in his dressing-room in Drury Lane Theatre, and when the Haymarket re-opened for the summer season, at which he was engaged, the fear of arrest suggested the expedient of conveying him with a cart full of scenery, in one of the cabinets used in "The Prize," and in this manner he actually was removed from one theatre to the other.<sup>1</sup>—*Life of Mathews*.

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few sketches of dramatic character, but he never attained the highest walks."

<sup>1</sup> A similar story is told of William Phillips, a famous Harlequin, who was, I believe, a contemporary of Garrick. He was arrested for a debt, and lodged in a sponging-house; here, having liberally treated the bailiff to drink, he pretended that he had a dozen of wine ready packed at his house, which he begged permission to send for, to drink while he was in custody, offering to pay sixpence a bottle for the privilege. The bailiff acceded to his request, and the wine was ordered to be brought. On a porter presenting himself with the load, the turnkey called to his master that the porter and hamper had come. "Very well," answered the bailiff; "then let nothing but the porter and hamper out." The porter acted his part well: came heavily in with an empty hamper, and went lightly out with Phillips on his back.—ED.

## John Henderson.

1747-1785.

Henderson was a truly great actor ; his *Hamlet* and his *Falstaff* were equally good. He was a very fine reader too ; in his comic readings superior, of course, to Mrs. Siddons ; his *John Gilpin* was marvellous.<sup>1</sup>—*S. Rogers*.

I have seen many *Falstaffs*, but none that thoroughly satisfied me. Henderson's was the most entertaining, but his tones in general were more like an old woman than an old man ; and he laughed too much, though, indeed, that practice may successfully draw the laugh of an audience.—*J. Taylor*, 1814.

He was a fine actor, with no great personal advantages, indeed, but he was the soul of feeling and intelligence.—*Mrs. Siddons : Campbell's "Life."*

The power of Henderson as an actor was analytic. He was not contented with the mere light of common meaning ; he showed it you through a prism, and reflected all the delicate and mingling hues that enter into the composition of any ray of human character. Besides, he had a voice so flexible that his tones conveyed all that his meaning would insinuate.—*Boaden*.

Professor Dugald Stewart, who knew Henderson, told me that his power of memory was the most astonishing he had ever met with. In the philosopher's presence he took up a newspaper, and after reading it once, repeated such a portion of it as to Mr. Stewart seemed marvellous. When he expressed

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<sup>1</sup> When Kemble played *Sir Giles Overreach*, he was so anxious to represent the part as Henderson had represented it that he wrote to Mrs. Inchbald, who had acted *Lady Allworth* to Henderson's *Sir Giles*, to know "what kind of a hat does Mr. Henderson wear? What kind of wig, of cravat, of ruffles, of clothes, of stockings ; with or without embroidered clocks, square or round-toed shoes? I shall be uneasy if I have not an idea of his dress, even to the shape of his buckles, and what rings he wears on his hands. Moroseness and cruelty seem the groundwork of this monstrous figure ; but I am at a loss to know whether in copying it I should draw the lines that express his courtesy to *Lord Lovel* with an exaggerated or mere natural strength? Will you take the pains to inform me in what particular points Mr. Henderson chiefly excelled, and in what manner he executed them?" Mrs. Inchbald's answer is unfortunately lost.—ED.

his surprise, Henderson modestly replied, "If you had been, like me, obliged to depend, during many years, for your daily bread on getting words by heart, you would not be so much astonished at habit having produced this facility."—*Thomas Campbell*.

I have seen the great Henderson, who has something, and is nothing—he might be made to figure among the puppets of these times. His *Don John* is a comic *Cato*, and his *Hamlet* a mixture of tragedy, comedy, pastoral, farce, and nonsense. However, though my wife is outrageous, I am in the secret; and see sparks of fire which might be blown to warm even a London audience at Christmas—he is a dramatic phenomenon, and his friends, but more particularly Cumberland, has (have) ruined him; he has a manner of paying when he would be emphatic, that is ridiculous, and must be changed, or he would not be suffered at the Bedford Coffee-house.—*David Garrick, 1775.*<sup>1</sup>

The elder Colman objected to the style in which Henderson sometimes dressed himself, and condemned his costume in *Shylock* as too shabby. Foote said of him, that "he would not do;" and Garrick's contempt of him amounted to personal enmity. All this seems to confirm the idea that he was not so extraordinary a man as his friends represented.—*Galt.*<sup>2</sup>

There is no denying that he had contracted some bad habits in his deportment, such as an odd mode of receding from parties on the stage, with the palms of his hands turned outwards, and thus *backing* from one of the *dramatis personæ* when he was expressing happiness at meeting. With these adventitious faults, he had to contend against physical drawbacks: his eye wanted expression, and his figure was not well put together. My father was anxious to start him in

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter from Bath, Garrick wrote:—"The Inflexible Captain' has been played here with success; Henderson played *Regulus*, and you would have wished him bunged up with his nails before the end of the third act."

<sup>2</sup> John Galt was born at Irvine, Ayrshire, 1779. He was a voluminous writer, his chief works being "Laurie Tod" (a novel), a "Life of Byron," his "Autobiography," "The Annals of the Parish," and the "Lives of the Players." Byron praised him as a man of strong sense and of great experience. Sir Walter Scott warmly admired his novels. He died, 1839, aged sixty.—ED.

characters whose dress might either help or completely hide personal deficiencies ; accordingly it was arranged that the two first personations should be *Shylock* and *Hamlet*, in which the Jew's gaberdine and the Prince of Denmark's "inky cloak" and "suit of solemn black," were of great service. I know not whether *Falstaff* immediately followed these, but whenever he *did* come, Sir John's proportions were not expected to present a model for the students of the Royal Academy. By this management the actor's talents soon made sufficient way to battle such ill-natured remarks as might have been expected upon symmetry ; and the audience was prepared to admit, when he came to the lovers and heroes, that

"Before such merit all objections fly."

*George Colman, "Random Records."*

George III., like his eldest son and grandfather, preferred comedy to tragedy. George IV. could not bear "the harrowing of the heart" that Kean's *Othello* gave him. A new comedy of Cumberland attracted his Majesty George III. and Queen Charlotte to Covent Garden about 1778 ; it was entitled "The Mysterious Husband," and Henderson acted the hero. It proved to be one of the serio-comic dramas then in vogue ; and in the last scene the principal character dies. Henderson's delineation was perfection. His Majesty's attention was riveted to the stage ; but he at length exclaimed, "Charlotte, don't look—it's too much to bear !" The play, by Royal desire, was never repeated. Henderson's countenance was of the same order as Macready's—flat, but capable of great variety of expression. His imitations of his contemporaries might justly have been termed impersonations or identifications—the look, tone, carriage, expression, even the thoughts in extemporaneous dialogue, were those of the individual he represented. Henderson, though not an imitator, was in the school of Garrick ; John Kemble in that of Barry, or rather of Quin ; for Barry was only a graceful disciple of the Quin school of oratory.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

William Lewis.<sup>1</sup>

1748-1811.

Mr. Lewis had rather a spare habit of body, but seemed always in possession of even florid health. His figure from his deportment might be deemed even elegant in the scenes of comic luxuriance; when he exceeded all the common bounds set to human action he never was vulgar, no—not for an instant. Where all the manners are diverting, it is difficult to sketch any in very bold relief; but he had one peculiarity which was the richest in effect that can be imagined, and was always an addition to the character springing from himself. It might be called an attempt to take advantage of the lingering sparks of gallantry in the aunt or the mother of sixty, or the ancient maiden whom he had to win, to carry the purposes of those for whom he was interested. He seemed to throw the lady by degrees off her guard, until at length his whole artillery of assault was applied to storm the struggling resistance; and the Mattockses and the Davenports of his attention sometimes complained of the perpetual motion of his chair, which compelled them to a ludicrous retreat, and kept the spectator in a roar of laughter. In short, whether sitting or standing, he was never for a moment at rest—his figure continued to exhibit a series of undulating lines, which indicated a self-complacency that never tired, and the sparkling humour of his countenance was a signal hung out for enjoyment, that it would have been treason against human happiness to refuse to obey.—*Boaden.*

How much this matchless *gentlemanly* comedian was respected in private life is evident, as on the day succeeding the violent epileptic attack which he experienced during the

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<sup>1</sup> We read that the “youth of Lewis, with all its sparkling captivations, was not undistinguished by the sex. Among his foreign admirers he had the honour to number the celebrated Gabrielli. On her arrival in this country she paid a visit to Covent Garden Theatre, and was powerfully struck by the grace of Lewis. As an Italian singer is usually little disposed to refuse herself any attainable object of her wishes, she resolved to send off love’s ambassador with the frank declaration of her passion, and a gracious command to *Mercutio* to visit her immediately. Rauzzini, however, changed the arrangement by apprising the Gabrielli that the *habits* of this country did not allow of such rapid movements, even in matters of the first taste. She reluctantly yielded to his experience.”

rehearsal of "Delays and Blunders," among many other high personages who kindly called at his house to make inquiries concerning his health, were his present Majesty, and his Royal Highness the Duke of York. Thus truly should desert be crowned.—*F. Reynolds.*

Lewis is rapidly whirling away from the recollection of the present generation. He blended the gracefulness of Barry with the energy of Garrick, and superadded to these acquirements his own unceasing activity and amazing rapidity both of utterance and motion. In his early days he had been a tragedian, and retained enough of his superior powers to deliver sentiment gracefully; but his great qualification was of nature's giving—his animal spirits. No greyhound ever bounded, no kitten ever gambolled, no jay ever chattered (sing, neither the bird nor man in question ever could) with more apparent recklessness of mirth than Lewis acted. All was sunshine with him: he jumped over the stage properties as if his leap-frog days had just commenced; danced the hay with chairs, tables, and settees, and a shade never was upon his face, except that of the descending green curtain at the end of the comedy.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

One of the most delightful performers of his class, and famous to the last for his invincible airiness and juvenility. Mr. Lewis displayed a combination rarely to be found in acting, that of the fop and the real gentleman. With a voice, a manner, and a person all equally graceful and light, and features at once whimsical and genteel, he played on the top of his profession like a plume. He was the Mercutio of the age, in every sense of the word mercurial. His airy, breathless voice, thrown to the audience before he appeared, was the signal of his winged animal spirits; and when he gave a glance of his eye, or touched his fingers at another's ribs, it was the very *punctum saliens* of playfulness and innuendo. We saw him take leave of the public a man of sixty-five, looking not more than half the age, in the character of the *Copper Captain*, and heard him say in a voice broken by emotion that "For the space of thirty years he had not once incurred their displeasure."—*Leigh Hunt, "The Town."*

## John Quick.

1748-1831.

He is a pleasant little fellow, and barring that he plays my business I wish his stay with us was much longer. He has not an atom of improper consequence in his composition.—*Charles Mathews.*

Little Quick (the retired Dioclesian of Islington), with his squeak like a Bart'lemew fiddle.—*Ibid.*

Many who never saw the original *Vortex* ("Cure for the Heartache") and the great *Silky* on the stage, may yet remember old Quick the octogenarian, with his blue coat and basket-buttons, his snow-white waistcoat, black knee-breeches, silk stockings, shoes and buckles, the latter being on the Sabbath both at knee and instep of diamonds—or paste. Quick was a great favourite with George III. ; but his acting went out of fashion when a more intellectual school appeared. Munden knew little, but Quick knew less ; noise and extravagance were with him substituted for nature and humour. There is a print often in the old picture shops, of Humphreys and Mendoza sparring, and a queer angular exhibition it is. What that is to the modern art of pugilism, Quick's style of acting was to Downton's ; the latter rounded off the square corners of Quick's old men, and brought them nearer if not quite to the standard of truth and nature. Quick quitted the stage in disgust ; when he left it he was as capable as he had been for the twenty years previous, and twenty years afterwards he remained as capable as when he left. He drank freely, sometimes six or seven glasses of rum and water in the evening after dining ; and he had in his old age a fancy for all the old houses about his retreat (Pentonville). Quick loved to sit and talk of Garrick and Goldsmith, and what the dramatist said to him (Quick) when he enacted *Tony Lumpkin* on the first night of the production of "She Stoops to Conquer." One of Quick's laments was the non-observance of a promise *implied* to him by George III. In the early part of that monarch's reign, Quick was walking in the park with his infant daughter, when the King, escorted by his Horseguards, came through ; the child, alarmed at the noise and the appearance of the military, ran from her father, and attempting to get through the rails got



fastened between them. Her screams and her father's endeavours to extricate her, attracted the notice of his Majesty; the carriage was stopped, and the actor presently heard an exclamation, "Quick! Quick! Quick! what's the matter?—head through the rails—bad that—very bad—gently, gently, Quick!" Whether in consequence of this advice or not, the child's caput was extracted, and she stood weeping and curtsying before her sovereign. "Good girl—don't cry, don't cry—be a good girl, and you shall be a maid of honour when you are old enough." So saying his Majesty returned to his carriage. This, which was a mere passing word to appease a crying child, Quick treasured as a sacred promise, and to his latest hour regretted that he had never had an opportunity of getting King George alone, in which case, he said, "she would have been maid of honour, and I whatever his Majesty pleased to make me." Quick was one of the vainest of a vain race. He believed in no living actor but himself. The dead he lauded indiscriminately (except Foote, of whom he equally disliked to speak or hear), and the mere mention of the name of a new performer playing one of his original characters would make him silent for the evening. Quick's great parts were *Isaac*, *Tony Lumpkin*, *Spado* ("Castle of Andalusia"); *Lapoche* ("Fontainebleau"); and *Sir Christopher Curry* ("Inkle and Yarico"). The part that first brought him into notice was *Beau Mordecai*, in which he appeared as far back as the year 1770.—*Records of a Stage Veteran*.

The favourite comedian of his late Majesty was Mr. Quick, an actor of very great and peculiar merits, and a most diligent and faithful servant of the public.—*Boaden*.

Quick, the comedian, one day passing through Broken Row, Moorfields, was seized upon by a touter of a furniture shop, who without ceremony pulled him in and began puffing off his chairs and tables. Quick being old and infirm made but little resistance, but asked the man if he were master of the shop? "No, sir," said the touter, "but I will fetch him immediately." The man returned with his master, to whom he put the same question, "Are you the master of the shop?" "Yes, sir; what can I do for you?" "Only," replied Quick, "just to hold your man a minute while I go out."—*Ana*.

The celebrated comedian John Quick resided in Hornsey Row, subsequently Will's Row, Islington. He was born in 1748, and left his father, a brewer in Whitechapel, when only fourteen

years of age, to become an actor. He commenced his career at Fulham, where he performed the character of *Attamont* in the "Fair Penitent," which he personified so much to the satisfaction of the manager, that he desired his wife to set down young Quick a whole share, which at the close of the farce amounted to three shillings. In the counties of Kent and Surrey he acted with great success, and before he was eighteen performed *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, *Richard*, *George Barnwell*, *Jaffier*, *Tancred*, and many other characters in the higher walks of tragedy. In a few years he sufficiently distinguished himself as an actor of such versatile talents that he was engaged by Foote at the Haymarket Theatre in 1769, where he became a great favourite with George III., who, when visiting the theatre, always expected Quick to appear in a prominent character. He was the original *Tony Lumpkin*, *Acres*, and *Isaac Mendoza*, and after his appearance in these characters, he stood before the public as the Liston of the day. Mr. Quick may be considered one of the last of the Garrick school. In 1798 he quitted the stage, after thirty-six years of its toils, and with the exception of a few nights at the Lyceum after the destruction of Covent Garden Theatre, did not act again. He retired with 10,000*l.* Up to the last day of his life he was in the habit of joining a respectable company which frequented the King's Head, opposite Islington Church, by whom he was recognised as president.—*Memoir of John Quick*, 1832.

### Ralph Wewitzer.<sup>1</sup>

1749-1825.

At obscure lodgings in Wild Passage, Drury Lane, under circumstances of peculiar distress, died Wewitzer the actor. He died indebted to his landlady 14*l.*, the payment of which she never urged during his illness; but after death, hearing that he had relations, she determined on having her money, or at least the value of it. A handsome coffin was provided, in which the remains of the unfortunate actor were deposited,

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<sup>1</sup> Wewitzer as an actor is well spoken of by O'Keefe. "Wewitzer," he says, who "performed one of these warriors, came out with a kind of grand extempore declaration, as if it was the original language of some of the islands. Wewitzer did this piece of pomposo wonderfully well."

and every arrangement made for the funeral, when the landlady made her demand, and a man was placed in possession. Information was forwarded to one of his relations, and ultimately the body was taken from the coffin and conveyed in a shell to interment. He was a native of London, where he was brought up as a jeweller, which business he exchanged at an early period for the honours of an actor's life. Having got some experience in his new professional course, he at length made his *début* at Covent Garden Theatre, as *Ralph*, in the opera of "The Maid of the Mill," which character he sustained for the benefit of his sister, who, about the year 1785 was held in some estimation both as an actress and singer. It may be observed, as something of a singularity, that his Christian name happened to be the same as that allotted to his character in the piece. Wewitzer's exertions were crowned with success, and indicated so much promise of utility in his profession that he was engaged by the house, where he soon distinguished himself in the representation of Jews and Frenchmen. He next repaired to Dublin for a short time, under the management of Ryder, and on his return he resumed his situation at Covent Garden: here he remained till, unfortunately, he was induced to undertake the management of the Royalty Theatre; but, on the failure of that concern, he became a member of the Drury Lane company, with which he continued to perform till the close of his theatrical career. He played at the Haymarket Theatre for several seasons; and he is also said to have been the inventor of some pantomimes. He had, speaking of him as an individual, no indifferent share of companionable qualities; for at one time, by happy turns and a cordial vein of humour, he managed to keep the table in a roar. He died quite calmly at the advanced age of seventy-six, and was in his latter years an annuitant on the Covent Garden Theatrical Fund.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1825.

The late R. Wewitzer sent the following letter to Mr. W. West, the popular comedian of the Haymarket Theatre, who had promised to give Ralph the copy of an address recited by the wife of the latter gentleman at Drury Lane Theatre, on the death of George III., together with two others spoken on the same occasion. Mr. West having neglected his promise received the following epistle:—

" Young West,  
You'd best

Send me  
Odes three,  
Printed or writ, sir,  
To yours, Wewitzer."

Mr. Wewitzer being asked how old he was, gravely replied, "I do not remember indeed when I was born."

One of the performers being absent and no intelligence to be obtained where he was, the prompter said that he must be fined. "Ay," cries Wewitzer, "but before he is *fined* he must be *found*."

Two of the doorkeepers were tossing a halfpenny for a pot of beer, when one of them called for a head, when lo! it was a tail. "Ah," said Wewitzer, who was at his elbow, "you always want a head."

One of the scene-shifters having vexed Mr. Wewitzer, Mr. W. raised his foot and kicked him. The man, highly provoked, declared that in all his life he was never kicked before. "Very possibly," said W.; "but I daresay you have been kicked behind."—*Theatrical Anecdotes*.<sup>1</sup>

## John Edwin.

1750-1790.

There are sufficient documents of his being the best burletta singer that ever had been, or perhaps ever will be; and of his obligations to O'Keefe, and of O'Keefe's to him, through the superiority of author and actor. What has not yet been observed of him is, that nature in gifting him with the *vis comica*, had dealt towards him differently from low comedians in general; for she had enabled him to look irresistibly funny, with a very agreeable if not handsome set of features; and while he sung in a style which produced roars of laughter, there was a melody in some of the upper tones of his voice that was beautiful. There was no medium in his performance of the various characters allotted to him; he was either excellent or execrable; and it might be said of his acting, as my father in one of his farces makes a gourmand remark upon Shakspeare's writing, "it was like *turtle*; the lean of it might

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<sup>1</sup> Much has been said of Wewitzer's wit. The reader will be able to judge of its quality by the above.—ED.

perhaps be worse than the lean of any other meat ; but there was a quantity of green fat about it which was delicious.”—*George Colman*.

Many performers before and since the days of Edwin have acquired the power, by private winks, irrelevant buffoonery, and dialogue to make their fellow-players laugh, and thus confound the audience and mar the scene. Edwin, disdaining this confined and distracting system, established a sort of *entre nous-ship* with the audience, and made them his confidants ; and though wrong in his principle, yet so neatly and skilfully did he execute it, that instead of injuring the business of the stage he frequently enriched it—the only possible excuse for “your clown speaking more than is set down for him.”—*F. Reynolds*.

Edwin told me that his method was when he got a new part to study to turn it about and about, as an artist drawing from a bust, in order to find the points which might give him most power over his audience. The part of *Tipple* in the “Flitch of Bacon” first introduced him to public favour.—*O’Keefe*.

Edwin was one of the most extraordinary actors of low comedy that the stage had ever possessed. Henderson—at least, a competent evidence—declared that in dumb action, a very difficult art of the drama, he had never seen him equalled. In *Sir Hugh Evans*, when preparing for the duel, he had seen him keep the house in an ecstasy of merriment for many minutes together, without speaking a single word. Edwin was another of the theatrical examples which, with competence and enjoyment within their grasp, prefer living in discomfort and dying in beggary. He enfeebled his powers by excess of brandy, until he died degraded, and worn with disease. Yet his powers were originally so strong that even his excesses could scarcely impair his popularity. To the last he was an universal favourite ; and when he died, men looked round the stage, in doubt where they were to find a successor.—*Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1839.

Alas, poor Edwin ! I knew him intimately. He was a choice actor, and a pleasant club companion. His career was short and brilliant ; it was a firework—a sort of squib—bright, dazzling, sputtering, and off with a pop.—*John Bannister*.

Edwin’s *Tipple* (in the “Flitch of Bacon”) was an exquisite treat. Had he *but* imitated the habit which christened him, he might long have continued the most diverting creature that the modern stage has known.—*Boaden*.

Our ancestors, down to a time as late as our grandfathers, certainly tolerated liberties taken with an audience by actors with a leniency that is more surprising, as the manners of the time were ruder and the customs of a very ruffianly character. There are still individuals living who may have seen Edwin. At the close of his career, Edwin was playing *Bowkit* in the "Son-in-Law" at the Haymarket. In the scene where *Cranky* declines to accept him as a son-in-law on account of his ugliness, Edwin uttered the word "ugly?" in a tone of surprise, and then advancing to the lamps, said with great coolness and infinite impudence, "Now I submit to the decision of an enlightened British public which is the *ugliest* fellow of the *three*—I, old *Cranky*, or that gentleman in the front row of the balcony box?" The gentleman became the object, not of general pity, but of general and loud derision, and he retreated hastily from the humiliating consequences of the actor's impertinence.—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1867.

## Henry Johnston.

*Circa 1750.*

Henry Johnston was born in Edinburgh, and had for his godfather the celebrated Lord Erskine,<sup>1</sup> who took charge of his education, after whom he was called, Henry Erskine Johnston. At this period the tragedy of "Douglas" was very popular; and as Johnston had decided on making the stage his profession, he selected *Young Norval* as his maiden attempt in his native city. His youthful appearance, being scarcely eighteen, graceful form, and handsome, expressive countenance, won for him the universal approbation of his

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<sup>1</sup> Of Erskine, Lord Cockburn, in his "Life of Jeffrey," says:—"A tall and rather slender figure, a face sparkling with vivacity, and a general suffusion of elegance, gave him a striking and pleasing appearance. He was nearly the same in private as in public; the presence of only a few friends never diminishing his animation, nor that of the largest audience his naturalness. No boisterousness ever vulgarized, no effort ever encumbered his aerial gaiety. Though imposing no restraint upon himself, but always yielding fresh to the radiant spirit within him, his humour was rendered delightful by its gentleness and safety. Too good-natured for sarcasm when he was compelled to expose, there was such an obvious absence of all desire to give pain, that the very person against whom his laughing darts were directed generally thought the wounds compensated by the mirth and the humanity of the cuts."

countrymen. Previous to this the noble shepherd was dressed in the trows and Scotch jacket; but when Johnston appeared in full Highland costume, in kilt, breastplate, shield, claymore, and bonnet, the whole house rose, and such a reception was never witnessed within the walls of a provincial theatre before. The reverend author, Mr. Home,<sup>1</sup> was present; and at the conclusion of the tragedy, publicly pronounced Johnston the *beau idéal* of his conception. There can be no doubt of this, as all who have attempted this beautifully drawn character have egregiously failed in producing the effects which Johnston brought forth.—*W. Donaldson.*

As a melodramatist he was of much consequence. As *Young Norval*, Johnston had long been admired in the country of Home. In spectacle he was first-rate.—*Boaden.*

Harry Johnston, who used to be "the biggest boy in the world," had an odd style of imitating persons' manner, gait, and gesture, without attempting their voices. No one who had not seen him do it could imagine anything so ludicrous as his representation of how the principal actors would play Harlequin. The fervent lightness of Lewis; the elephantic ponderosity of Cooke; and the solemn saltatory efforts of Kemble, were irresistible; he generally ended this display by a jump *à la* Ellar. On one occasion, when a knot of actors and their friends were dining at Greenwich, in the house looking into the Park, he gave this performance, and concluded by a lion's leap out of the window, which, as they were in the parlour, was only four or five feet from the ground. The laugh, the song, and the bottle went round, and in another hour the party adjourned upstairs to the first floor, as the numbers having increased, we should have been confined below. Some of our recent visitors were anxious to hear Johnston's imitations again. Harry complied, and set everybody screaming at his pantomimical portraits of Holman, Suett, Pope, &c. Elated with the hilarity of his hearers, he wound up as before in the style of a veritable pantomimist, and, for-

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<sup>1</sup> John Home, the author of "Douglas," was born in 1724. In the rebellion of 1745, being in the Royal army, he was taken prisoner at the battle of Falkirk. He escaped, and in 1750 was ordained minister of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian. On the production of "Douglas," finding the Presbytery greatly incensed at a minister writing for the stage, he resigned his living. He died in 1808.—ED.

getting where he was, jumped through the window, and of course fell full sixteen feet into the Park. Providentially no bones were broken; but poor Harry received a shock that none but a strong constitution could ever have recovered.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

## Jack Johnstone.

1750—1828.

Of all the popular men in London Jack Johnstone was more courted and favoured than any other, not only on account of his nationality, but in consequence of his unapproachable talent in either the Irish gentleman or the peasant. His rich and delicious singing, and his agreeable and social manners, gained the hearts of gentle and simple in his native city. There have been many excellent actors in the *low* Irishman, but there has been only *one* comedian that could delineate the refined Irish gentleman, and enter into the genuine unsophisticated humour of a son of the Emerald Isle with equal talent.—*Walter Donaldson.*

John Johnstone, in whom the Irish character was certainly somewhat refined, but who taught our dramatists quite enough for their *use*—namely, all that was pleasant. Rock and others rendered it vulgar; whereas Johnstone made it sparkle with humour, and in either blunder or mischance, anger or jest, uniformly delightful.—*Boaden.*

Jack Johnstone was very proud of his patrician acquaintances; and as the Prince of Wales was partial to his Irish ballads, he was a constant member of the jovial societies of the year 1790 and thereabouts. Suett inflated poor Johnstone with the hyperbolic praises that he vowed the Prince had lavished on his singing; whilst he amused Johnstone's associates with very different accounts. Johnstone had one note (E in Alt), which he took very clearly in his falsetto. It was his delight to dwell on that tone an unconscionable time; so much so, that Suett told Erskine that the Prince once coming into his box whilst Johnstone was at his favourite exercise, turned to his friend and said, "I verily believe he has held that note ever since we were here last"—the Prince having been, the week previous, according to Suett, driven out of the theatre by "Paddy's protracted howl."—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*



He was born at Tipperary, the son of a small but respectable farmer, having a large family. At the early age of eighteen he enlisted into a regiment of Irish dragoons, then stationed at Clonmel, commanded by Colonel Brown. Being smitten with the charms of a neighbouring farmer's daughter, Johnstone used to scale the barrack wall after his comrades had retired to their quarters, for the purpose of serenading his mistress, having a remarkably sweet and flexible voice. He always returned, however, and was ready at parade the following morning. He was much esteemed throughout the regiment for a native lively turn of mind and peculiarly companionable qualities. Two of his comrades (who had found out the secret of his nocturnal visitations) scaled the wall after him, and discovered him on his knee singing a plaintive Irish ditty beneath the window of his *inamorata*. They returned to quarters instanter, and were quickly followed by Johnstone. The sergeant of the company to which he belonged eventually became acquainted with the circumstance, but never apprized the Colonel of the fact. Shortly after Colonel Brown had a party of particular friends dining with him, whom he was most anxious to entertain. He inquired what soldier throughout the regiment had the best voice, and the palm of merit was awarded by the sergeant-major to Johnstone. The Colonel sent for him, and he attended the summons, overwhelmed with apprehension that his absence from quarters had reached his commander's ears. He was soon relieved, however, on this point, and attended the party at the time appointed. The first song he sung was a hunting one, which obtained much applause, although he laboured under extreme trepidation. The Colonel said that he had heard he excelled in Irish melodies, and bade Johnstone sing one of his favourite love songs. His embarrassment increased at this order, but after taking some refreshment, he sang the identical ditty with which he had so often serenaded his mistress in such a style of pathos, feeling, and taste, as perfectly enraptured his auditors. Having completely regained his self-possession, he delighted the company with several other songs, all which received unqualified approbation. The next day Colonel Brown sent for him and sounded his inclination for the stage. Johnstone expressed his wishes favourably on the point, but hinted the extreme improbability of his success from want of experience and musical knowledge. The Colonel overcame his objections,

and granted him his discharge, with a highly recommendatory letter to his particular friend Mr. Ryder, then manager of the Dublin theatre, who engaged Johnstone at two guineas a week for three years, which, after his first appearance in *Lionel*, was immediately raised to four (a high salary at that time in Dublin). His fame as a vocalist gathered like a snowball, and he performed the whole range of young singing lovers with pre-eminent *éclat*. Our hero next formed a matrimonial alliance with a Miss Poitier, daughter of Colonel Poitier, who had then the command of the military dépôt at Kilmainham gaol. This lady being highly accomplished, and possessing a profound knowledge of music, imparted to her husband the arcana of the science, and made him a finished singer. Macklin, having the highest opinion of Johnstone's talent, advised him to try the metropolitan boards, wrote a letter to Mr. Thomas Harris, of Covent Garden, who, on the arrival of Johnstone and his wife, immediately engaged them for three years, at a weekly salary of 14*l.*, 16*l.*, and 18*l.* Johnstone made his first appearance in London the 3rd of October, 1783, in his old character of *Lionel*, and made a complete hit—fully sustaining the ten years' reputation he had acquired on the Dublin stage. After remaining several years at Covent Garden, and finding his voice not improving with time, he formed the admirable policy of taking to Irish parts, which were then but very inadequately filled. His success was beyond example—his native humour, rich brogue, and fine voice for Irish ditties carried all before him. In fact, he was the only actor who could personate with the utmost effect both the patrician and plebeian Irishman. He next performed at the Haymarket, being one of those who remonstrated with the proprietors of Covent Garden in 1801 against their new regulations. In 1803 he visited his friends in Dublin, where, martial law being then in force, on account of Emmett's rebellion, the company performed in the day-time. On his return to London his wife died, and he afterwards married Miss Boulton, the daughter of a wine-merchant, by whom he had Mrs. Wallack, who with her children succeed to the bulk of his large property. In the records of the stage no actor ever approached Johnstone in Irish characters. *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, *Callaghan O'Brallaghan*, *Major O'Flaherty*, *Teague*, *Tully* (the Irish gardener), and *Dennis Brulgruddery*, were portrayed by him in the most exquisite colours. In fact, they stood alone for felicity of nature and original merit.

Mr. Johnstone's remains were interred in a vault under the church of St. Paul, Covent Garden, near the eastern angle of the church.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1829.

In 1803 Jack Johnstone, afterwards so well known as Irish Johnstone, added to the attractions of the Drury Lane company. Twenty years before, when a very young man, he had appeared on the stage in London, and having a fine voice was a promising performer of opera. The talent by which he was to be distinguished seems to have been utterly concealed from himself. How it came to be discovered he used thus to tell: "He was one morning in the green-room when Macklin came in; the actors crowded round him. Fixing his eyes on Johnstone, he bid him come to breakfast next morning. On going he found the old man with the manuscript of 'Love à la Mode' in his hand. 'Read that, sir,' says he, marking out the part of *Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan*. When the reader expressed his admiration, 'You shall play it, sir,' said the author. Johnstone made many excuses, but was forced to give way. His Irish talent was developed by success, and in it he was unrivalled to the end of his days."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1839.

## Mrs. Hartley.

1751-1824.

A finer creature I never saw. Her make is perfect.—*Garrick*.

She is a very good figure, with a handsome, small face, and very much freckled; her hair red, and her neck and shoulders well turned. There is no harmony in her voice; but when forced (which she never fails to do on the least occasion) is loud and strong, but an inarticulate gabble. She is ignorant and stubborn. She talks lusciously, and has a slovenly good nature about her that renders her prodigiously vulgar.—*Moody*.

The most severe satirist who bestows one look on Mrs. Hartley must be instantly disarmed, and turn all his censure to panegyric. The calm and lovely innocence of *Lady Touchwood* could by nobody be so happily represented as by this actress, who is celebrated for her artless exhibition of the distress of the unhappy *Shore* and the beautiful *Elfrida*.—*T. Davies*.

She was tall and striking in her figure, and had golden hair. It was for this woman that Smith, of Drury Lane, at his

maturity, made a fool of himself—deserted his wife, with the greatest respect for her all the time, and like a green boy, would have given up the whole world, as he told Garrick, “rather than desert his Rose.”—*Boaden*.<sup>1</sup>

Her lovely face, and lithe, tall, delicate figure, had rapidly won for her the leading place at Covent Garden in such parts of tender tragedy as *Fane Shore*, and the puling heroines of Murphy's *Alzuma* and Mason's *Elfrida*. She was no actress, but her beauty for a time (as Moody had prophesied) stood her in stead of genius. She had that golden auburn hair which the early Italian painters loved, and those blonde colours which have always, I think, exercised most power of witchery on men. She sat to Sir Joshua very soon after her first success. When he paid her a compliment on her beauty, she turned it laughingly off: “Nay, my face may be well enough for shape, but sure 'tis as freckled as a toad's belly.”—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

She is one of the most beautiful women I ever saw, and the finest figure, but has not a good voice.—*James Northcote*.

Lately, at Woolwich, aged seventy-three, the once beautiful and admired actress, Mrs. Hartley. She was a contemporary with Garrick, and we believe the only one that remained, excepting Mr. Quick and Mrs. Mattocks, who are still alive. Her extreme beauty, and the truth and nature of her acting, attracted universal admiration, and caused her to rank the highest, as a female, in her profession, previous to the appearance of Mrs. Siddons. Mr. Hull had written his tragedy of “Henry II., or Fair Rosamond,” several years previous to its production, and despaired of obtaining a proper representative for the character of *Rosamond* until the above lady appeared. Mason, the poet, also wrote his well-known tragedy of “*Elfrida*,” that she might personify the principal character. “*Elfrida*” has always been admired as a beautiful poem, but is not calculated for stage effect; it was nevertheless at that time supported, and even rendered highly attractive, by

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<sup>1</sup> “The author could not have wished a more perfect form and face than this lady displayed upon the stage. When I look back and around me for anything to reflect her to those who have never seen her, I am obliged to say that the exquisite portrait by Sir Joshua did not do her entire justice, and that at last we must refer to the images of ripened beauty and modest dignity with which the perhaps flattering portraits of her poets delighted to exhibit the person of the VIRGIN QUEEN.”—*Boaden*.

the person and talents of Mrs. Hartley. She was a very favourite subject of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and appears as the beautiful female in a number of his most celebrated pictures. Two in particular are professed portraits of her, called "Mrs. Hartley as *Fane Shore*," and "Mrs. Hartley as a Bacchante." A fine study for the former was recently sold at the celebrated sale of the Marchioness of Thomond's pictures, at Christie's. She died in easy circumstances, her merits during her public services having procured her a comfortable independence.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1824.

### Miss Linley<sup>1</sup> (Mrs. Sheridan.)

1754-1792.

Among those who sang, not only at the oratorios at Bath, but who had gained a high reputation in all musical circles, was Miss Linley, the daughter of the eminent composer, upon whom nature seemed to have lavished her richest treasures, and art to have nobly seconded her. Miss Linley was beyond a doubt one of the most accomplished and most beautiful women ever seen.—*Life of Sheridan*, *Bohn's Edition*.

To see her as she stood singing beside me at the pianoforte was like looking into the face of an angel.—*Jackson of Exeter*.<sup>2</sup>

There has seldom perhaps existed a finer combination of all those qualities that attract both eye and heart than this

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<sup>1</sup> She married Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The story of their courtship is a romance too worn to be re-told. After Sheridan had married her, he would not let her sing in public. "We talked," says Boswell, "of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded. It was questioned whether the young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, 'He resolved wisely and nobly, to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publicly for hire? No, sir, there can be no doubt here.'"

<sup>2</sup> William Jackson, invariably called Jackson of Exeter, was born in that city in 1730. He was the composer of several beautiful canzonets and sonatas, and the author of a treatise "On the Present State of Music." He died 1804.—ED.

accomplished and lovely person exhibited. To judge by what we hear it was impossible to see her without admiration, or know her without love; and a late Bishop used to say that "she seemed to him the connecting link between woman and angel." The devotedness of affection, too, with which she was regarded, not only by her own father and sisters, but by all her husband's family, showed that her fascination was of that best kind which, like charity, "begins at home;" and that while her beauty and music enchanted the world, she had charms more intrinsic and lasting for those who came nearer to her.—*Thomas Moore.*

Hers was truly "a voice as of the cherub choir," and she was always ready to sing without any pressing. She sung here a great deal, and to my infinite delight; but what had a peculiar charm was, that she used to take my daughter, then a child, on her lap, and sing a number of childish songs with such a playfulness of manner, and such a sweetness of look and voice as was quite enchanting.—*Rogers's "Correspondence."*

Her exquisite and delicate loveliness, all the more fascinating for the tender sadness which seemed, as a contemporary describes it, to project over her the shadow of early death; her sweet voice, and the pathetic expression of her singing, the timid and touching grace of her air and deportment, had won universal admiration for Eliza Ann Linley. From the days when, a girl of nine, she stood with her little basket at the pump-room door, timidly offering the tickets for her father's benefit concerts, to those when, in her teens, she was the belle of the Bath assemblies, none could resist her beseeching grace. Lovers and wooers flocked about her; Richard Walter Long, the Wiltshire miser, laid his thousands at her feet. Even Foote, when he took the story of Miss Linley's rejection of that sordid old hunk as the subject of his "Maid at Bath," in 1770, laid no stain of his satirical brush on *her*. Nor had she resisted only the temptation of money: coronets it was whispered had been laid at her feet as well as money. When she appeared at the Oxford oratorios, grave dons and young gentlemen commoners were alike subdued. In London, where she sang at Covent Garden, in the Lent of 1773, the King himself is said to have been as much fascinated by her eyes and voice as by the music of his favourite Handel.—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

I own I prefer Mrs. Sheridan before Miss Harrop, and indeed before any singer I ever heard, even to this moment; but this

is no ill compliment to Miss Harrop, because charming and exquisite as they were, her talents were confined to concert singing. The talents of Mrs. Sheridan, had the experiment been made, would have been found to have been universal; but the public was not so far to be obliged. Those who have never heard Mrs. Sheridan can be no more able to conceive the force and effect of her merit than I can be capable of describing it. I can easily make it understood that, if she was possessed of every perfection and free from every fault as a singer, she must have been superior to every other; but this is theory: the practical part of the argument cannot be felt but by those who were fortunate enough to hear her, who, if they have any recollection, and will take the trouble to repeat Milton's passage, uttered by *Comus* immediately after he has heard the lady sing "Sweet Echo," they will find their sensations were at that time delighted equal to that description, for indeed "she took the prisoned soul and lapped it in elysium."—*Charles Dibdin's "History of the Stage."*

## Mrs. Siddons.

1755-1831.

Of actors Cooke was the most natural, Kemble the most supernatural, Kean the medium between the two. But Mrs. Siddons was worth them all put together.—*Byron.*

Mrs. Siddons in her visit to me behaved with great propriety and modesty, and left nothing behind her to be censured or despised. Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corruptors of mankind, seem to have depraved her.—*Dr. Johnson.*

Is it not worth something to have seen Mrs. Siddons in her days of magnificence—Mrs. Siddons, who has lent to the very syllables of her name an elevation and a charm so strong that no effort of mind could now effect their separation—so strong, that none who saw her in the splendour of her meridian ever pronounced that name without a tone and a manner more softened and raised than their habitual discourse? She sometimes gave vitality to a line which stamped it for ever, while all surrounding recollections have faded away. I remember her saying to a servant who had betrayed her, in some play no longer acted—

"There's gold for thee; but see my face no more."

I am sorry that this is the moment in which she comes most strongly on my recollection. I wish it had been in one of Shakspeare's plays; but so it is. There is no giving an adequate impression of the might, the majesty of grace she possessed, nor of the effect on a young heart of the deep and mysterious tones of her voice. Kemble as *Coriolanus*, when she was *Volumnia*, equalled the highest hopes of acting.—*Mrs. R. Trench*, "*Remains*," 1822.

After she left the stage Mrs. Siddons, from the want of excitement, was never happy. When I was sitting with her of an afternoon she would say, "Oh dear! this is the time I used to be thinking of going to the theatre; first came the pleasure of dressing for my part, and then the pleasure of acting it; but that is all over now." When a grand public dinner was given to John Kemble on his quitting the stage, Mrs. Siddons said to me, "Well, perhaps in the next world women will be more valued than they are in this." She alluded to the comparatively little sensation which had been produced by her own retirement from the boards, and doubtless she was a far, far greater performer than John Kemble. Combe<sup>1</sup> recollected having seen Mrs. Siddons, when a very young woman, standing by the side of her father's stage, and knocking a pair of snuffers against a candlestick, to imitate the sound of a windmill, during the representation of some Harlequin piece.<sup>2</sup>—*S. Rogers*, "*Table Talk*."

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<sup>1</sup> Combe, the author of "*Dr. Syntax*."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> One night, when Mrs. Siddons had occasion to drain "the poisoned cup," a ruffian bawled out, to the overthrow of all order in the rest of the house, "That's right, Molly; soop it up, ma lass." Once during her engagement, the evening being hot, Mrs. Siddons was tempted by a torturing thirst to avail herself of the only relief to be obtained at the moment. Her dresser, therefore, despatched a boy in great haste to "fetch a pint of beer for Mrs. Siddons." Meanwhile the play proceeded, and on the boy's return with the frothed pitcher, he looked about for the person who had sent him on his errand, and not seeing her, inquired, "Where is Mrs. Siddons?" The scene-shifter whom he questioned, pointing his finger to the stage, where she was performing the sleeping-scene of *Lady Macbeth*, replied, "There she is." To the horror of the performers, the boy promptly walked on to the stage close up to Mrs. Siddons, and with a total unconsciousness of any impropriety, presented the porter! Her distress may be imagined; she waved the boy away in her grand manner several times without effect. At last the people behind the scenes, by dint of beckoning, stamping, &c., succeeded in getting him off with the beer, while the audience were in an uproar of laughter, which the dignity of the actress was unable to quell for several minutes.—*Life of Mathews*.



If you ask me, What is a queen? I should say, Mrs. Siddons.  
—*Tate Wilkinson.*

I have some reason to believe that Mrs. Siddons was addicted to drollery. As a proof of this she was very fond in private society of singing with tristful countenance the burlesque song called “Billy Taylor;” and I will venture the assertion from many evidences that both Mrs. Siddons and Mr. John Kemble had a bias, I may say a great leaning, towards comedy. Mr. Kemble, everybody knows, harboured an intention (a *serious* intention I may call it) of performing *Falstaff* not long before his retirement, and rehearsed it several times. Happily for his reputation the idea was abandoned.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

She was an actress who never had had an equal, nor would ever have a superior.—*Henderson.*<sup>1</sup>

I remember her coming down the stage in the triumphal entry of her son *Coriolanus*, when her dumb-show drew plaudits that shook the house. She came alone, marching and beating time to the music; rolling (if that be not too strong a term to describe her motion) from side to side, swelling with the triumph of her son. Such was the intoxication of joy which flashed from her eye, and lit up her whole face, that the effect was irresistible. She seemed to me to reap all the glory of that procession to herself. I could not take my eye from her. *Coriolanus*, banner, and pageant, all went for nothing to me after she had left her place.—*C. Young.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The actor.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Young, the actor, related to me an instance of her power in the part of *Mrs. Beverley* over his own feelings. He was acting *Beverley* with her on the Edinburgh stage, and they had proceeded as far as the fourth scene in the fifth act, when *Beverley* has swallowed the poison, and when *Bates* comes in and says to the dying sufferer, “Jarvis found you quarrelling with Lawson in the streets last night.” *Mrs. Beverley* says, “No, I am sure he did not,” to which *Jarvis* replies, “Or if I did?” meaning, it may be supposed, to add, “the fault was not with my master;” but the moment he utters the words “Or if I did?” *Mrs. Beverley* exclaims, “’Tis false, old man! They had no quarrel—there was no cause for quarrel!” In uttering this Mrs. Siddons caught hold of *Jarvis*, and gave the exclamation with such piercing grief, that Mr. Young said his throat swelled, and his utterance was choked. He stood unable to speak the few words which as *Beverley* he ought immediately to have delivered. The pause lasted long enough to make the prompter several times repeat *Beverley*’s speech, till Mrs. Siddons, coming up to her fellow actor, put the tips of her fingers on his shoulder, and said, in a low voice, “Mr. Young, recollect yourself.”—*Campbell’s “Life of Siddons.”*

Her performance was a school for oratory ; I had studied her cadences and intonation, and to the harmony of her periods and pronunciation I am indebted for my best displays.—  
*Lord Erskine.*

Her lofty beauty, her graceful walk and gesture, and her potent elocution, were endowments which at the first sight marked her supremacy on the stage. But it was not the classical propriety of a speech, nor the grandeur or pathos of a scene ; it was no individual or insulated beauty that we exclusively admired. These received their full portion of applause, and to many individuals might seem to exhaust the theme of her praise. But it was the high judgment which watched over all these qualifications, the equally vigilant sympathy which threw itself into the assumed character ; it was her sustained understanding of her part, her self-devotion to it, and her abstraction from everything else, and no casual bursts of effect, that riveted the experienced spectator's admiration.—  
*Thomas Campbell.*<sup>1</sup>

The enthusiasm she excited had something idolatrous about it ; we can conceive nothing grander. She embodied, to our imaginations, the fables of mythology of the heroic and deified mortals of elder time. She was not less than a goddess or a prophetess inspired by the gods. Power was seated on her brow ; passion radiated from her breast as from a shrine ; she was Tragedy personified.—*Hazlitt.*

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<sup>1</sup> Her farewell performance was given on the 29th of June, 1812. The play was "Macbeth." The crowd was immense. At the sleep-walking scene the excitement was so great that the audience stood on the benches, and demanded that the performance should end with that scene. The curtain was then dropped for twenty minutes. When it rose, Mrs. Siddons was discovered at a table dressed in white. She came forward, amidst a perfect thunderstorm of applause, which endured many moments. Silence being obtained, she recited an address, towards the conclusion of which, it is said, she exhibited deep emotion. The closing lines were :—

“ Judges and friends, to whom the magic strain  
Of nature's feeling never spoke in vain,  
Perhaps your hearts, when years have glided by,  
And past emotions wake a fleeting sigh,  
May think on her whose lips have poured so long  
The charmed sorrows of your Shakspeare's song ;  
On her who, parting to return no more,  
Is now the mourner she but *seem'd* before :  
Herself subdu'd, resigns the melting spell,  
And breathes, with swelling heart, her long, her last Farewell.”

She is a woman of excellent character, and therefore I am glad she is thus patronized, since Mrs. Abington and so many frail fair ones have been thus noticed by the great. She behaved with great propriety, very calm, modest, quiet, and unaffected. She has a very fine countenance, and her eyes look both intelligent and soft. She has, however, a steadiness in her manner and deportment by no means engaging. Mrs. Thrale said, "Why, this is a leaden goddess we are all worshipping! However, we shall soon gild it."—*Miss Burney*.

Mrs. Siddons seemed always to throw herself on nature as a guide, and follow instantaneously what she suggested.—*R. B. Haydon*.<sup>1</sup>

There never perhaps was a better stage figure than Mrs. Siddons. Her height is above the middle size, but not at all inclined to the *embonpoint*; there is, notwithstanding, nothing sharp or angular in the frame; there is sufficient muscle to bestow a roundness upon the limbs, and her attitudes are, therefore, distinguished equally by energy and grace. The symmetry of her person is exact and captivating; her face is peculiarly happy, the features being finely formed, though strong, and never for an instant seeming overcharged, like the Italian faces, nor coarse and unfeminine, under whatever impulse. On the contrary, it is so thoroughly harmonized when quiescent, and so expressive when impassioned, that most people think her more beautiful than she is. So great, too, is the flexibility of her countenance, that the rapid transitions of passion are given with a variety and effect that never tire upon the eye. Her voice is naturally plaintive, and a tender melancholy in her level speaking denotes a being devoted to tragedy; yet this seemingly settled quality of voice becomes at will sonorous or piercing, overwhelms with rage, or in its wild shriek absolutely harrows up the soul. Her sorrow, too, is never childish; her lamentation has a dignity which belongs, I think, to no other woman; it claims your respect along with your tears.—*Boaden*,<sup>2</sup> 1782.

<sup>1</sup> Haydon found fault with her *Lady Macbeth*. "I fancied that Mrs. Siddons acted with very little force in the scene where she comes out, when Macbeth is in Duncan's chamber, and says, 'That which hath made them drunk has made me bold.' She ought to have been in a blaze. . . . I will not go again to see any of Shakspeare's plays; you always associate the characters with the actors."—*Haydon's "Autobiography."*

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Siddons, her husband, is represented as an actor of great versa-

In the acting of Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble I remember particularly (perhaps because it was somewhat unexpected) the grace with which they could descend from the stateliness of tragedy to the easy manner of familiar life. The scene in which Mrs. Siddons, as *Volumnia*, sat sewing with *Virgilia*, and the subsequent scene with *Valeria*; and in "Hamlet," the manner in which John Kemble gave the conversations with the players, were beautiful instances of this. These passages are not comic; but both brother and sister, in giving them, indicated the perfection of genteel comedy. Perhaps it is the highest praise of such acting to say that it was truly Shakspearian, and made one feel, still more than in reading the plays, the value of such scenes. In the "Winter's Tale," also, the bye-play of *Leontes* with the child of *Mamillius*, while he was jealously watching *Hermione* and *Polixenes*, was marked by John Kemble with the same fine taste; and the manner in which Mrs. Siddons, as *Lady Macbeth*, dismissed the guests from the banquet-scene has often been noticed among the minor beauties of her acting. After her retirement from the stage, she was fond of adverting to her theatrical career;<sup>1</sup> and in a conversation on this subject she said to my friend Newton, "*I was an honest actress, and at all times in all things endeavoured to do my best.*"—*Leslie's "Autobiography."*

No tragic actress, I believe, ever had such absolute dominion over her audience as Mrs. Siddons; nor were her audiences common and indiscriminating, for in addition to a splendid

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tility, capable of acting through the whole range of *Hamlet* to *Harlequin*. He was, says Boaden, "when I knew him first, in the prime of life, a fair and very handsome man, sedate and graceful in his manners." Mrs. Siddons had a son, Henry Siddons, who became an actor. He is described as being deficient for the stage "in his voice, form, and face." The force of deficiency could hardly go further. The *Stranger* was the only character he personated with any degree of success. He married Miss Murray, an actress, by all accounts, of real genius. "Above all the actresses of that time," says an enthusiastic writer, "her demeanour was distinguished by that charm which sometimes has imparted power even to mediocrity, but which, when joined, as it was in her case, with the finest faculties, adds a perpetual power to genius, and ensures its resistless triumph. Mrs. Henry Siddons was in all things the perfect lady."

<sup>1</sup> "John Kemble's most familiar table-talk often flowed into blank verse, and so indeed did his sister's. Scott, who was a capital mimic, often repeated her tragical exclamation to a footboy during a dinner at Ashestiel:—

"'You've brought me water, boy—I asked for beer!'"—*Lockhart.*

display of the principal rank and fashion of the period, I have frequently seen in the orchestra Burke, Windham, and Sir Joshua Reynolds—all testifying an equal admiration of her commanding talents. The late Mr. Harris used to say that he had more cause to praise and admire her than Sheridan himself; for she brought as full houses to Covent Garden as to Drury Lane, though the former paid her no salary. The fact was, that on Mrs. Siddons's nights Mr. Harris (being sure of an overflow from Drury Lane) only put up his weakest bills, reserving the strongest for his *off nights*; thus probably, at the end of the week, the average amount of the receipts was in his favour.—*Frederick Reynolds, "Autobiography."*

On before us tottered, rather than walked, a very pretty, delicate, fragile-looking creature, dressed in a most unbecoming manner in a faded salmon-coloured sack and coat, and uncertain whereabouts to fix either her eyes or her feet. She spoke in a broken, tremulous tone; and at the close of her sentences her words generally lapsed into a horrid whisper, that was absolutely inaudible. After her first exit, the buzzing comment went round the pit generally, She certainly is very pretty; but then how awkward! and what a shocking dresser!—*Critique on her First Appearance.*

We trust that we have too much good sense to attempt painting a picture of Sarah Siddons. In her youth it is said she was beautiful, even lovely, and won men's hearts as *Rosalind*. But beauty is a fading flower; it faded from her face ere one wrinkle had touched that fixed paleness which seldom was tinged with any colour, even in the whirlwind of passion. Light came and went across those finest features at the coming or going of each feeling and thought; but faint was the change of hue ever visible on that glorious marble. It was the magnificent countenance of an animated statue, in the stillness of its idealized beauty instinct with all the emotions of our mortal life. Idealized beauty! Did we not say that beauty had faded from her face? Yes, but it was overspread with a kindred expression, for which we withhold the name only because it seemed more divine, inspiring awe that overpowered while it mingled with delight, more than regal—say rather, immortal. Such an image surely had never before trod, nor ever again will tread, the enchanted floor. In all stateliest shows of waking woe she dwindled the stateliest into insignificance; her majesty made others mean; in her sun-

like light all stars "paled their ineffectual fires." But none knew the troubled grandeur of guilt till they saw her in *Lady Macbeth*, walking in her sleep, and as she wrung her hands, striving in vain to wash from her the engrained murder, "Not all the perfumes of Arabia could sweeten this little hand!" The whisper came as from the hollow grave; and more hideously haunted than ever was the hollow grave, seemed then to be the cell of her heart! Shakspeare's self had learned something then from a sight of Siddons.—*John Wilson.*

Lord Lansdowne mentioned Mrs. Siddons saying one day, when looking over the statues at Lansdowne House, that the first thing that suggested to her the mode of expressing intensity of feeling was the position of some of the Egyptian statues, with the arms close down by the side, and the hands clenched. This implied a more intellectual feeling as to her art than I have ever given Mrs. Siddons credit for.—*T. Moore.*<sup>1</sup>

When Mrs. Siddons, in her spectacles and mob-cap, read "Macbeth" or "King John," it was one of the grandest dramatic achievements that could be imagined, with the least possible admixture of the theatrical element. Mrs. Siddons could lay no claim to versatility; it was not in her nature; she was without mobility of mind, countenance, or manner.—*Fanny Kemble.*

Mrs. Siddons continues (1782) to be the mode, and to be modest and sensible. She declines great dinners, and says her business and the cares of her family take up her whole time. When Lord Carlisle carried her the tribute-money from

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<sup>1</sup> "Had a good deal of conversation with Siddons, and was for the first time in my life interested by her off the stage. She talked of the loss of friends, and mentioned herself as having lost twenty-six friends in the course of the last six years. It is something to *have had* so many. Among other reasons for her regret at leaving the stage was that she always found in it a vent for her private sorrows, which enabled her to bear them better; and often she has got credit for the truth and feeling of her acting when she was doing nothing more than relieving her own heart of its grief. This I have no doubt is true, and there is something particularly touching in it. Rogers has told me that she often complained to him of the great *ennui* she has felt since she quitted her profession. When sitting drearily alone, she has remembered what a moment of excitement it used to be when she was in all the preparation of her toilette to meet a crowded house, and exercise all the sovereignty of her talents over them."—*Moore's "Diary,"* 1828.

Brookes's, he said she was not *maniéré* enough. "I suppose she was graceful?" said my niece, Lady Maria. Mrs. Siddons was desired to play *Medea* and *Lady Macbeth*. "No," she replied; "she did not look on them as female characters." She was questioned about her transactions with Garrick. She said, "He did nothing but put her out; that he told her she moved her right hand when it should have been her left. In short," said she, "I found I must not shade the tip of his nose." Mr. Crauford, too, asked me if I did not think her the best actress I ever saw. I said, "By no means; we old folks were apt to be prejudiced in favour of our first impressions." She is a good figure; handsome enough, though neither nose nor chin according to the Greek standard, beyond which both advance a good deal. Her hair is either red, or she has no objection to its being thought so, and had used red powder. Her voice is clear and good; but I thought she did not vary its modulations enough, nor even approach enough to the familiar; but this may come when more habituated to the awe of the audience of the capital. Her action is proper, but with little variety; when without motion her arms are not genteel.—*Walpole, 1782.*

In support of my theory of the mute eloquence of gait and movement, Charles Young was wont to speak in terms of almost wanton admiration of a bold point he saw Mrs. Siddons once make. In the second scene of the second act of "Coriolanus," an ovation in honour of the victor was introduced. No fewer than two hundred and forty persons marched in stately procession across the stage. In this procession Mrs. Siddons had to walk. Had she been content to follow in the beaten track of those who had gone before her she would have marched across the stage with the solemn, stately, almost funereal step conventional. But at the time—as she often did—she forgot her identity; she was no longer Sarah Siddons, tied down to the directions of the prompter's book: she broke through old traditions; she recollected that she was *Volumnia*, the proud mother of a proud son, and conquering hero. So that, instead of dropping each foot at equi-distance in cadence subservient to the orchestra, deaf to the guidance of her woman's ear, but sensitive to the throbbings of her haughty mother's heart, with flashing eye and proudest smile, and head erect, and hands pressed firmly on her bosom, as if to repress by manual force its triumphant swellings, she towered above

all around her, and almost reeled across the stage, her very soul, as it were, dilating and rioting in its exultations, until her action lost all grace, and yet became so true to nature, so picturesque and so descriptive, that pit and gallery sprang to their feet electrified by the transcendent execution of the conception.—*Life of Charles Mayne Young.*

This actress, like a resistless torrent, has borne down all before her. Her merit, which is certainly very extensive in tragic characters, seems to have swallowed up all remembrance of past and present performers; but as I would not sacrifice the living to the dead, neither would I break down the statues of the honourable deceased to place their successors on their pedestals. The fervour of the public is laudable; I wish it may be lasting, but I hope without that ingratitude to their old servants, which will make their passion for Mrs. Siddons less valuable, as it will convey a warning to her that a new face may possibly erase the impression which she has so anxiously studied to form, and so happily made.—*Davies.*

We think of Mrs. Siddons now not only as the greatest tragic actress of whom there is any trace in living memory, but as a splendid exception to the rules of nature—an artist above her art; one who not only surpassed all others in *degree*, but excelled them in *kind*; which certainly is not the feeling of those who have seen Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Vates, and others, who divided the throne with her in the beginning of her career.—*Talfourd.*

## George Frederick Cooke.

1756–1812.

There is an American life of G. F. Cooke, *Scurra*, deceased, lately published. Such a book!—I believe since “*Drunken Barnaby’s Journal*,” nothing like it has drenched the press. All green-room and tap-room, drams and the drama—brandy, whisky-punch, and *latterly*, toddy, overflow every page. Two things are rather marvellous: first, that a man should live so long drunk, and next that he should have found a sober biographer.—*Byron.*<sup>1</sup>

George Frederick Cooke was once invited by a builder or

<sup>1</sup> Byron thought him the most natural of actors.—ED.



architect of one of the theatres—Elmerton, as I think. He went; and Elmerton being at a loss whom to invite, pitched upon Brandon the box-keeper, to meet him. All went on pretty well until midnight, when George Frederick getting very drunk, his host began to be tired of his company. George took the hint, and his host lighted him downstairs; when Cooke, laying hold of both his ears, shouted, "Have I, George Frederick Cooke, degraded myself by dining with bricklayers to meet box-keepers!" tripped up his heels, and left him sprawling in darkness.—*Charles Lamb.*

On one occasion when Cooke fell under the merited rebuke of a crowded house by a repeated instance of gross intemperance, having vainly tried to recollect the beginning of *Richard's* first soliloquy, he tottered forward with a cunning yet maudlin intent to divert the indignation expressed into a false channel; and laying his hand impressively on his chest to insinuate that illness was the only cause of his failure, with up-turned eyes supplicating all the sympathy of his audience, he hiccuped out the unlucky words, "*My old complaint!*" which was applied so aptly, that a simultaneous burst of derisive laughter followed "the weak invention," and renewed hisses at length dismissed him from the stage for the night.<sup>1</sup>—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

Few actors were more popular in their day than George Frederick Cooke, whose very errors excited an additional interest to behold him in his favourite characters. Mr. Cooke was an instance of the advantage of an actor undergoing stage discipline in the country before he assumes the highest walk of the drama on the metropolitan boards. He played in London, was unnoticed, and then went the round of the country theatres. Twenty years afterwards he returned to town, a theatrical star of the first magnitude. Mr. Cooke used to say that the highest compliment he ever received on the stage was at York, when he portrayed the base duplicity of *Iago*, that he

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<sup>1</sup> Cooke seems to have pretty often taken very extraordinary liberties with his audiences. Acting once at Liverpool, he was hissed for being so far drunk as to render his declamation unintelligible. He turned savagely upon the people. "What! do you hiss me!—hiss George Frederick Cooke! you contemptible money-getters! You shall never again have the honour of hissing me! Farewell! I banish you." After a moment's pause, he added, in his deepest tones, "*There is not a brick in your dirty town but what is cemented by the blood of a negro!*"—ED.

was hissed amid cries of "What a villain!" Cooke's *Iago* was always considered an unrivalled performance.—*Percy Anecdotes*.

His figure and face are much more adapted to the villain than the lover. His countenance, particularly when dressed for *Richard*, is somewhat like Kemble's, the nose and chin being very prominent features, but the face is not so long. He has a finely marked eye, and upon the whole, I think, a very fine face. His voice is extremely powerful, and he has one of the clearest rants I ever heard. The most striking fault in his figure is his arms, which are remarkably short and ill-proportioned to the rest of his body, and in his walk this gives him a very ungraceful appearance. He is one of the most intelligent men and agreeable companions I ever met with, and I think myself extremely fortunate in getting into the same house with him.—*Charles Mathews*.

Cooke has brought a mine of wealth to Covent Garden. He is a curious actor; often great, often surprising, with some whimsical defects that act as a foil to his excellencies.—*John Litchfield*.

Cooke performed *Falstaff* like an old lurching sharper. He was shrewd and sarcastic, but wanted easy flowing humour.—*J. Taylor*.<sup>1</sup>

To Covent Garden Cooke was an accession of great value: he was a *Shylock*, an *Iago*, a *Kitely*, a *Sir Archy*, and a *Sir Pertinax*. He was formed for the sarcastic; like Macklin, his features and his utterance were only harmonious in discord. He was an admirable *Sir Giles Overreach*, a character in which Massinger is very close indeed to the power of Shakspeare. I forget whether he played *Luke* in that author's "City Madam;" but the hard, insolent irony of that masterpiece would have sat upon him without a sign of effort. Our drama does not afford many specimens of the kind I mean. It was not sturdy or unceremonious virtue that Cooke excelled in; the sarcasm must be malignant to suit him perfectly. He was an Apemantus, not a Kent.—*Boaden*.

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<sup>1</sup> John Taylor was the son of the Chevalier Taylor, a man notorious in his day as a travelling quack. Taylor was a journalist and dramatic author. His "Monsieur Tonson" is still remembered for its humour. His first wife and Mrs. Stephen Kemble were sisters. Through this he lived on terms of intimacy with the Kemble family. He was for a long time proprietor of the *Sun* newspaper. He died 1832.—ED.

The best *Richard* since Garrick, and who has not been surpassed even by Edmund Kean. Cooke had seen Garrick, and this was no doubt much to his advantage. I thought Edmund Kean inferior to him in *Lear*, but in *Sir Giles Overreach* superior, particularly in the last scene. I was told by Bannister that Cooke's *Falstaff* was much below Henderson's, but it certainly was much above any other *Falstaff* I ever saw; and his *MacSycophant* and *MacSarcasm* were perfection. I think of him always with particular interest, not only as one of the very few *really* great tragic actors I have seen, but as the cause of my coming to England. I dined once in company with him at the fish-house on the banks of the Schuylkill, with a club of gentlemen, who in the summer months resorted there to fish. Cooke's manners when sober were perfect, and I came away before he got drunk.<sup>1</sup>—*Leslie*, "Autobiography."

On the night that the King commanded this comedy, he asked Mr. Harris whether it were true that Cooke intended to perform the *King of Denmark*. The manager replying in the affirmative, his Majesty hastened away, observing, "Won't do, won't do. Lord Thurlow might as well play *Hamlet*." The King was right, and the *Prince* failed *in toto*. When Cooke once performed this part in Ireland, he sharpened his sword in the green-room, saying, "I and Mr. Laertes will to-night in reality settle our little disputes," which alarming threat reaching the menaced actor's ears, at the commencement of the fencing match the son of Polonius, seizing *Hamlet* with both hands by the collar, threw him on his back, and triumphantly put his knee on him.—*F. Reynolds*.

When the tragedian was intoxicated he was overbearing, noisy, and insufferably egotistical, asking questions and answering them himself, thus:—"Who am I, sir? George Frederick Cooke, sir. *What* am I, sir? *The* tragedian: *not* Black Jack, sir." Cooke married a Miss Daniells. Influenced by jealousy he locked her up in a garret, and in a drunken fit, forgetting everything, absented himself from home; his lady

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<sup>1</sup> "In early life he was apprenticed to a printer, but his attention to theatricals so absorbed his mind that his master soon had his indentures cancelled. He then tried the navy, with no better success. After the usual probation he became a star at the larger provincial theatres, and was at length engaged at Dublin for three years. There his fame travelled to London, and in October, 1800, he made his appearance at Covent Garden."  
—*Memoir*.

was in danger of starvation—no one was in the house but the prisoner—her cries at length were heard in the street, and by means of a ladder she was released. She was wise enough not to incur the danger a second time, and obtained a divorce. At certain times Cooke was as mad as any inmate of Bedlam or St. Luke's. In one of his quarrels a common soldier declined fighting with him because he (C.) was rich, and the persons present would, he affirmed, favour him. "Look ye here, sir," said Cooke, "all I possess in the world is here, 35*0*l.," and he thrust the bank notes into the fire, and held the poker upon them until they were consumed. "Now I am a beggar, sir; will you fight me now?"—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

I saw Kemble play *Sir Giles Overreach* (the *Richard III.* of middling life) last night; but he came not within a hundred miles of Cooke, whose terrible visage, and short, abrupt, and savage utterance, gave a reality almost to that extraordinary scene in which he boasts of his own successful villainy to a nobleman of worth and honour, of whose alliance he is ambitious. Cooke somehow contrived to impress upon the audience the idea of such a monster of enormity as had learnt to pique himself even upon his own atrocious character. But Kemble was too handsome, too plausible, and too smooth.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Among the Covent Garden actors must not be forgotten Cooke, who came out there in *Richard III.* For some time he was the greatest performer of this and a few other characters. He was a new kind of Macklin, and like him excelled in *Shylock* and *Sir Archy MacSarcasm*; a confined actor, and a wayward man, but highly impressive in what he could do. His artful villains have been found fault with for looking too artful and villainous; but men of that stamp are apt to look so. The art of hiding is a considerable one; but habit will betray it after all, and stand foremost in the countenance. They who think otherwise are only too dull to see it. Besides, Cooke had generally to represent bold-faced, aspiring art, and to hug himself in its triumph. This he did with such a gloating countenance, as if villainy was pure luxury in him, and with such a soft inward retreating of his voice—a wrapping up of himself, as it were, in velvet—so different from his ordinary rough way, that sometimes one could almost have wished to abuse him.—*Leigh Hunt.*

## John Philip Kemble.

1757-1823.

Died, near Lausanne, on the 26th of February, J. P. Kemble, Esq., in his sixty-sixth year. On the 24th it appears he rose well, and went to an adjoining room to speak to Mrs. Kemble, and then returning to his room was observed to totter in his gait. Mrs. Kemble noticed this and assisted him to his chair, but getting worse Dr. Schole was sent for, who found him in the position described, but already altered and exhibiting very unfavourable symptoms—his left side had suffered a decided attack, and he could with difficulty articulate. He seemed extremely anxious to spare the feelings of Mrs. Kemble. Dr. Schole, with the assistance of his old attached servant, George, helped him to his bed, and in the act of conducting him there, a second attack took place, so suddenly that his clothes were obliged to be cut asunder, in order that he might the more speedily be let blood. But nature was fast exhausting; nor could he ever make use of his speech after a few words which he had uttered on Dr. Schole's arrival. He, however, assented or dissented by signs of the head until within two hours of his complete extinction. His last intelligible words were "George, George." In fine, a third attack, on Wednesday the 26th, just forty-eight hours after the first, proved fatal: though to a stranger he might appear to suffer, it is the opinion of the doctor that he was long insensible to the acute feelings of pain. He had imagined that the climate of Italy would prove beneficial to his health; but having arrived in Rome three months before under unfavourable circumstances of the season, he became worse and worse, so that the English physician, Dr. Clarke, hurried him away to return to Lausanne, where he had been comparatively well. His occupations were his books and his garden—the latter was his predilection; it was resorted to by him with the first rays of the sun, and kept in a state of cultivation rarely to be surpassed. He was the eldest son of Mr. Roger Kemble, and was born in 1757, at Prescott, in Lancashire. He received the first part of his education at the Roman Catholic seminary at Sedgeley Park, in Staffordshire, and was afterwards sent to the University of Douay to be qualified for one of the learned professions. Here he soon became distinguished for that talent for elocution which afterwards raised him to

such eminence. Having finished his academical studies he returned to England, and, preferring the stage to either of the professions for which he had been intended, he performed at Liverpool, York, and Edinburgh. While at York, Mr. Kemble introduced a new species of entertainment, consisting of recitations of some of the Odes of Mason, Collins, and Gray; the tales of Le Fevre and Maria, from Sterne; and other popular pieces in prose and verse. In these he was particularly successful, and they contributed to increase his reputation. In Edinburgh he delivered a lecture of his own composition, on Sacred and Profane Oratory, which, from the talent and sound criticism it displayed, gained him the reputation of refined taste among men of letters. He afterwards performed for two years with flattering success in Dublin. Mr. Kemble made his first appearance in London, at Drury Lane Theatre, in the character of *Hamlet*, September 30th, 1783. His reception was most encouraging, but he had not an opportunity of fully developing his powers till the retirement of Mr. Smith, in 1788, who had been in possession of almost all the principal parts both in tragedy and comedy. On the secession of Mr. King, Mr. Kemble became manager of Drury Lane Theatre, which office he filled till 1796. Shortly afterwards he resumed the management, and held it till the conclusion of the season 1800-1. In 1802 Mr. Kemble visited the Continent, for the purpose of introducing to the British stage whatever he might find worthy of adoption in foreign theatres. He spent a twelvemonth at Paris and Madrid, where he was honoured with that marked consideration which his eminent talents merited. On his return he purchased a sixth part of the property of Covent Garden Patent, and became manager of that theatre, which situation he filled till a season or two before his retirement. During his management in London Mr. Kemble revived several pieces of merit, and adapted many of our immortal bard's productions to the taste of modern times. He was also the author of "*Belisarius*," a tragedy which was acted at Hull in 1778, but never printed; the "*Female Officer*," a farce, acted at York in 1779, not printed; "*O! It's Impossible!*" (altered from the "*Comedy of Errors*"), a comedy performed at York, 1780, this was also never printed; the "*Pannel*," a farce taken from Bickerstaff's "*'Tis Well it's no Worse*;" "*The Farm House*," a comedy; "*Love in Many Masks*," a comedy; "*Lo-doiska*," a musical romance; "*Celadon and Florimel*," a

comedy, which has not been printed. Mr. Kemble also published, about the year 1780, a small collection of verses, under the title of "Fugitive Pieces." They were juvenile productions, and it is said that the very day after their publication he was so discontented with them when in print that he destroyed every copy he could procure; some few, however, escaped the general immolation, and one of them, at a sale a few years since, fetched 3*l.* 5*s.* Of Mr. Kemble, as an actor, most have been able to form their own estimate. In private life he was a scholar and a gentleman.—*Memoir at the time of his Death.*

The most supernatural of actors.—*Byron.*<sup>1</sup>

This great actor, and amiable and accomplished man, left the stage in 1816, and died the 26th of February, 1823, at Lausanne. In his own day he had no competitor in any walk of tragedy; and those (of whom I knew several) who remembered Barry, Mossop, Henderson, and Garrick, admitted that in characters of high tragic dignity, such as *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *Alexander*, *Cato*, he excelled all his predecessors almost as much as his sister did all actresses in the female characters of the same heroic class. I never saw any that approached to either. She, it is agreed, was never excelled, and he by Garrick alone, and by Garrick only in his universality. In such characters as I have mentioned, those who had seen both preferred Kemble, whose countenance and figure were both suited to those parts.—*J. W. Croker, "Boswell's Johnson."*

Kemble was unpopular with all but the aristocratic portion of his audience, to whom exclusively he was accused of paying court. He is said to have been proud and authoritative in his bearing towards others, and to have given disgust by the affectation which was exhibited in his manners, language, and even in his acting. An amusing instance of this was shown in the obstinacy with which he contended that the word *ache* should be pronounced as it is written, *aitche*, and in the pertinacity with which he held himself to that pronunciation.—*Thomas Wright, "Caricature History."*

Is it not also much to recollect Kemble, when he too was after the high Roman fashion, and the last of the Romans? Some persons begin now to praise him for his classical and

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<sup>1</sup> "Was not *Iago* perfection?" wrote Byron, "particularly the last look. I was close to him, and never saw an English countenance half so expressive."—*Life of Byron.*

erudite performance of certain characters, as though he had been denied the power of touching the tenderer sympathies of our natures; but who has seen him in the *Stranger* or *Penruddock* and not shed tears from the deepest sources? His tenderly putting away the son of his treacherous friend, and inconstant, but unhappy mistress, examining his countenance, and then exclaiming, in a voice which developed a thousand mysterious feelings, "You are very like your mother," was sufficient to stamp his excellence in the pathetic line of acting. But in this respect Mrs. Siddons was a disadvantage to him. I enter into no comparison between their merits; but it would have been fair to remember that the sorrows of a woman formed to be admired and revered are in general more touching, more softening, than those of a warrior, a philosopher, or a statesman. I always saw him with pain descend to the *Stranger*. It was like the genius in the Arabian tale going into the vase. First, it seemed so unlikely *he* should meet with such an affront, and this injured the probability of the piece; and next, the *Stranger* is really never dignified, and one is always in pain for him, poor gentleman!—*Mrs. R. Trench*, 1822, "*Remains*."

No man could deliver brilliant dialogue—the dialogue of Congreve or of Wycherly—because none understood it half so well as John Kemble. His *Valentine*, in "Love for Love," was, to my recollection, faultless. He flagged sometimes in the intervals of tragic passion; he would slumber over the level parts of an heroic character; his *Macbeth* has been known to nod. But he always seemed to me to be particularly alive to pointed and witty dialogue. The relaxing levities of tragedy have not been touched by any since him. The playful court-bred spirit in which he condescended to the players in *Hamlet*, the sportive relief which he threw into the darker shades of *Richard*, disappeared with him. He had his sluggish moods, his torpors, but they were the halting-stones and resting-places of his tragedy, politic savings and fetches of the breath, husbandry of the lungs, where nature pointed him to be an economist, rather, I think, than errors of judgment.—*Charles Lamb*.

The daughter of a nobleman is said to have discovered a strong passion for Mr. Kemble, which induced the father to send to him, and after stating the circumstance, he observed that effectual means were taken to prevent an union between



Mr. Kemble and his daughter, should they mutually wish it. He then proposed to Mr. Kemble that if he would relieve him from the duty of being a sentinel over his daughter by marrying some other lady, he would present him with 4000*l.*; but that it must be done within a fortnight. Mr. Kemble consented, and married Mrs. Brereton; but it is said the noble lord did not keep his promise, and that Mr. Kemble never received a shilling from him.—*Life of Kemble*, 1828.

John Kemble was often very amusing when he had had a good deal of wine. He and two friends were returning to town in an open carriage from the Priory (Lord Abercorn's), where they had dined; and as they were waiting for change at a toll-gate, Kemble, to the amazement of the toll-keeper, called out in the tone of *Rolla*,<sup>1</sup> "We seek no *change*; and least of all such *change* as he would bring us!" When Kemble was living at Lausanne, he used to feel rather jealous of Mont Blanc; he disliked to hear people always asking, "How does Mont Blanc look this morning?"—*S. Rogers's "Table Talk."*

Fair as some classic dome,  
Robust and richly graced,  
Your Kemble's spirit was the home  
Of Genius and of Taste—

Taste like the silent dial's power,  
That when supernal light is given,  
Can measure inspiration's hour,  
And tell its height in heaven.

At once ennobled and correct,  
His mind surveyed the tragic page,  
And what the Actor could effect,  
The Scholar could presage.<sup>2</sup>

*Thomas Campbell.*

<sup>1</sup> "Sheridan's translation of the 'Death of Rolla,'" wrote Mrs. Trench, "under the name of 'Pizarro,' has brought him 5000*l.* per week for five weeks. The sentiments of loyalty uttered by *Rolla* are supposed to have had so good an effect, that on the Duke of Queensberry's asking why the stocks had fallen, a stockjobber replied, 'Because at Drury Lane they had left off acting 'Pizarro.'"—*Memoirs*.

<sup>2</sup> Not always. He once designed to play *Machath* in the "Beggars' Opera," a part about as much suited for him as *Isaac Mendoza* in the "Duenna," and it is notorious he played *Charles Surface* in the "School for Scandal" against the advice of every one competent to advise, until

When Kemble was appointed stage-manager of Drury Lane, his fine classical taste and judgment saw at once the ridiculous costume handed down from the days of Shakspeare and Garrick—such as a stiff-skirted coat for *Othello*, breeches, waistcoat, black face, white full-bottomed wig, and three-cocked hat. He accordingly searched the engravings and paintings of former ages, and had the historical drama dressed in the proper costume of its period. This great benefit to the legitimate works of the country must be ascribed to John Kemble, and to no other.<sup>1</sup>—*Donaldson's "Recollections."*

The theatre opened for the after-season on Monday, May 25 (1795), with "Hamlet" and the "Village Lawyer;" *Hamlet* Mr. Kemble, his first appearance these six years; and if twenty guineas had been offered for a ticket or a place in the boxes, it could not have been purchased. In all my life I never saw people more anxious to get into a theatre. Every avenue was crowded at an early hour; and after the theatre was filled, I may safely assert many hundreds went away. Kemble's reception was quite rapturous; every one seemed delighted—those who had seen him, at the return of their former favourite, and those who had not seen him, at his figure and appearance. The applause was continued to six or seven peals. Being out of the play, I went in front, and never had so great a treat. His *Hamlet* certainly must be ranked as one of his best parts. In the scene with *Rosencrantz* and *Guildestern*, after the play, it is customary with other actors, when performing that character, to address themselves entirely to *Guildestern*—"Can you play upon this pipe?" But Kemble, after speaking to him, and "entreating," turns to *Rosencrantz*—"Can you?" when standing between them, and alternately surveying them with scorn, he addresses them: "How poor a thing," &c. This, however trifling the alteration may appear, has a much

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laughed out of it by being asked, "Mr. Kemble, you have long given us *Charles's martyrdom*; when shall we have his *restoration*?"—ED.

<sup>1</sup> In Garrick's time *Macbeth* wore a suit of black silk, with silk stockings and shoes, buckles at the knees and feet, a full-bottomed wig, and a sword. The anomaly, however, seems to disappear, when we read that in 1770 a well-dressed gentleman wore a mixed silk coat, pink satin waistcoat, breeches covered with silver net, white silk stockings with pink clocks, pink satin shoes and pearl buckles, high hair, well powdered and stuffed with pearl pins, and a mushroom-coloured stock covered with point lace.—ED.

better effect than addressing only one, as it disposes the three figures better.—*Charles Mathews.*

In January, 1777, they drank tea and supped at Mrs. Siddons's; there Mrs. Inchbald first saw her brother, Mr. Kemble, who seems to have been pleased with his new acquaintances. . . . He was now in his twentieth year, his countenance remarkably striking, his figure, though muscular, slender; he greatly exceeded the usual measure of learning among young men, was very domestic in his habits, and fond of a friendly fireside. . . . Mrs. Inchbald seems to have paid him the homage of a very particular study as a character out of the common road, and consequently in some danger of losing his way; for as to the powers of his genius, perhaps they needed the brilliant success of his sister to warm them to their full expansion, and prepare the public for a style of acting somewhat scholastic and systematic.—*Boaden's "Life of Inchbald."*

Kemble came into a part with a stately dignity, as if he disdained to listen to nature, however she might whisper, until he had examined and weighed the value of her counsel.—*B. R. Haydon.*

I like him equally well with Cooke, but I think it is hardly right to draw a comparison between them, as the line of characters they each excel in is quite different. Kemble could not play *Sir Pertinax* like Cooke, nor could the latter play *Pierre* or *Coriolanus* like Kemble.—*C. R. Leslie.*

Of Kemble I must say that in several characters, particularly in those of the Roman and the Misanthrope, he was unquestionably the finest actor I ever saw, and off the stage his unaffected simplicity of manner rendered him most pleasing and entertaining. One instance of this simplicity I well remember. Meeting him at a dinner in the city, not long after he had performed *Charles* in the "School for Scandal," when our flattering host, asserting that this character had been lost to the stage since the days of Smith, added that Kemble's performance of it should be considered as *Charles's Restoration*, to this a less complimentary guest replied, in an undertone, that in his opinion this performance should rather be considered as *Charles's Martyrdom*. Our witty critic, however, did not speak so low but that the great tragedian heard him; when, to our surprise and amusement, instead of manifesting indignation, he smiled and said, "Well now, that gentleman is not altogether singular in his opinion. A few months ago, having taken a glass

too much, I inadvertently quarrelled with a gentleman in the street. This gentleman called on me the following morning for an explanation. 'Sir,' said I, 'when I commit an error, I am always ready to atone for it; and if you will only name any reasonable reparation in my power—' 'Sir,' interrupted the gentleman, 'at once I meet your proposal, and name one. Solemnly promise, in the presence of this my friend, that you will never play *Charles Surface* again, and I am perfectly satisfied.' Well, I did promise, not from *nervosity*, as you may suppose, gentlemen; but because, though Sheridan was pleased to say that he liked me in the part, I certainly did not like myself in it; no, no more than that gentleman who has just done me the favour to call it *Charles's Martyrdom*."—*F. Reynolds*.

Mr. Kemble did not, like his sister, burst on the town in the full maturity of his powers. He was a gentleman and a scholar, with signal advantages of person, and with almost equal defects of voice, who determined to become a noble actor, and who succeeded by infinite perseverance and care, assisted doubtless by the reputation and the influence of Mrs. Siddons. He formed a high standard in his own mind, and gradually rose to its level. At his very last, in all characters which were within the scope of his physical capacity, he played his best, and that best seemed absolute perfection. His career, therefore, may be reviewed with that calm and increasing pleasure, with which we contemplate the progressive advances of art; instead of the feverish admiration and disappointment which are alternately excited by the history of those who have played from impulse in the first vigour of youth, and in after-days have been compelled languidly to retrace the vestiges of their early genius. At first he had but a limited choice of characters; he was opposed by Henderson, to whom he was then unequal, and rivalled by Smith, who held possession of the chief parts in tragedy as well as comedy till he left the stage. For a long time, Holman and even Pope divided public favour with him; but the seeds of greatness were deeply implanted in his nature, and the determination to cultivate and mature them. Even after he became manager and obtained an uneasy and invidious power, there were not wanting accidents to retard his progress. Cooke, in spite of his imprudences, perhaps by the aid of some of them, beat him on his stage in the estimation of the vulgar; Master Betty obscured

him for a season; and the O. P.<sup>1</sup> disturbance, ungenerously begun by the people, and imprudently resisted by the managers, set him in painful opposition to the town, and fretted the haughty spirit which it could not subdue. But resolution prevailed; he went on calmly studying the principles of his art, and succeeded at last in presenting the stateliest pictures of

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<sup>1</sup> Covent Garden Theatre was burned on September 19th, 1808, and was now in rapid progress of rebuilding. Its re-opening led to the most extraordinary theatrical riots that this country ever witnessed. Immediately after the destruction of the theatre Kemble solicited a subscription to rebuild it, which was speedily filled up, the Duke of Northumberland contributing ten thousand pounds. The first stone of the new building was laid by the Prince of Wales on the last day of the year 1808, and it was completed with such rapidity that on the 18th of September, 1809, it was opened with "Macbeth," Kemble himself appearing in the character of *Macbeth*. In the new arrangement a row of private boxes formed the third tier under the gallery. The furniture of each box and of the adjoining room was to be according to the taste of the several occupants. To make these extraordinary accommodations for the great the comforts of the rest of the audience were considerably diminished. To crown all, the theatre opened with an increase of the prices, the pit being raised from 3s. 6d. to 4s., and the boxes from 6s. to 7s. The manager said that this was necessary to cover the great expense of rebuilding the theatre; but the public declared that the old prices were sufficient, and that the new ones were a mere exaction to enable Kemble to pay enormous salaries to foreigners like Madame Catalani (who had been engaged at 150*l.* a week to perform two nights only). On the first night of representation, which was Monday, the curtain drew up to a crowded theatre, and the audience seemed to be lost in admiration at the beauty of the decorations until Kemble made his appearance on the stage. A faint attempt at applause got up by his own friends was in an instant drowned by an overpowering noise of groans, hisses, yells, which drove him from the stage. Mrs. Siddons then came forward, but met with no better reception. Kemble had declared he would not give in to the popular clamour, but the next night and the nights following it was continued with greater fury. On Wednesday night the manager came forward to address the audience, and attempted to make a justification of his conduct, which was not accepted. On Friday he presented himself again, and proposed that the decision of the dispute should be put to a committee composed of the Governor of the Bank of England, the Attorney-General, and others. On Saturday night this was agreed to, and the theatre was shut up until the decision was obtained, the obnoxious Catalani having in the meantime agreed to cancel her engagement. On the Wednesday following the theatre was re-opened, but the report of the committee being of a very unsatisfactory kind, the uproar became greater than ever. The manager is said to have hired a great number of boxers, and on the Friday night following, the various fights in the pit gave it the appearance of a boxing-school. During this period everything distinguished by the epithet O. P. (old prices) became fashionable. There was an O. P. Dance. Finding it utterly impossible

Roman greatness, and giving the most appropriate expression to philosophic thought, that it had entered into modern imagination to conceive.<sup>1</sup>—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1825.

Kemble has no *déshabille* talent, if I may coin the phrase. Away from the lamps he was a mere private gentleman, and to most persons must have appeared an exceedingly dull one. His mind was not obtuse, but his extreme slowness gave him all the appearance of obtusity. In allusion to his asthma, he was wont to say that no one else of his family knew the misery of “drawing on their own chest, and finding the cheque dishonoured.” Kemble and Henderson were both subject at times to profound melancholy; Kean gave way to despondency, but that his habits sufficiently accounted for; with his two great predecessors the feeling seemed to be “a part of them and of their natures.”—*Records of a Veteran*.

He seems to me always to play best those characters in which there is a predominating tinge of some over-mastering passion, or acquired habit of acting and speaking, colouring the whole man. The patrician pride of *Coriolanus*, the stoicism of *Brutus* and *Cato*, the rapid and hurried vehemence of *Hotspur*, mark the class of characters I mean. But he fails where a ready and pliable yielding to the events and passions of life

to appease the rioters in any other way, Kemble gave in to them. A public dinner was held, at which no less than five hundred people attended, and Kemble came in person to make an apology for his conduct. After dinner there was a crowded theatre, and amid considerable uproar a humble apology was accepted from the manager. After their demands had been complied with, a large placard was unfurled, containing the words, “We are satisfied.” Thus ended this extraordinary contest.—*Wright’s “Caricature History,” Abridged*.

<sup>1</sup> Emery, Cooke, and Incedon were once overheard speaking of Kemble. A fragment of their conversation is preserved:

“*Emery*. ‘He has no natur; not a bit. But then he never wur the feyther of a child, and that accounts for it.’

“*Cooke*. ‘With the voice of an emasculated French horn, and the face of an itinerant Israelite, he would compete with me, sir; me—George Frederick Cooke! Wanted me to play *Horatio* to his *Hamlet*, sir! Let *him* play *Sir Pertinax*, that’s all. I would like to hear him attempt the dialect.’

“*Incedon*. ‘Attempt! The fact is, my dear boys, he’d attempt anything.’ Here Incedon illustrated some of Kemble’s attempts in a way the reader must imagine, and wound it up by saying, ‘and, lastly, he actually attempted to sing, d— me, in the presence of the *national* singer of England, Charles Incedon; d— me!’”

makes what may be termed a more natural personage. Accordingly, I think his *Macbeth*, *Lear*, and especially his *Richard*, inferior in spirit and truth. In *Hamlet* the natural fixed melancholy of the prince places him within Kemble's range; yet many delicate and sudden turns of passion slip through his fingers. He is a lordly vessel, goodly and magnificent when going large before the wind, but wanting the facility to go "ready about," so that he is sometimes among the breakers before he can wear ship. Yet we lose in him an excellent critic, an accomplished scholar, and one who graced our forlorn drama with what little it has left of good sense and gentlemanlike feeling.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Kemble was a cultivated man, but a poor creature when he put pen to paper, or otherwise had to bring out anything of mind.—*T. Moore.*<sup>1</sup>

I went as I promised to see the new *Hamlet*, whose provincial fame had excited your curiosity as well as mine. There has not been such a first appearance since yours; yet nature, though she has been bountiful to him in figure and features, has denied him a voice. Now and then he was as deliberate in his delivery as if he had been reading prayers, and had waited for the responses. He is a very handsome man, almost tall, and almost large, with features of a sensible, but fixed and tragic cast. His action is graceful, though somewhat formal—which you will find it hard to believe, yet it is true. Very careful study appears in all he says and all he does; but there is more singularity and ingenuity than simplicity and fire. Upon the whole he strikes me rather as a finished French performer than as a varied and vigorous English actor.—*Richard Sharp, to Henderson, the Actor, 1785.*

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<sup>1</sup> "One night, when John Kemble was performing at some country theatre one of his most favourite parts, he was much interrupted, from time to time, by the squalling of a young child in one of the galleries. At length, angered by this rival performance, Kemble walked with solemn step to the front of the stage, and addressing the audience in his most tragic tones, said, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, unless the play is stopped, the child cannot possibly go on.' The effect on the audience of this earnest interference in favour of the child may be conceived."—*T. Moore.*

Stephen Kemble.<sup>1</sup>

1758-1822.

The countenance of Mr. Stephen Kemble was certainly handsome, though not dark, like that of his elder brother. But his figure was encumbered with flesh; there was nothing of the heroic in his proportion. But had he personated Achilles, and shouted at the door of his tent, he had equally struck a terror through the army, and probably the whole city of Troy. He appeared on the 24th of September, 1783, at Covent Garden Theatre, in the character of *Othello*, and thus by blacking his face parted with his only agreeable distinction. But he had nothing of the noble and discriminating character of his family—at least, it did not enter into his acting. He was a man of sense, and even of some literary attainments; but his declamation was coarse and noisy, and his vehement passion was too ungovernable for sympathy.—*Boaden*.

Stephen Kemble, who died in Durham, conducted the Sunderland circuit for years, and was also manager of the Glasgow Theatre. His *Falstaff* was an attraction; for this gross character he could act without stuffing. There were others, too, he appeared in, such as *Othello* and *Hamlet*. An

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<sup>1</sup> Of Mrs. Stephen Kemble, a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1832, said:—"There were few more delightful actresses in her day. In speaking she had a clear silver voice, 'most musical, most melancholy' (though she was not a little of a vixen, and in pure spite once almost bit a piece out of the shoulder of Henry Johnston, in *Young Norval*, while bending over 'my beautiful, my brave,' in the maternal character of *Lady-Randolph*), and she sung with the sweetest pathos. From many fair eyes now shut have we seen her *Ophelia* draw tears in the mad scene, and she was a delicious *Juliet*, and an altogether incomparable *Yarico*. Not so lovely as the fair O'Neill, nor so romantic, for she had borne children; but her eyes had far more of that unconsciously alluring expression of innocence and voluptuousness which must have shown through the long fringes of the large laming orbs (*sic*) of the fond Italian girl who at fourteen was a bride, and but for that fatal sleeping draught, ere fifteen would have been a mother. In *Catherine*, again, we have more than once been delighted to see her play the devil. To her it was not every man, we can assure you, that was able to be a *Petruchio*. In all the parts she played she was impassioned; and all good judges who remember her will agree with us in thinking that she was an actress, not only of talent but of genius." Her maiden name was Satchell. Boaden is enthusiastic in her praise. See "Life of Siddons," pp. 214, 215, vol. i.—Ed.



engraving is still in existence of Stephen Kemble in the *Prince of Denmark*, in an old-fashioned black coat, breeches, vest, shoes, buckles, and a large flowing auburn wig. I am not in possession of his costume for *Othello*, but should imagine from this that he dressed the noble Moor much as Garrick was in the habit of doing—coat, breeches, and a white judge's wig. He selected white as it matched his complexion. What ideas they had of costume in those days! In 1815, in Scotland, I have seen *Macbeth* dressed in an officer's red coat, sash, blue pants, Hessian boots, and a cocked hat. Stephen Kemble personated *Othello* one night in the Glasgow Theatre, and a circumstance occurred in the last scene which turned the tragedy into a comedy. When the bed of *Desdemona* was arranged, the property man, being a new hand, and in eager anxiety to have everything right and proper, fit for a *chambre accouché*, placed something under the bed which is always dispensed with. The curtain drew up and Kemble entered, speaking the soliloquy, "My soul, it is the cause, it is the cause!" A tittering took place, and then a laugh. Stephen Kemble stopped, looked around, and perceiving the cause of the hilarity, rushed off the stage, seized the unlucky property man by the neck as he would *Iago*, and roared out, "Villain! villain!" The terrified wretch cried, "Oh, sir, pardon me! I assure you I couldn't get the loan of a white one anywhere."—"*Recollections of an Actor*," *Donaldson*.

Stephen Kemble was born immediately after the conclusion of the performance of Shakspeare's "Henry VIII.," in a small temporary theatre at Kingstown, Herefordshire, his mother having enacted *Anna Bullen* that night; and Stephen was ushered into existence at the very period when, according to the play, the *Princess Elizabeth* is supposed to be born.<sup>1</sup> Stephen married Miss Satchell, and their son Harry followed the dramatic fortunes of his father, for Mrs. S. Kemble was confined within two hours of her having performed *Yarico* at the Haymarket Theatre. Mr. Stephen Kemble, whose obesity unfitted him for the stage, was an actor of great talent, and an amiable man. On one occasion he offended Incedon, who having exhausted his memory for some tangible cause for

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<sup>1</sup> This is as good as the Militia Captain, who exclaimed: "Talk of coincidences! Why, sir, on the very day that Napoleon escaped from St. Helena I marched at the head of my regiment to Wormwood Scrubs!"—ED.

reprehension, at last said, "In fact, no good can be expected of a fat fellow who—*never was shaved in his life!*" Stephen had no beard.—*Records of a Veteran.*

Stephen Kemble has a soul under that load of fat, which soul *will* ooze out; but John's is barred up by his ribs, a prisoner to his prudence.—*Edmund Kean.*

Stop—we had forgotten Stephen the Fat, who used to play *Falstaff*. He had a fine face of his own, but that boundless belly spoiled everything. Yet we have seen him enact *Hamlet* for his own benefit.

"Oh that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!"

was a wish that, if granted, had drowned the pit. Had he been a slim youth, he had been a capital actor, and could have played well *Ranger* or *Young Norval*. For Stephen Kemble was a man of excellent talents, and taste too; and we have a volume of his poems, presented to ourselves one evening after the play in the Shades at Whitehaven, in which there is considerable powers of language, and no deficiency either of feeling or of fancy. He had humour if not wit, and was a pleasant companion and worthy man. He was among the best of our provincial managers.—*John Wilson.*

In talking about Stephen Kemble, whose sole qualification for acting *Falstaff* was his being able to do it without stuffing, Luttrell<sup>1</sup> said, "The most difficult character I know to act without stuffing is a fillet of veal! I have seen it attempted, but it failed."—*Moore's "Diary,"* 1824.

One of the great Histrionic Dynasty, Stephen Kemble, has lately amused the town by his performance of *Falstaff*. He exhibited the humours of the jovial knight with skill enough to make the audience laugh. But he was perhaps the first actor who ever played the *fat* knight to the life. His remarkable corpulence qualified him to play the character without stuffing. The good humour of his visage was fully equalled by the pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Luttrell was a well-known wit, a regular *habitué* of Holland House, and popular as a *talker*, in days when the power of conversing well could confer fame. Lady Blessington probably paid him a just compliment when she said, "The conversation of Mr. Luttrell makes me think, while that of many others only amuses me." He died in 1851, in the eighty-first year of his age. He printed several performances, but nothing survives him.—ED.

tubérance of his stomach ; and if the “*totus in se teres atque rotundus*” of Horace, is the poet’s definition of a good man, the actor rose to the summit of human virtue. The best prologue since the days of Garrick ushered in this singular performance :—

“ A *Falstaff* here to-night by nature made,  
Lends to your favourite bard his ponderous aid.  
No man in buckram he : no stuffing gear—  
No featherbed, nor e’en a pillow here !  
But all good honest flesh and blood and bone,  
And weighing, more or less, some *thirty* stone.  
Upon the northern coast by chance we caught him,  
And hither in a broad-wheel’d waggon brought him ;  
For in a chaise the varlet ne’er could enter,  
And no mail-coach on such a fare would venture.  
Blest with unwieldiness, at least his size  
Will favour find in every critic’s eyes.  
And should his humours and his mimic art  
Bear due proportion to his outer part,  
As once ’twas said of Macklin in the Jew,  
‘ This is the very *Falstaff* Shakspeare drew.’ ”

*Recollections of a Lover of Society.*<sup>1</sup>

## Richard Suett.

1758–1805.

Shakspeare foresaw him when he framed his fools and jesters. They have all the true Suett stamp—a loose and shambling gait, a slippery tongue—this last the ready midwife to a without-pain-delivered jest—in words light as air, venting

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<sup>1</sup> The following brief notice of his death appeared in a contemporary paper :—

“ At the Grove, near Durham, died George Stephen Kemble, Esq., after a short illness, aged sixty-five. The name which he bore was no ordinary one, and it buoyed him up when his merit as an actor would have availed him but little. His professional character is too well known to require observation. The last time he appeared on the stage was for the benefit of a part of his family, on the 20th of last month, when he performed *Sir Christopher Curry* in ‘*Inkle and Yarico*.’ He was then apparently in his usual state of health, but in a few days afterwards he was attacked by inflammation of the bowels, which disorder terminated his mortal existence on Wednesday afternoon, about four o’clock. In private life he was a social, lively companion.”

truths deep as the centre ; with idlest rhymes tagging conceit when busiest ; singing with *Lear* in the tempest, or *Sir Toby* at the buttery-hatch.—*Charles Lamb*.

He was a person, when living, much liked by his theatrical brethren.—*Mrs. C. Mathews*.

They had both,<sup>1</sup> then very young men, been invited to attend the funeral of the "poor player" (Suett), and were placed in the same coach with Jack Bannister and Palmer. The latter sat wrapped up in angry and indignant silence at the tricks which the two younger *mourners* (who, by the way, had known but little of Suett) were playing ; but Bannister, though much affected, nevertheless could not refrain from occasionally laughing in the midst of his grief, while the tears were actually running from his eyes. At length, on the procession reaching Fleet Street, on its way to St. Paul's churchyard, where Suett lies buried, Mr. Whittle, commonly called "Jemmy Whittle," of the firm of Laurie and Whittle, stationers, came to the door of his shop to see the remains of his old friend pass to their place of rest. An obstruction in the road at this moment caused a short delay ; when C—— called out, in the exact voice and manner of the dead man : "Aha ! Jemmy ; oh, law ! how do ? Oh, dear ! going to be buried ! Oh, law ! oh, lawk ! oh, dear !"<sup>2</sup> The astonished stationer rushed back to his house shocked, surprised, and possibly not a little alarmed at the sound of the familiar tones. It was a little singular that at the conclusion of the ceremony, as the benediction fell from the lips of the clergyman, a grinning urchin, perched on a tombstone close by the iron rails, began vigorously to clap his hands. So practical a compliance with the *plaudite* at the actor's grave struck the whole company. The boy, however, on being questioned and taken to task for his irreverence, blubbered out, "La, sir, there was only them two dogs outside as wanted to fight, and was afeard to

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<sup>1</sup> Namely, Charles Mathews and a friend, a Captain C——, renowned for his imitation of Suett.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "He was known, like Puck, by his note, *Ha, ha!* sometimes deepening to *Ho, ho, ho!* with an irresistible accession, derived, perhaps remotely, from his ecclesiastical education, foreign to his prototype of *O La!* Thousands of hearts yet respond to the chuckling *O La!* of Dicky Suett, brought back to their remembrance by the faithful transcript of his friend Mathews's mimicry. The 'force of nature could no further go.' He drolled upon the stock of these two syllables richer than the cuckoo."—*C. Lamb*.

begin, so I just did it to set 'em on like."—*Barham's "Life of Hook."*<sup>1</sup>

Few comedians have ever afforded more amusement than Suett. I cannot say that he was strongly characteristic, but he was diverting to every description of audience.—*Boaden.*

The actors of the bygone day had a characteristic humour; the public then thought more of their sayings, cared less for their doings. Men would rather record in my time the bright things or the merry stories that Suett uttered, than delight in expatiating on his love of the lasses or the bottle. It was impossible to remain for any length of time angry with him; he had about him an unconsciousness of offending that disarmed you. It is not generally known that Dicky, in a comic part, nearly "damned" "Pizarro" the first night; but so it was. The part was ill-written, and its introduction ill-timed; and most furiously did the public hiss it. Sheridan was distracted; and Dicky, with the utmost gravity, said: "This comes of putting me into a German drama. You know, sir,

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<sup>1</sup> The lives of most of our humorists exhibit but little room for merriment. You in vain seek for those pauses of distress which might enable the humorist to pass his joke and utter his laugh. What Hood said of himself, that his whole life was wasted in spitting puns and blood, seems true in a more or less severe sense of those who have made us laugh. In reading the life of Hook, you are pained to remark how much laughter is to be got out of his career of complicated misery—his career of debt, poverty, imprisonment, and penury. It is like looking at the face of a clown from whose eyes the broad painted smile cannot rob the hunger and the anguish. It is easy to charge such a man as Hook with being the author of his own misfortunes. He should have practised economy; he should have been regardful of his own interests. The truth is, he should not have been born with the nature that made it impossible for its flowers to blow but in the sunshine of pleasure. Remove from Hook that copious wit, that fertile fancy, that fervid brain, and you would have left him probably as sturdy and steady an economist, as faithful and vigilant a watchman of his own interests, as any merchant tailor or city magnate who ever piled a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds upon the boastful basis of a half-crown. For Hook it is impossible to claim genius. He was gifted with no great qualities. But what he wanted in value he made up in quantity. His mind was a garden in which bloomed a very great variety of plants, which had sprung, independent of culture, from a soil radically rich and generous. He must necessarily be injured in his reputation in the eyes of posterity, for he is remembered best by that which must be injurious to his dignity as a man of letters. Had he brought the same labour of judgment which he expended on his practical jokes to bear upon any one of his numerous powers, he might, perhaps, have achieved the highest distinction in literature.—*ED.*

I know nothing of German." Poor Suett had no wit, but an infinitude of humour. Parsons used to say that Suett walked like a *camel-leopard*.<sup>1</sup>—*Records of a Stage Ve'cran*.

The very personification of weak whimsicality, with a laugh like a peal of giggles. Mathews gives him to the life.—*Leigh Hunt*.

## Joseph Munden.

1758-1832.

There is one face of Farley, one face of Knight, one (but what a one it is!) of Liston; but Munden has none that you can properly pin down and call *his*. When you think he has exhausted his battery of looks in unaccountable warfare with your gravity, suddenly he sprouts out an entirely new set of features, like Hydra. He is not one, but legion; not so much a comedian as a company. If his name could be multiplied like his countenance, it would fill a playbill. He, and he alone, literally *makes faces*; applied to any other person, the phrase is a mere figure, denoting certain modifications of the human countenance. Out of some invisible wardrobe he dips for faces, as his friend Suett used for wigs, and fetches them out as easily. I should not be surprised to see him some day put out the head of a river-horse, or come forth a

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<sup>1</sup> Suett could tell a capital story. The following he would relate inimitably:—Among Astley's equestrians were many Jews, who, when they accompanied him to the provinces, left their families behind them. A Mr. Cohen thus left a wife and large family whilst he was figuring away at Liverpool. In about six weeks' time Mrs. Cohen wrote a lamentable history of the family afflictions, commencing at the very top of a sheet of foolscap, and covering over three sides and a half with details of the numerous wants of Lypey, Rachel, Israel, &c. This manuscript was transmitted to Cohen through Mr. Villiers, the London agent. Shortly after Mrs. Cohen called upon the agent, and said, "Look ye here; see vat a villin it is, Mr. Villis." "My name is Villiers," says the agent. "I knows it is, but I says Villis for short. See vat a villin it is—here's the answer;" saying which she produced a large sheet of paper, on the centre of which was simply written, "Write me no more nunsinc" (nonsense). Another story of Suett's was of a landlady of his, who was a great lover of gin. He would overhear her say, "Betty, go and get a quartern loaf and half a quartern of gin." Off started Betty; she was soon recalled. "Betty, make it half a quartern loaf and a quartern of gin." Betty started again, again to be recalled. "Betty, on second thoughts, you may as well make it all gin."

pewit, or lapwing, some feathered metamorphosis. — *Charles Lamb.*

Mr. Munden was a *great* actor, and unlike the generality of “low comedians” (that is, the representatives of broad comedy and farce), was really fond of acting—a rare instance in that line of the drama. Liston, Mathews, and many others, after their early *furor* subsided, became reluctant and dejected promoters of the public mirth. Mr. Munden, however, unlike these, was an actor *per se*, and might be said to have heart and soul in his vocation. Although it was believed that, for many years past, Mammon led him on, still it is certain, independent of any other guide than his own fancy, he followed his art *con amore*. Every playgoer of his time must have seen Mr. Munden perform *Obadiah* in “The Committee, or Honest Thieves” (if not, they are now to be pitied); and who of those has not a recollection also of the incomparable Johnstone (Irish Johnstone) in *Teague*, picturesquely draped in his blanket, and pouring forth his exquisite humour and mellifluous brogue in equal measure?—*Mrs. C. Mathews, “Tea-Table Talk.”*

A little while previous to Munden’s retirement his health was precarious, and Elliston agreed, in consequence, to give Munden 10*l.* per night, instead of a settled weekly salary. The number of nights not being specified, the lessee only called upon the veteran’s services when he imperatively required them. This, as Munden recovered, was wormwood to him. However, the time of retribution arrived. His Majesty bespoke a play and farce; Elliston omitted Munden’s name, because the house would assuredly be full to the ceiling, and employing Munden would be throwing 10*l.* away. But in the green-room a notice was affixed, desiring all the company to “attend to sing the National Anthem.” This was enough: Munden joined the group, and on the strength of the managerial notice, claimed and received his 10*l.* that night. — *Records of a Stage Veteran.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Munden had an unpleasant way of discouraging, if not of extinguishing, the flame of ambition in the youthful dramatic author’s breast. During a green-room reading of a comedy he would sit making hideous faces, and when the three or five acts were concluded, plaintively remark, “My precious eyes, sir, but where’s the comedy?”

Cherry once formed the scheme of taking a company to Calcutta. The terms talked of were in keeping with the land of silver fountains and golden sands. A lac of rupees was offered to the “walking gentle-

Munden was one night playing with Jack Johnstone in "The Committee;" in that scene where *Teague* plies *Obadiah* with liquor from a black bottle, Johnstone, who played *Teague*, was surprised to remark the extraordinary grimaces Munden made over the draughts he gulped down. So irresistibly comical, indeed, were Munden's grimaces, that not only did the audience shriek with laughter, but Johnstone was almost too convulsed to proceed. When the scene was over, *Obadiah*, as usual, was borne off the stage; but no sooner was he out of sight of the audience than he commenced bellowing for a stomach-pump. "I'm a dead man!" he shouted. "I'm poisoned! Where's the villain that filled that bottle?" And then in an agony of disgust, pointing to the empty bottle, still in Johnstone's hand, he cried, "*Lamp-oil! lamp-oil!* every drop of it." It was true: the property-man had mistaken a bottle containing lamp-oil for one half filled with sherry and water. When Munden had in some measure recovered, Johnstone naturally asked him why he should, after the first taste, have allowed him to pour the whole of the filthy stuff down his throat, when the slightest hint would have prevented it. Munden's reply, in gasps, was as follows:—"My dear boy, I was about to do so; but there was such a glorious *roar* at the first face I made upon swallowing it, that I hadn't the heart to spoil the scene by interrupting the effect, though I thought I should die every time you poured the accursed stuff down my throat."

Munden used to wheedle Moncrieff out of a comic song for his benefit. "Dang it, my boy," he would cry, "you're a lad after my own soul, sir. I knew O'Keefe, sir, and George Colman, sir, and every one of them, sir, in their best days; but by the Lord Harry, sir, none of 'em could write me off a song like you, sir." Moncrieff, at last, grew tired of being paid in this coin; and when Joe came as usual for his annual song, the dramatist hinted, with great delicacy, that a pecuniary

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man." "What is a lac of rupees?" asked the actor to whom Cherry made the proposal. "Do you know what a lack of money is?" asked Munden. "Yes." "Well, a lac of rupees means exactly the same thing."

Munden had a foolish way of boasting of his ignorance. "I never read any book but a play," said this son of a poulterer; "no play but one in which I myself acted, and no portion of that play but my own scenes." When this was told to Charles Lamb, he said, "I knew Munden well, and I believe him."—ED.



recompense would be more grateful to his feelings. Munden suddenly remembered a pressing engagement, and vanished.

Soon after Munden retired from the stage, an admirer met him in Covent Garden. It was a wet day, and each of the gentlemen carried an umbrella. The admirer's was an expensive silk; Joe's an old gingham. "So you have left the stage for ever, sir?" "Yes, sir, yes; I am getting old, you see, and the gout, sir, the gout." "Ah, we shall never see your like again. *Polonius*, and *Femmy Fumps*, *Old Dornton*, *Crack*, and a dozen others, in whose company I have passed many a happy hour, have all left the world with you. I wish you'd give me some trifle by way of memorial, Munden." "Trifle, sir?" "Ay, any little thing by way of keepsake." "Faith, sir, I've got nothing that—" "Oh, search your pockets." "There are so many thieves about, that—but hold! suppose, sir—egad! suppose we exchange umbrellas!"  
—*Theatrical Anecdotes.*

He was the son of a poulterer in Brook's Market, Leather Lane, Holborn, and was born in the early part of 1758; his father died when he was young, and at the age of twelve young Joe was placed in an apothecary's shop; but becoming tired of physic, he turned his attention to the law. From an attorney's office he descended to a law-stationer's shop, and became what is termed a "hackney writer;" to one of the fraternity in Chancery Lane he was ultimately apprenticed. He was at this time a great admirer of Garrick, whose powers he well remembered, and used to dilate upon; this gave him the first desire for the stage. He was for some time a clerk in the office of the town-clerk of Liverpool; but his first regular engagement on the boards was as the representative of old men at Leatherhead. He had the actor's customary provincial round at the theatres, and soon became a partner in the Sheffield Theatre. On December 2nd, 1790, a few nights after Inledon's appearance, Munden made his bow to the Covent Garden audience as *Sir Francis Gripe*, in the "Busybody," and *Femmy Fumps* in the "Farmer." He was the original representative of *Old Rapid*, *Caustic*, *Lazarillo* (in "Two Strings to your Bow"), *Nipperkin*, *Sir Abel Handy*, and *Old Dornton*, besides a host not now remembered. In 1813, in consequence of a quarrel respecting the amount of his salary, he joined the Drury Lane Company, making his first appearance there in *Sir Abel Handy*. Here he remained until the

31st of May, 1824, when he took his farewell of the public in the character of *Sir Robert Bramble*, in the "Poor Gentleman." He was an excellent comic actor, and in some of his parts unrivalled. In private life he was generally esteemed by a very numerous circle of acquaintance, not more on account of his convivial qualities than for others more substantial.—*Memoir of Joseph Shepherd Munden*, 1832.

Mr. Munden was by far the greatest comedian we ever saw; his vein of humour was the richest and most peculiar; his range of character the most extensive; his discrimination the most exact and happy, and his finishing the most elaborate and complete. He received great advantages from nature, and improved them to the utmost by vigilant observation and laborious study. His power of face was most extraordinary; for he had no singularity of feature—no lucky squint or mechanical grin; but the features which, when at rest, befitted well the sedate merchant, or baronet, of the old school, assumed at his will the strangest and the most fantastic forms. This almost creative faculty was associated with another power of an opposite kind; the capability of imparting to every variety of form a substance and apparent durability as if it were carved out of a rock. His action had no less body than flavour. In the wildest parts of farce he every minute put forth some living fantasy of his own, some new arrangement of features, creations among which Momus would have hesitated long which he should choose for his own proper use, as embodying most general traits of comic feeling. Any one of these hundred faces might serve as the model of a mask for the old Greek comedy, and looked as immovable while it lasted. And yet this marvellous power of spreading out before the eye the products of a rich comic imagination—this working out of breathing farces, which Aristophanes would have been pleased to gaze on, was set down as vulgar grimace by those who fancy the perfection of one excellence implies the absence of all others; and who will not be persuaded, even by their senses, that the same man can be *Nipperkin* and *Dornton*! Although Mr. Munden's humour and his flexibility of countenance were the gifts which chiefly distinguished him from others, he shared largely in that pathos which belongs in a greater or less degree to all true comedians. It is natural that a strong relish for the ludicrous should be accompanied by a genuine pathos, as both arise from quick sensibility to the

peculiarities of our fellow-men, and the joys and sorrows by which they are affected. Those who are endowed with such qualities too often presume upon their strength, and rely on the individual effects which they can produce in their happiest moods. But Mr. Munden had a higher sense of the value of his art than to leave his success to accident, or to rest contented with doing something to make an audience laugh or weep without reference to the precise nature of the conception which he professed to embody. He studied his parts, in the best sense of the term, and with as careful and minute attention as though he were the driest and most mechanical of actors. When he had fully mastered the outlines of a part, he cast into it just so much of his resources of humour or of feeling as was necessary to give it genial life, and to discriminate its finest shades, and never enough to destroy its individuality, or melt down its distinctive features. In nothing did he more delightfully exhibit his skill than in the little sprinklings of humour which he threw into his sedater parts, endearing and familiarizing them to us, yet never allowing us to abate a jot of the respect or sympathy which they were intended to awaken.—*T. N. Talfourd.*

## Elizabeth Farren (Countess of Derby).

1759—1829.

Her figure is considerably above the middle height, and is of that slight texture which allows the use of full and flowing drapery. Her face, though not regularly beautiful, is animated and prepossessing; her eye, which is blue and penetrating, is a powerful feature when she chooses to employ it on the public, and either flashes with spirit or melts with softness, as its mistress decides on the expression she wishes to convey. Her voice we never thought to possess much sweetness, but it is refined and feminine; and her smiles fascinate the heart as her form delights the eye. In short, a more complete exhibition of graces and accomplishments never presented itself for admiration before the view of an audience.<sup>1</sup>—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1829.

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Inchbald used to tell the following story of Miss Farren:—"To have fixed the degrees and shades of female virtue possessed at this time by the actresses of the Haymarket Theatre would have been employment

On the 7th of April, 1797, she took her final leave of the stage in the above-named character (*Lady Teazle*) before a fashionable and crowded audience at Drury Lane Theatre. It was remarked that Miss Farren had never performed with greater animation and better spirits than on this occasion; nor, until the play drew near to the close, was the least alteration observable; her manner then visibly changed—indeed she became unable to conceal how deeply she was affected. Her concluding words (for such they proved) which conveyed *Lady Teazle's* valedictory address to *Lady Sneerwell*, the latter portion of which might seem applicable to her present situation, were delivered by Miss Farren falteringly. “Let me also request, Lady Sneerwell, that you will make my respects to the scandalous college of which you are a member, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, *as she leaves off practice and kills characters no longer.*” A passionate burst of tears here revealed the sensibility of the speaker; while a stunning burst of a more cheering though not less feeling nature, from the audience, followed, and no more of the play was listened to.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*<sup>1</sup>

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for an able casuist. One evening, about half an hour before the curtain was drawn up, some accident having happened in the dressing-room of one of the actresses, a woman of known intrigue, she ran in haste to the dressing-room of Mrs. Wells, to finish the business of her toilet. Mrs. Wells, who was the mistress of the well-known Captain Topham, shocked at the intrusion of a reprobated woman who had a worse character than herself, quitted her own room and ran to Miss Farren's, crying, ‘What would Captain Topham say if I were to remain in such company?’ No sooner had she entered the room, to which as an asylum she had fled, than Miss Farren flew out of the door, repeating, ‘What would Lord Derby say if I should be seen in such company?’—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Boaden cynically tells the rest of the story:—“Instead of the usual rhymes at the end of the play, the whole of the *dramatis personæ* remaining in their stations, Mr. Wroughton advanced and addressed to the audience the following personalities as to Miss Farren, for them to ratify if they approved them:—

“ ‘But, ah! this night adieu the mournful mien,  
 When Mirth's loved favourite quits the mimic scene!  
 [*Looking towards Miss Farren, who stood supported  
 by King and Miss Miller.*]  
 Startled Thalia would assent refuse,  
 But Truth and Virtue sued and won the Muse.’

I cannot but think this too strongly, however *truly*, put, the lady being herself present. He then spoke *her* acknowledgments, which she declined

Whilst Mrs. Siddons might be said thus to struggle to keep up with her own the fame of English tragedy, the other muse was about to suffer a loss which thirty years have scarcely shown a tendency to replace. I mean the elevation of Miss Farren to a coronet by her marriage with the Earl of Derby, in the year 1797. Perhaps I do not refer effects to causes inadequate to their production when I say that this theatrical demise absolutely produced the degeneracy of comedy into farce. The *lady* of our Congreves lost that court-like refinement in manners, that polished propriety in speech—the coarser parts in comedy were forced forward without a balance, without contrast—cultivated life on the stage became insipid as soon as its representative was without the necessary charms.—*Boaden.*

Miss Farren, then in her teens, made her *début* (1777) as *Miss Hardcastle*, in Goldsmith's comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer,"—as appears by Mr. Winston's note. She conquered so much subsequently in the superior walk of comedy that she might have stooped in resuming this character, although it is worthy the acceptance of an actress of great ability. She came most opportunely to prevent a chasm which would have been greatly lamented; and to personate modern females of fashion when the retirement of the Abington, with the *vielle cour*, was approaching. To dilate upon the history of the lovely and accomplished Miss Farren would be very superfluous; no person ever has more successfully performed the elegant levities of *Lady Townly* upon the stage, or more happily practised the amiable virtues of *Lady Grace* in the highest circles of society.—*George Colman.*

At the early age of fourteen, her first appearance was at the Haymarket Theatre, then under the management of the elder Colman, in the character of *Miss Hardcastle*, in Goldsmith's comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer." That season produced at the same time Henderson and Edwin. In the winter of that year Miss Farren went to Liverpool, where she appeared in *Rosetta*, a character afterwards repeated in London with great success. But the part which at once established her fame as

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doing for herself, and then the Countess-elect advanced, and curtsied to the *right*, to the *left*, and the *front*, as is usual upon occasions of high stage ceremonial." Boaden fixes the 8th of April as the day of her retirement.—ED.

an actress was *Lady Townly*, which we owe to the inimitable Parsons, who, with infinite difficulty, prevailed upon her to try it for his benefit. The whole house was enraptured with her performance, and Miss Farren was engaged on that night for both the winter theatres, and played alternately at Drury Lane and Covent Garden the first characters in tragedy as well as comedy. On the secession of Mrs. Abington from Drury Lane, Miss Farren succeeded to all her principal parts, and at that theatre she remained until her marriage with Earl Derby. She was the Oldfield of her day. It was well said of her by an eminent critic, that in her performances Miss Farren never deviated from the walk for which art as well as nature designed her; that were we to collect every idea which has been suggested to us by books, or has been the result of our own observations on life, assisted by all that the imagination could conceive of a woman of fashion, we should find every idea realized and every conception embodied in the person and acting of Miss Farren. She continued to occupy the highest fame in genteel comedy to the end of her theatrical career. Miss Farren's last performances were:—March 30th, 1797, *Violante*; April 1st, *Maria*, in "The Citizen;" 3rd, *Estifania*; 4th, *Susan*, in "The Follies of a Day;" 6th, *Bizarre*, in "The Inconstant;" and finally on the 8th *Lady Teazle*.—*Memoir of Elizabeth, Countess of Derby*, 1829.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Farren is as excellent as Mrs. Oldfield, because she has lived with the best style of men in England.—*H. Walpole*.

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<sup>1</sup> Writing of "The School for Scandal" in Miss Farren's day, Lamb says: "No piece was perhaps ever so completely cast in all its parts as this *manager's comedy*. Miss Farren had succeeded to Mrs. Abington in *Lady Teazle*, and Smith, the original *Charles*, had retired when I first saw it. The rest of the characters, with very slight exceptions, remained. I remember it was then the fashion to cry down John Kemble, who took the part of *Charles* after Smith; but, I thought, very unjustly. The original cast of this comedy, as it was acted in 1777, stood as follows:—*Sir Peter Teazle*, King; *Sir Oliver Surface*, Yates; *Sir Harry Bumper*, Gawdry; *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, Dodd; *Joseph Surface*, J. Palmer; *Charles Surface*, Smith; *Snake*, Packer; *Crabtree*, Parsons; *Rowley*, Aickin; *Moses*, Baddeley; *Trip*, Lamash; *Lady Teazle*, Mrs. Abington; *Lady Sneerwell*, Miss Sherry; *Mrs. Candour*, Miss Pope; *Maria*, Miss P. Hopkins."

## Mrs. Davenport.

1759-1843.<sup>1</sup>

On the 24th of September, 1794, Mrs Davenport, an actress of infinite merit, made her first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre, in which she acted six-and-thirty years. She came to London as a substitute for Miss Webb ; but the substitute, like the soldier so called in the militia, was infinitely more fit for the duty than the overgrown original had ever been. She had a very acute perception of comic humour, and a strength and earnestness that always carried the dialogue home. Her *début* was in the *Mrs. Hardcastle* of "She Stoops to Conquer." Quick, among our actors, seemed her natural counterpart. I believe this lady, in her long professional career, gave less trouble than had ever been remarked, to either manager, actor, or author—she loved her business, and did it well and cheerfully.—*Boaden*.

Next to Fawcett's closing night, came that of Mrs. Davenport, who on this occasion took her first, her last, her only benefit, and made her final curtesy to a most elegant and crowded house. Remembering how much she has enlivened our merrier moments, we rather wish that she had taken leave of us in some stirring comedy than in a tragedy of such engrossing interest as "Romeo and Juliet," where her part of the nurse rather frets and irritates us, as interfering with the deep passion, and as surrounding *Juliet* with images of impurity. We would rather think of her as *Mrs. Heidelberg*, or *Mrs. Mala-*

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<sup>1</sup> In assigning dates to the various actors I have been struck by the numerous instances of longevity that have occurred in theatrical life. Take the following as samples:—Wilkes lived 88 years, Quin 73, Garrick 65, Mrs. Clive 75, Beard 75, Rich 70, Macklin 107, Betterton 75, Mrs. Siddons 77, Quick 80, Colley Cibber 86, King 78, Cumberland 79, Dibdin 74, Hull 76, Murphy 78, Yates 97, Bannister 77, G. Bartley 74, Miss Bartley 64, Mrs. Bracegirdle, 85, Braham 79, Dowton 88, Farren 85, Mrs. Garrick 98, Mrs. Glover 68, Harley 72, Incedon 69, Jack Johnstone 78, Keeley 75, Liston 69, A. Pope 73, J. Russell 79, Mrs. Sparkes 83, Lee Sugg 85, W. Vining 78, H. J. Wallack 78, Mrs. Wallack 90, James Wallack 73, and many more. Of these a greater number were before the public until within a few years, and in numerous instances within a few months, of their death. In our own day this *rule* of longevity—for rule it absolutely seems—is illustrated in those veterans, Buckstone, whose first appearance in London was in 1823 ; Benjamin Webster, 1818 ; Compton, 1837 ; Walter Lacy, 1838.—ED.

*prop*, speaking with her prodigious emphasis that commentary on the she-dragon "He means *me*, sir!" or as the respectable hostess in "Husbands and Wives," unconsciously making the oddest arrangements for the accommodation of her guests; or as fifty other fine and furious old ladies whose looks she has engraved on our memories: Her address was short and sensible; she alluded to her infirmities lightly; and took her leave amidst the heartiest wishes of the house for her comfort in her age. In many respects she was worthy of imitation; she took every part allotted to her, did her best with all, and adhered steadily to one establishment instead of creating a transitory interest, or seeking a higher salary by changing. So she took root at Covent Garden; and now she is gone will be missed and mourned more perhaps than actors of higher pretension, who have been agreeable vagrants at many theatres without gaining a settlement in any.—*Talfourd*.

## Jack Bannister.

1760—1836.

Jack Bannister, in the beginning of this century, paid Nottingham a starring visit; and having heard Robertson sing "Beggars and Ballad Singers," that celebrated comedian requested a copy, as at this time it was not in type. Robertson readily obliged him. The following season at Drury Lane, Bannister sang Robertson's song; and what words could describe Jemmy's surprise when he beheld the words and music of "Beggars and Ballad Singers" published, and Bannister's name inserted as the author? He could get no redress, although he agitated in the affair.<sup>1</sup>—*W. Donaldson*.

Bannister was certainly not the chief of convulsively droll actors; but he was, to my humble taste, something better—one who made you forget that you were looking at a play. He was pure hilarity, and plain English nature. Without a trait of grimace on his comely countenance, he always came in as if he had been breathing the fresh air of the country; and he was more than an actor, by seeming to be no actor at all, but a

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson was manager of the Stamford Theatre. He was himself the author of the song which Bannister appropriated.—*ED.*



gloriously pleasant fellow, helping you to enjoy a joke.<sup>1</sup>—  
*T. Campbell.*

He began his own stage career in tragedy, and played the hero in Voltaire's "Mahomet." Garrick, who had trained him to the part, met him the next day, after he had acquired some applause in "Mahomet," and asked him, with his usual abundance of gestures, and eh, ehs, what character he wished to play next. "Why," said Bannister, "I was thinking of *Oroonoko*."<sup>2</sup> "Eh," said David, staring at Bannister, who was at that time very thin, "you will look as much like *Oroonoko* as a chimney-sweeper in consumption." Bannister told me that at these words of Garrick his knees slackened, and he had almost sunk down on the pavement. At another interview he ventured to tell the English Roscius that he had some thoughts of attempting comedy. "Eh, eh!" said Garrick, "why, no, don't think of that, you may humbug the town some time longer as a tragedian; *but comedy is a serious thing*, so don't try it yet." Bannister however attempted comedy, and his *Don Whiskerandos*<sup>3</sup> (as he himself says) laughed his tragedy out of fashion.<sup>4</sup>—*Ibid.*

Bannister is in many parts a judicious actor, as well as an agreeable singer of such songs as please an English audience.—  
*T. Davies.*

From my first knowledge of Bannister to the present hour, he made his prudence a guard over his festivity; and though no man was ever more solicited in social life, his amusements neither disturbed his business nor deranged his circumstances; he could always dispense the liberal aid which he did not need, and never drew on himself, in a single instance that I can remember, the displeasure of the public. Being his contemporary through no trivial series of years, I remember him in

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<sup>1</sup> Mathews wrote to his wife from Stratford, "Bannister went (to the house where Shakspeare was born) after dinner for the third time in one day, threw himself upon the bed in which the dear lying old woman swears Shakspeare was born—nay, shows the chair he was nursed in. But Jack threw himself in his drunken raptures on the bed, and nearly smothered two children, who were asleep till his raptures awoke them."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> By Thomas Southerne.

<sup>3</sup> A character in Sheridan's "Critic."

<sup>4</sup> Bannister used to tell the story thus:—"I was a student of painting in the Royal Academy when I was introduced to Mr. Garrick, under whose superior genius the British stage then flourished beyond all former example. One morning I was shown into his dressing-room when he was before the

tragedy, and am not sorry that he put off the buskin early in his career. The genius of John Bannister met with a congenial author in Mr. Prince Hoare, who may, perhaps, as a farce writer, be said to have best suited his talents. But this palm is powerfully contested by very able men. Yet whatever contest may exist among the *writers* of farce, there is none whatever, where Bannister is concerned, among the *performers*. I have seen no actor at all near him where he was fully himself.—*Boaden.*

September 30th, 1826.—Met Bannister by accident in Chenies Street, Bedford Square. His face was as fresh, his eye as keen, and his voice as musical as ever. I had not seen him for years. He held out his hand just as he used to do on the stage, with the same frank, native truth. As he spoke, the tones of his favourite *Walter*<sup>1</sup> pierced my heart. It was

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glass preparing to shave: a white nightcap covered his forehead, his chin and cheeks were covered with soap-suds, a razor-cloth was placed upon his left shoulder, and he turned and smoothed the shining blade with so much dexterity that I longed for a beard to imitate his incomparable method of handling the razor.

“‘Eh! well—what! young man—so—eh? You are still for the stage? Well, now what character do you—should you like to—eh?’

“‘I should like to attempt *Hamlet*, sir?’

“‘Eh! what, *Hamlet the Dane*? Zounds! that’s a bold—a—— Have you studied the part?’ ‘I have, sir.’ ‘Well, don’t mind my shaving. Speak your speech—the speech to the *Ghost*; I can hear you. Come, let’s have a roll and a tumble.’ After a few hums and haws, and a disposing of my hair so that it might stand on end, ‘like quills upon the fretful porcupine,’ I supposed my father’s ghost before me, armed *cap-à-pie*, and off I started. I concluded with the usual,

‘Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?’

but still continued in my attitude, expecting the praise due to an exhibition which I was booby enough to fancy was only to be equalled by himself. But to my eternal mortification, he turned quick upon me, brandished the razor in his hand, and thrusting his half-shaved face close up to mine, he made such horrible mouths at me that I thought he was seized with insanity, and I showed more natural symptoms of being frightened at him than at my father’s ghost. ‘Angels and ministers! yaw! yaw! yaw! maw!’ However, I soon perceived my vanity by his ridicule. He finished shaving, put on his wig, and with a smile of good nature he took me by the hand. ‘Come,’ said he, ‘young gentleman—eh, let us see now what we can do.’ He spoke the speech—*how* he spoke it those who have heard him never can forget. ‘There,’ said he, ‘young gentleman; and when you try that speech again, give it more passion and less mouth.’”—*Ed.*

<sup>1</sup> In “The Babes of the Wood.”

extraordinary the effect. "Bannister," said I, "your voice recalls my early days."—"Ah," said he, "I had some touches, had I not?" He told me a story of Lord Egremont. Bannister bought at Sir Joshua's sale the Virgin and Child. He sent it to a sale at a room for 250*l.* Lord E. told the seller he would give 200. It was agreed to. Lord Egremont afterwards said to Bailey, "I have bought Reynolds's Virgin and Child." "Ah," said Bailey, "it was Bannister's picture. You gave 250*l.*" He said nothing, but the same day wrote to Bannister he was ashamed to have offered less, and sent him a cheque for the 50*l.* owing. I said to Bannister, as Napoleon said to Talma, "We are talking history; I shall put this down."—"Shall ye though?" said he, as his face flushed. "That I will," said I; and he hobbled off with a sort of wriggling enjoyment. His acting was delightful; and his tones to-day accounted for his fame. They were as a man's, something like Mrs. Jordan's as a woman.—*B. R. Haydon.*

After his long-established celebrity as a comedian, and the regret felt by lovers of the drama on his retirement from the stage, it is curious to recur to his earliest days in the Haymarket Theatre; when he was frequently tied to a sword, and rammed into a full-dress coat, to represent *Lord Falbridge* in "The English Merchant," and other deadly lively characters, little above those which are called, in stage language, "walking gentlemen." There was a very persevering, sky-coloured suit of laced clothes, which was always lugged out of the Haymarket wardrobe for him upon such occasions; and Jack Bannister, in his light blue and silver, with a sword by his side, was, to all play-goers of that time, as infallible a token of a clever young actor in a wrong part, as deep mourning is a sign of a death in a family. But in the course of some nights, when he was thus misplaced, he often performed some other character effective in itself, and rendered more so by his own powers.—*George Colman.*

Bannister was remarkably handsome, even as an old man; his dark eyes still full of animation, were more striking from the contrast with his white hair. His nature was a thoroughly genial one, "When I first attracted notice on the stage," he said, "I was told of such-and-such people who were my enemies; but I never would listen to such reports, for I was determined to go through life without enemies; and I *have* done so." He said to Constable, "They say it is my wife who

has taken care of my money, and made me comfortable in my old age; and so she has; but I think I deserve a little of the credit, for I let her."—*C. R. Leslie*, "*Autobiography*."

Of another comic favourite who entered the lists with this celebrated trio (*i.e.* Parsons, Quick, and Edwin), and nobly supported the fight, I have before spoken—to Bannister junior, I allude. But I must not forget here to add that he possessed what they "upon the adverse faction" wanted, strong serio-comic power; and that his personation of the character of a sailor was certainly superior to that of any other actor on the stage. I do not allude to our modern *trap-clapping* sailors; impostors in a blue jacket and trousers, who vociferate a certain number of slang nautical phrases; who, with their elbows bang their tobacco-boxes, put quids in their mouths, pull up their trousers, and, boasting of "Britannia's wooden walls," and "Albion's matchless glory," swagger up to the lamps, exclaiming, "There's a sailor for you!" No, I allude to the genuine Jack Tar, particularly Congreve's *Ben*; in that legitimate sailor, Bannister was inimitable.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the love-scene between him and *Miss Prue*, when this latter part was acted by Mrs. Jordan, was probably never surpassed in rich natural comedy.—*F. Reynolds*.

About 1808 he was persuaded to give an entertainment by himself, and accordingly employed the talent of George Colman and others to prepare him one, which he subsequently delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, the London, and various other places in town, and in all the principal provincial cities. In it he gave a mimetic representation of his first audience with Garrick; this Quick and Whitbread declared "was not imitation but identity." Bannister's Budget differed essentially from Mathews's "At Home;" the former being a blending of serious and comic stories, the latter, if we except "Mallet"

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<sup>1</sup> "For what is *Ben*—the pleasant sailor which Bannister gives us—but a piece of satire—a creation of Congreve's fancy—a dreamy combination of *all* the accidents of a sailor's character, his contempt of money, his credulity to women, with that necessary estrangement from home? . . . We never think the worse of *Ben* for it, or feel it as a stain upon his character. But when an actor comes, and instead of the delightful phantom—the creature dear to half belief—which Bannister exhibited, displays before our eyes a downright concretion of a Wapping sailor . . . we want him turned out. We feel that his true place is not behind the curtain, but in the first or second gallery."—*C. Lamb*,

and the "Yorkshire Gambler," exclusively comic. Mathews was by many degrees the greater mimic, but Bannister was the pleasanter fellow; Mathews made you laugh more, but he altogether satisfied you less. Public taste underwent a great change between 1808 and 1830. Mathews's jokes would not have been taken in the former year, and Bannister's Budget would be "flat, stale, and unprofitable" now.—*Recollections of Bannister.*

## Alexander Pope.

1762-1835.

Pope had a handsome face, good person, genteel figure, and graceful action; his voice possessed a firmness, and in the softer tones called the soul-moving Barry to the recollection of his hearers. But his countenance was scarcely sufficiently expressive to give full effect to the passions of grief, joy, or disdain.—*The Manager's Note-Book.*<sup>1</sup>

Pope was a great gourmand;<sup>2</sup> he carried his inclination that way so far as occasionally to make himself unpopular even to the extent of losing several worthy friends. Kean, Pope, and Catalani were one day invited to dine with Jones, the Dublin manager, at his house, a mile or two from Dublin, with some of the first people. It was not long after dinner when Pope asked Kean what time he had ordered the carriage? Kean replied, at eleven. At Pope's request it was sent for directly, and they departed. As they were returning, Kean asked Pope

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<sup>1</sup> His first wife was Miss Younge (*see Mrs. Pope*). His second wife was a Miss Champion. She was born 1777, and died 1803. She was an excellent actress, and was for some time the heroine of the Dublin stage. She is described as possessing a slender but finely-proportioned figure, a face of sweetness and interest, with large expressive eyes. Charles Mathews, who saw her perform in Dublin, wrote, "There are few such actresses to be met with. She possesses a very beautiful face, extremely elegant figure, and delightful voice, added to every advantage of nature in mental qualifications, and every accomplishment of education."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Pope's love of good living was the occasion of much waggery on the part of his friends. He used to say that he knew of but one crime that man could commit, and that was peppering a rump-steak. On Incedon's return from America, Pope asked him how they "fed" there. "Immortally," replied Incedon. "The very poetry of eating and drinking, my dear Pope, in all things but one—they take no oil to their salads." "No oil to their salads!" cried the tragedian, recoiling. "*Why did we make peace with them!*"

why he was in such a hurry to come away. "Why, did you not observe what occurred at dinner?" "No!" "No; did you not see what that monster Catalani did?" "Not I," said Kean. "Why, sir," exclaimed Pope, "she cut a fricandeau with a knife!" "Yes," said Kean, "I did see that; but what of it?" "What of it?" cried Pope; "why, she ought to have used a spoon; and I will never again sit down with the woman till she has learned how to help a fricandeau."—Pope was invited to Earl's Court to see a collection of pictures. It being his first visit, he was, at the dinner, placed on the right hand of the host; and on the covers being removed a fine turbot made its appearance before him. Pope could not restrain himself, and rising from his chair with his knife in his hand, cried, "D— your cook, sir! she ought to be discharged; she has spoilt a fine Torbay turbot by smothering it with horse-radish;" and proceeded forthwith to scrape the whole of it off with his knife. This was his first and last invitation.—*Popciana*.<sup>1</sup>

## Mrs. Dora Jordan.<sup>2</sup>

1762-1816.

Those who have only seen Mrs. Jordan within the last ten or fifteen years can have no adequate notion of her performances of

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<sup>1</sup> *Apropos* of Pope's love of eating may be mentioned the diet of a few well-known actors generally and during performance. Kean, we are told, took beef-tea for breakfast, and preferred a rump-steak to any other dinner. Macready used to eat the lean of mutton chops only when he acted, and subsequently almost entirely adopted a vegetable diet. Braham sang on bottled porter, Mrs. Wood upon draught porter, Inledon on Madeira. Wrench and Harley acted through a long performance without refreshment. Oxberry drank quantities of tea, Henderson gum arabic and sherry, Kean, Emery, and Reeve cold brandy-and-water, Lewis mulled wine (and oysters), William Smith coffee, Mrs. Jordan calf's-foot jelly dissolved in warm sherry, Miss Catley linseed tea and Madeira. G. F. Cooke drank everything; John Kemble took opium. A boiled egg supported Henry Russell through the most arduous entertainment ever given by one man.—*ED.*

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Jordan was the mistress of the Duke of Clarence. Her *maiden* name—in the significant sense of maidenhood—was Miss Bland. This, when she went on the stage, she changed to Miss Francis. Before long, however, her mother wrote to request another change, and she took that of Mrs. Jordan. The *Mrs.* was prefixed, we are told, to keep "frivolous suitors at bay." Old Tate Wilkinson claimed the honour of re-naming

such parts as *Ophelia*; *Helena* in "All's Well that Ends Well;" and *Viola* in this play. Her voice had latterly acquired a coarseness which suited well enough with her *Nells* and *Hoydens*; but in those days it sank, with her steady melting eye, into the heart. Her joyous parts—in which her memory now chiefly lives—in her youth were outdone by her plaintive ones. There is no giving an account how she delivered the disguised story of her love for *Orsino*. . . . She used no rhetoric in her passion; or it was nature's own rhetoric, most legitimate then, when it seemed altogether without rule or law.—*Charles Lamb*.

A charming, cordial actress, on the homely side of the agreeable, with a delightful voice.—*Leigh Hunt*.

Went to the play with Hobhouse. Mrs. Jordan superlative in *Hoyden*, and Jones well enough in *Foppington*. *What plays!* what wit!—hélas, Congreve and Vanbrugh, are you only comedy?—*Byron*.

Mathews was frequently invited to the house of this fascinating actress, and visited her on several occasions of domestic interest. He always accepted her invitations when he could, and became strongly attached to her society. He used to say that her fine, joy-inspiring tones, and her natural and peculiar manner of speaking, always carried a warmth to his heart which no other voice ever conveyed, and seemed to do him good. She was indeed an extraordinary and exquisite being, as distinct from any other being in the world as she was superior to all her contemporaries in her particular line of acting.—*Life of Mathews*.

Here alone, I believe, in her whole professional career, Mrs. Siddons found a rival who beat her out of a single character. The rival *Rosalind* was Mrs. Jordan; but those who best remember Mrs. Jordan will be the least surprised at her

her. "You have crossed the water, my dear," he said to her, "so I'll call you Jordan! And by the memory of Sam!" he adds, "if she didn't take my joke in earnest, and call herself Mrs. Jordan ever since." Her first appearance in London was in 1785, at Drury Lane, as *Peggy* in the "Country Girl." Her success was immediate; her salary was doubled, and she was allowed two benefits. She was the mother of ten children by the Duke, who, on separating from her, caused a yearly allowance of 4400*l.* to be settled on her, with the provision that if she returned to the stage the care of the Duke's four daughters, together with 1500*l.* a year, should revert to him. She returned to the stage, and the children and the money were surrendered to the Duke.—ED.

defeating her great contemporary in this one instance. Mrs. Jordan was perhaps a little too much of the romp in some touches of the part; but altogether she had the *naïveté* of it to a degree that Shakspeare himself, if he had been a living spectator, would have gone behind the scenes to have saluted her for her success in it.—*T. Campbell, "Life of Siddons."*

Sir Joshua Reynolds was quite enchanted with a being who, like Jordan, ran upon the stage as a *play-ground*, and laughed from sincere wildness of delight. He said, "she vastly exceeded everything that he had seen, and really *was* what others only affected to be." The friend to whom he thus expressed himself had but just arrived in town, and, struck by his enthusiasm, said to him, "What, sir! greater than your friend, Mrs. Abington?" "Yes, sir," said Sir Joshua, "greater than Mrs. Abington, wherever she challenges comparison." "Well," rejoined his friend, "at all events you must not forget the more extended range of Mrs. Abington—her fine lady." "I do not forget the fine lady of Mrs. Abington; it is never to be forgotten—I spoke of the two actresses where they challenged *comparison*. But as to more extensive range, I do not know that you can make out your point; for opposed to these fashionable ladies, you have the fashionable *men* of Mrs. Jordan, and the women who would *pass* for men, whether *Wildairs* or *Hypolitas* in comedy, and the tender and exquisite *Viola* of Shakspeare, where she combines feeling with sportive effect, and does as much by the music of her melancholy as the music of her laugh."—*Life of Mrs. Jordan.*

It was not as an actress, but as herself, that she charmed every one. Nature had formed her in her most prodigal humour; and when nature is in the humour to make a woman all that is delightful she does it most effectually. Her face, her tones, her manner, were irresistible; her smile had the effect of sunshine, and her laugh did one good to hear it; her voice was eloquence itself—it seemed as if her heart were always at her mouth. She was all gaiety, openness, and good nature; she rioted in her fine animal spirits, and gave more pleasure than any other actress, because she had the greatest spirit of enjoyment in herself.—*Hazlitt, "Criticisms."*

Mrs. Jordan, more than any English actress, seems to have "bewitched" the public. There was an irresistible joyousness about her look, her laugh, her voice—a mixture of enjoy-



ment and sympathy, as if she was full of pleasure in what she was doing, and of delight in feeling that pleasure shared by others, which was quite independent of beauty, grace, or intellect. It must have been gall and wormwood to the jealous and domineering temper of Mrs. Abington to see the throne she had held so long and so despotically usurped by this raw young actress-of-all-work from the York circuit, who dressed carelessly, moved as the whim prompted her, thought nothing of cadences or points, and, in short, was as completely the ideal of natural charm as Mrs. Abington of artificial.—*C. R. Leslie*, “*Life of Reynolds*.”

Mrs. Jordan, when making up a quarrel with a lover, was touching beyond description.—*B. R. Haydon*, “*Autobiography*.”

Her sphere of observation had for the most part been in the country, and the “Country Girl,” therefore, became her own in its innocence or its wantonness, its moodiness in restraint, or its elastic movement when free. Her imagination teemed with the notions of such a being, and the gestures with which what she said were accompanied, spoke a language infinitely more expressive than words—the latter could give no more than the meaning of her mind, the former interpreted for the whole being. She did not rise to the point where comedy attains the dignity of moral satire, but *humour* was her own in all its boundless diversity. She had no reserve whatever of modest shyness to prevent her from giving the fullest effects to the flights of her fancy. She drove everything home to the mark, and the visible enjoyment of her own power added sensibly to its effect upon others. Of her beautiful compact figure she had the most captivating use—its spring, its wild activity, its quickness of turn. She made a grand deposit of her tucker, and her bosom concealed everything but its own charms. The redundant curls of her hair, half showing and half concealing the archness of her physiognomy, added to a playfulness which even as she advanced in life could not seem otherwise than natural and delightful.—*Boaden's “Life of Siddons.”*

I went a short time ago to see Mrs. Jordan in “As You Like It,” and was quite as much pleased with her as I expected; indeed, more so, for I had been taught to expect an immensely fat woman, and she is but moderately so. Her face is still very fine; no print that I ever saw of her is much like. Her performance of *Rosalind* was, in my mind, perfect; though

I am convinced the character, from its nature, did not call forth half Mrs. Jordan's powers.—*Leslie's "Autobiography,"* 1813.

## Joseph George Holman.

1764-1817.

Joseph George Holman was a native of London, and intended for the church; but in 1784 he made his *début* at Covent Garden Theatre. He afterwards went to America, and became manager of Charlestown Theatre. Among his dramatic productions are the "Votary of Wealth," a comedy, "Red Cross Knights," "Abroad and at Home," &c. His death was remarkable and melancholy, taking place, together with his second wife, two days after their marriage, by the yellow fever.—*Universal Biography.*

All the actors of that day, both in the street and on the stage, Holman surpassed in majestic bearing and deportment. The London critics acknowledged his *Lord Townly*, in the "Provoked Husband," the perfection of the nobleman of the days of Chesterfield. He was quite unlike an actor in the dignified lord, and was the thing itself. . . . Many *De Valmouts*<sup>1</sup> I have witnessed in fifty-four years, but have never seen the equal of this accomplished English actor.—*Donaldson.*

Holman having been annoyed by some anonymous criticism, wrote, on a pane of glass at the Booth Hall Inn, Gloucester :

"My life is like the glass I mark, at best,  
Shining, but brittle; easily impressed;  
The missile of a wanton, unseen foe  
Can smash a glass or actor at a blow.—J. G. H."

Miles Andrews,<sup>2</sup> who was travelling with him, wrote under it before they left :

"Your life like to this glass! Not so, my lad;  
*This* has reflection, which you never had.—M. P. A."

*Records of a Veteran.*

When Reynolds and Holman were both in the first dawn of

<sup>1</sup> In "The Foundling of the Forest."

<sup>2</sup> "Andrews was so wretched a writer that his new plays in London, like his powder-mills at Dartford, were particularly hazardous affairs, and in great danger of going off with a sudden violent explosion."—*Colman.*

their reputation, the latter wrote to Reynolds from some of the provinces to say, that he had heard Macklin had seen him one night in "Werter" (a play of Reynolds's), and had expressed himself highly delighted with the performance. "If you should meet him," continued Holman, "pray tell him how much flattered I feel, &c. &c., and how proud I shall be to continue to merit," &c. &c. Reynolds accordingly took the first opportunity to address Macklin, when he met him; but he had not gone far with "his friend Holman's" rapturous acknowledgments when Macklin, interrupting him, said, "Stop, stop, sir! before you go any further, have the goodness to tell me *who* are you, and who is the fellow you're talking of?"—*T. Moore.*

Holman, with the bright glittering teeth in *Lothario*, and the deep pavior's sighs in *Romeo*, the jolliest person ("our son is fat") of any *Hamlet* I have yet seen, with the most laudable attempts (for a personable man) at looking melancholy.—*C. Lamb.*

## William Dowton.

1764-1851.

Mr. Dowton might have reminded one very often of the fabled fountain of antiquity, whose water, it was said, bubbled as if boiling, yet never ran over, but always fell back again perfectly cool upon itself.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*<sup>1</sup>

Dowton's face, manner, and delivery, were so truly in keeping with nature, that an auditor could hardly imagine he was looking on anything but the thing itself, so wonderfully Dowton conceived and executed the most difficult character. During his stay at Southampton he played *Sir Anthony Absolute*, *Sir Peter Teazle*, *Sir David Dunder*, and *Sir John Falstaff*, in "Henry the Fourth." It has ever been said that the delineation of the fat knight is a sure test of an actor's talents. Since the days of Henderson, the manager Maxfield, who had seen

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<sup>1</sup> "Dowton," wrote Mathews to his wife, from Stratford-on-Avon, "kicked up a great dust in the house where Shakspeare was born. The old woman who shows it remembered him well. He must have been delirious; he desired to be left alone:—'There, go; I cannot have witnesses; I shall cry; and so—eh? what, the divine Billy was born here, eh? The pride of all nature has been in this room! I must kneel—leave me! I don't like people to see me cry.'"—ED.

that great man, declared he had never witnessed any one that in the slightest degree approached Dowton in *Sir John*.—*W. Donaldson.*

In acting he was of a very different school (from Parsons), the chastest, and therefore the best. He was not disposed, like Munden, to resort to occasional grimace, but made his aim legitimately at *character* in the drama, and filled up any perfect outline from an author with all the vitality that could be expected from the consummate artist. Among his other excellencies, he is a great master of dialect, and preserves it without the slightest mixture even in the vehemence of passion, when any mode *assumed* by the tongue is in most danger of being lost in the personal feeling of the actor. As to utility in the theatre, he was nearer to King than to Parsons; and sensible speaking made the great charm of his comedy, with a kindly paternal warmth that *glowed* through the oddities of exterior whim.—*Boaden.*

Dowton's passionate old men are pronounced faultless: they are so; nothing can be more true to nature, for it is Dowton's nature. I have seen Dowton, annoyed at dinner, snatch his wig off his head and fling it into the fire. There is scarcely any extravagance of manner that he has portrayed in *Sir Anthony*, *Restive*, or *Oldboy*, that I have not noticed in him in private life. I have seen him deprived of speech by irritation.—*Records of a Veteran.*

## Benjamin Charles Incledon.

1764–1826.

Incledon was notoriously a vain man, an egotist in the most liberal and extended sense of the word. In pronouncing his own name he believed he described all that was admirable in human nature. He called himself the “English Ballad-singer”—a distinction he would not have exchanged for the highest in the realm of talent.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

Incledon was an original, and a general favourite among his brother actors. He was ever ready with a witty expression, and was rarely indeed seen out of humour. The elder Mathews gave a first-rate imitation of Incledon; and although the great mimic's face was totally unlike the national singer's,

yet it was difficult to tell, when seen together, which was Inledon and which was Mathews.<sup>1</sup>—*W. Donaldson.*

The tuneful favourite of your youthful days,  
Rear'd by your smiles and nurtur'd by your praise ;  
Whom you proclaim'd from competition free,  
Unrivall'd in his native minstrelsy.—*Dowton.*

It is a pity I cannot put upon paper the singular gabblings of that actor ; the lax and sailor-like twist of mind with which everything hung upon him, and his profane pieties in quoting the Bible, for which and swearing he seemed to have an equal reverence.—*Leigh Hunt.*

He is one of the worst-looking men I ever saw, and has, indeed, completely the face and figure of a low sailor. He is likewise a wretched actor, and always appears on the stage with that kind of awkward stiffness that arises from a man being in better company than he is accustomed to. He is, however, a very charming singer, and has the most manly and at the same time most agreeable voice I ever heard. He was, I am told, in reality a common sailor originally. I have also heard that he has other talents than that of singing, and can eat and drink more at a meal than any other man.—*C. R. Leslie's "Autobiography,"* 1813.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mathews has recorded his opinions of Inledon :—"Inledon has cleared a vast deal of money ; he has fifteen guineas each night, and a benefit in each place, two of which have been very great ; and I do not doubt that will be the case with the third here. I heartily wish it, for I am convinced he is a very good-hearted fellow. Whatever ill-natured people may say of his ignorance or vanity, I think he has sense enough to conduct himself like a gentleman, and infinitely less vanity than could be expected from a man who had not the advantage of a good education or polite introduction to the world. I have been very intimate with him since he has been here, and from his conduct in general I should say he was as generous as a prince ; and never ashamed to mention his former situation when at sea, or when in strolling company at half-a-guinea per week. This is but very seldom the case when men are raised from low situations."—*ED.*

<sup>2</sup> "His energy was great, his sensibility scarcely less, and but for the vulgarity of his manner he was qualified to take, and would have taken, a very high place. His pronunciation was thick, and affected by something like a lisp, which proceeded from a roll of his too large tongue, when he prepared for a forcible passage, or was embarrassed by the word. In this way, too, he used to jump to his falsetto by octaves, for the tone (it was that of a rich flute) was so widely different from his natural voice, there could be no junction. His singing was at once natural and national. The

At Worcester, February 4, died Mr. Incedon, who possessed at once the most powerful and most melodious voice of modern times, and who stood unrivalled in his style of singing such songs as "The Storm," "Black-eyed Susan," &c. He was born in Cornwall. His voice, at a very early period, excited admiration; and when only eight years old he was articled to the celebrated Jackson of Exeter, and under his tuition he became a little idol in all the concerts and musical parties about the neighbourhood. At the expiration of six or seven years (1779), a truant disposition induced him to enter on board the *Formidable*. He went to the West Indies, and in the course of the two years that he continued in the navy he was in several engagements. Under the patronage of Lord Mulgrave, Admiral Pigot, and other naval officers, who gave him letters of introduction to Mr. Colman, he, after his return to England in 1792, endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an engagement for the Haymarket Theatre. Disappointed there, he joined Collins's company at Southampton, came out as *Alphonso* in the "Castle of Andalusia," and was received with the most flattering admiration. About a year afterwards, the fame of his abilities having reached Bath, he was engaged by the managers of that city. There, however, he was for some time regarded as little better than a chorus-singer; but, fortunately, the penetration of the musical amateurs soon discovered his value. Rauzzini, the conductor of the concerts, took him under his care, and gave him the best instructions a pupil could receive. He sang at the concerts at Bath and Bristol with great applause; was engaged at Vauxhall in the summer, where his success was still more flattering; and Rauzzini's patronage speedily raised him from obscurity into universal estimation. He was a great favourite at the noblemen's Catch Club in Bath, which he assisted in establishing;

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hunting song, the sea song, and the ballad, given with English force and English feeling, may be said to have expired with Incedon. He was the manliest of singers." Thus writes one who had often heard Incedon. He adds, however, "It is impossible to imagine anything more conceited or more coarse than Incedon in private life, as well as on the stage. There is an anecdote in common circulation which combines these two qualities to demonstration. Some of his theatrical companions were one day discussing the qualities necessary to the performance of *Macheath*, when Incedon thus spoke:—"A man should be a gentleman, G—d—— me, to play *Macheath*; he should be a man of education (another oath), he should have fine manners (a still stronger); in short (with a most blasphemous adjuration), he must be Charles Incedon!"

and Dr. Harrington, the most eminent physician there, was his particular friend. Remaining under Rauzzini six or seven years, he received a complete musical education, and became the first English singer on the stage. As a tenor, Mr. Incedon's voice was not always agreeable to the ear, but in compass it was equal to any piece of music; the falsetto part was extensive and sweet beyond conception, and the bass was better than could be reasonably expected in one gifted so liberally in other respects. In the song of "My bonny, bonny Bet, sweet blossom," he particularly charmed with his falsetto, and he was frequently obliged to sing that air three times—never less than twice—in the course of an evening. After a few years, however, he practised more in the tenor or middle part of his voice, and used the falsetto less than in the earlier part of his career. Mr. Incedon made his *début* as *Dermot* in "The Poor Soldier," at Covent Garden Theatre, in October, 1790. He had for some time to labour against the prejudice of having been a Vauxhall singer; and as his histrionic talents were of a very humble stamp, it was long before he could obtain possession of any first-rate characters. His occasional performance, however, of *Captain Macheath*, *Young Meadows*, &c., was so masterly, it proved him to be fully competent to take the lead in all operas. Ultimately his powers were duly appreciated by the managers and by the public. For many seasons Mr. Incedon sang with great *éclat* at the oratorios in Lent; frequently he visited Ireland, where no singer, not even Mrs. Billington, was ever more caressed. Of late years—somewhat neglected, perhaps, for newer favourites in the metropolis—his engagements were chiefly of a provincial nature. Styling himself "The Wandering Melodist," he was accustomed to give a vocal entertainment of his own. A paralytic affection, in the course of a few weeks, led to the termination of his existence. He had been married three times, and has a son<sup>1</sup> engaged in agricultural pursuits, now, or recently, living in the neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826.

During the O.P. war, whilst a terrific tumult was raging in front

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<sup>1</sup> This son appeared at Drury Lane Theatre, in 1829, as *Young Meadows* in "Love in a Village." A critic, noticing his performance, says:—"Although bearing no comparison with his father, this gentleman has honest claims to be fostered for his own sake—a tenor voice of singular sweetness, though of moderate compass, a fine intonation, and modest, frank, and unaffected manners."

of the house, the management in their dilemma popped upon Incedon, as "an everybody's favourite," to go on and pacify them. "I, my dear boy," replied Charles; "*I attempt to stop that riot! I might as well bolt a door with a boiled carrot!*"—Wishing to give a stranger an idea of a man who was extremely thin, he said, "His leg now is a capital leg to *clean a flute* with."—His quotations from Scripture were always aptly, sometimes awfully used; but occasionally he made them convey bitter sarcasm. He had been starring at a large provincial town, and his share of the receipts certainly appeared very inadequate to what might have been expected from the houses. The manager protested all was correct; Incedon bowed, and after a moment muttered, "*Now Barabbas was a robber.*"—Incedon was *not* very learned, but affected to be much more ignorant than he really was. Conversation once turning upon poetry, and the "*Canterbury Tales*" being quoted, one of the arguers asked Charley if he was partial to Chaucer. "Am I partial to chaw, sir? By the Holy Paul, that entirely depends upon what it is; but if you mean tobacco, d—— me, I am not!"—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

A singer whose marvellous sweetness of voice and forcible simplicity of style can never be forgotten by those who once heard him.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1839.

Cooke was one evening very merry at a tavern, when Incedon, coming in, was requested by the tragic hero to sing "*The Storm*," but it being late he refused, and retired to bed. Irritated at this, Cooke determined to be revenged, and after musing for a few minutes, asked the masters and waiters if they knew the man who had just been sitting in the same box with him. They replied, it was Mr. Incedon. "No such thing," exclaimed Cooke; "'tis some vile impostor, for he has stolen my watch and notes, and I insist for an officer being sent for, that we may search him. Remonstrance was fruitless, so at length the guardian of the night was summoned, and they all ascended to Incedon's chamber, with Cooke at their head. Charley, roused from his first sleep, asked what they wanted. Cooke insisted that he was the man who had the NOTES, at the same time observing, "If 'tis really Incedon he can sing '*The Storm*.' Let him do so, and I shall be convinced of my error." Incedon now perceiving the drift of the joke, without further preface, addressing himself to Cooke, struck up "*Cease, Rude Boreas*," and having gone through the ditty,



the party left him once more to his repose.—*Theatrical Anecdotes.*

His vocal endowments were certainly considerable: he had a voice of uncommon power, both in the natural and falsetto. The former was from A to G—a compass of about fourteen notes; the latter he could use from D to E or F, or about ten notes. His natural voice was full and open, neither partaking of the reed nor the string, and sent forth without the smallest artifice; and such was its ductility, that when he sang *pianissimo*, it retained its original quality. His falsetto was rich, sweet, and brilliant, but totally unlike the other. He took it without preparation, according to circumstances, either about D, E, or F, or ascending an octave, which was his most frequent custom, he could use it with facility, and execute in it ornaments of a certain class with volubility and sweetness. His shake was good, and his intonation much more correct than is common to singers so imperfectly educated.—*Dictionary of Musicians.*

## Charles Dignum.

1765–1827.

A quick transition from summer to winter was easy to him who knew no middle season of spring and fall. As soon, therefore, as Vauxhall Gardens closed their rural gates, Drury Lane Theatre opened wide—very wide—its dignified portals to admit Diggy's ample form; for there, time out of mind, he was found the stock representative of the gallant *Captain Lightly*, a character which he performed annually to Mrs. Jordan's romp for nearly a quarter of a century, and of which, by prescriptive right, he retained possession for many a year after the secession of that inimitable actress. Who that had even once seen Dignum in the amatory soldier could forget him? With what a full-blown martial air would he present himself, as lounging about the streets, though morning, in a captain's full-dress regimentals of his day! . . . How judiciously would Diggy in a subsequent scene, act the part of bottle-holder to the delicate *Miss Tomboy*, during her pugilistic experiments upon her grocer cousin!—his warrior head, pomatumed and powdered, resembling a seedling cauliflower, and agreeing in shape, though not in colour, with his well-rounded face; his

figure bedight in scarlet coat, with yellow facings; white dimity, double-breasted, and lapelled waistcoat; red sash, pendant over his white kerseymeres, the ends dangling unequally above his well-mangled silk stockings of a bluish hue; with paste knee and shoe buckles, low quartered pumps, and a very large three-cornered cocked hat, gilt-buttoned and looped, with a towering red-and-white feather swagging over one shoulder—presenting altogether “a combination and a form, indeed, where every (gallery) god did seem to set his seal to give assurance of”—an officer and a *gentleman!* (Dignum was essentially *that*, or less than that he was nothing.)<sup>1</sup>—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

Dignum made his *début* at Drury Lane Theatre, in 1784, in the character of *Young Meadows*, in the comic opera of “*Love in a Village.*” His figure was, indeed, rather unfavourable for the part he represented, but his voice was so clear and full-toned, and his manner of singing so judicious, that he was received with the warmest applause. He then appeared in *Cymon*, and again experienced the most flattering approbation. His voice was a fine tenor. Amongst other characters, those of *Hawthorn* and *Giles* particularly suited him, and he was superior in them to every other actor since the days of Beard.—*Dictionary of Musicians.*

In a common room his voice, it must be confessed, is musical and pleasant; and while he sits in a chair after a good dinner (which he is said to be very fond of) he seems to feel no embarrassment. He has been used to sitting on a tailor’s shop-board for many years, therefore the habit of sitting is as familiar to him as to the grand signior; when Dignum walks down the stage his motion is like to that of an empty *butt*, set upon one end in a hurry, which, ere it settles to a standstill, makes many strange, unwieldy motions; and when it rests has nothing to boast of but its void rotundity. It must be allowed that he has music about him; but as an actor I know not whether he is so likely to excel.—*C. H. Wilson.*

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<sup>1</sup> Dignum was a tailor before he turned vocalist. He and Moses Kean (uncle of Edmund Kean), who had also been a tailor, were one day together when Charles Bannister passed with a friend. “I never see those two fellows together,” said Bannister, “without thinking of one of Shakspeare’s plays.” “And which is that?” asked the friend. “*Measure for Measure,*” answered Bannister.—ED.

## John Richardson.

1766-1836.

It was when this generation of showmen had passed away that Richardson made his bow at Smithfield. His stage and theatrical fittings were at first of a very rude character. The first floor of a public-house was turned into a theatre, and the platform or parade, which was fitted up outside the window, formed an arch over the stalls of the sellers of gingerbread nuts and fried fish, which stood below. The audience had to reach the theatre by means of a ladder, communicating from the platform to the fair. Twenty-one times a day were the unlucky performers called upon to go through their parts. The audiences were not very fastidious, and as long as they had a broad-sword combat and a ghost, the actors were at liberty to play all sorts of tricks with the drama. The length of the performance was indeed usually regulated by the number of people waiting to enter the show. When it was thought that there was a sufficient quantity of visitors outside to form another audience, some one would be sent in to inquire in a loud voice if John Audley was there. This was a signal to the actors to cut the part short; and to abridge a performance is very commonly called to "John Audley" it. This trick was first practised by Shuter at his booth in 1759. Whatever may have been the cause, it is certain that at first, curses, loud, deep, and comprehensive as that of Ernulphus, were heard from Richardson's retreating patrons; but it was not long before he installed himself in popular favour. The performances of Bartlemy were repeated at Edmonton and other places, and at the end of the year our showman found himself the possessor of a good sum of money. With this he built himself two or three caravans ("carrywans" was his pronunciation) in which he could convey his company and properties from one place to another. . . . His show became one of the principal features of many of the fairs of the kingdom—Bartlemy and Greenwich being his head-quarters—but it was not until after many years, and many hardships, that he was enabled to give his show that appearance of splendour which we were accustomed to associate with it in our younger days.—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1865.

We were once introduced to the celebrated Muster Richardson, and were presented with a free admission to his "theater as one of the purfession." The drama was called the "Wandering Outlaw, or the Hour of Retribution," concluding with the "Death of Orsina, and the appearance of the Accusing Spirit." We did not enjoy it very much, as the rain came through the canvas and the principal tragedian and the ghost had the influenza. Richardson claimed to have had under his management the elder Kean, Wallack, Barnes, the favourite pantaloon, and other celebrities. He had a fine appreciation of genius, that Muster Richardson, and left a gentleman of the fair—the original *Mazeppa* at Astley's—a handsome legacy because he was a bold speaker.—*Mark Lemon*.

This person, who is the last of the real race of itinerant dramatic showmen, amassed a fortune by unwearied industry; for upwards of forty years he has reigned supreme in Smithfield and other fairs. It happened some years since, at the time of the fair at St. Albans, that a dreadful fire occurred; Richardson and his company did their utmost to extinguish it, and their services were considered valuable. Some time afterwards a subscription was raised for the uninsured sufferers; a plain-looking man, in a rusty black coat, red waistcoat, corduroy inexpressibles, and worsted stockings, entered the committee-room, and gave in his subscription—100*l*. "What name shall we say, sir?" asked the astonished clerk. "*Richardson, the penny showman,*" was the proud reply.—*Records of a Stage Veteran*, 1836.

## Samuel Russell.

1766–1845.

Mr. Russell was the prince of oral hoaxers. His natural voice and expression of face favoured any desire which he conceived, of persuading his victims of his own belief of whatever he wished *them* to believe. His calm, dispassionate, and persuasive manner and tones never failed to produce whatever was his object—no matter upon whom he practised, his end was always attained. Mr. Russell's waggeries were continually in progress in the green-room, and he had the skill to adapt them to diverse subjects, according to his fancy; and with an absolute dominion over himself, he could scarcely fail to rule those upon whom he exercised his power; his quiet and

seemingly *unconscious* mind, the guileless expression of his face and voice, his ready smile, his words and demeanour, were so apparently candid, while carrying on his jokes, and the impassibility of his features so entire, his temper so imperturbable, that those combined characteristics gained him from Mr. Mathews the fitting *sobriquet* of "His Innocence."—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

Russell, who is best known as Jerry Sneak Russell, is the oldest exhibitor now extant (1835)—that is to say, he appeared in some capacity full sixty years since (exceeding Bannister by two years). At the time of Russell's *début*, however, he was only seven or eight years old. He performed at Coachmakers' Hall, gave a series of songs, recitations, &c., and was much followed. When Breslaw, the emperor of all the conjurers, started through the provinces with his ambidexteral displays, he engaged little Sam Russell, and little Miss Ramanzini (afterwards Mrs. Bland, then nine years old), to accompany him. These juvenile performers proved very attractive, and received a lucrative offer at the opening of the Circus (now the Surrey) under the management of old Charles Dibdin, of *Sans Souci* celebrity, in 1779 or 1780. There Russell spoke the opening address, and there remained until

"He grew hobbady-hoyish."

About the year 1785 he launched into the drama, and ten years afterwards appeared at Drury Lane in *Charles Surface* and *Dribble*.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

## Joseph Bartleman.

1767-1821:

The character of Bartleman's intellect and voice was in diametrical opposition to both the theory and the practice. He was of a spirited and gay temperament, and his voice was strictly a baritone. He had a compass of more than two octaves, and the tone was as penetrating as that of a violoncello, from which instrument perhaps he caught it, for it bore more resemblance to the clear, vibrating, yet stringy effect of Lindley's bass than anything else. Bartleman, too, was himself a violoncello player, which adds force to the opinion. His performance gave to bass-singing a totally new air. He enlivened and exalted its

expression, and, by his energy of manner, improved the inert and sluggish ponderosity of heavy sound with vivacity and meaning. He lightened, improved, and enlarged the sphere of the bass. The drawback upon Bartleman's singing was his vocalization. He had embraced a theory that the perfection of tone was its general uniformity—its homogeneity. To this intent he rounded the pronunciation of his vowels, thus making *they* into *thoy*, *die* into *doy*, &c. This swelling and sonorous system of enunciation, for system it was, corrupted the purity and infected the whole manner with a pomposity that was very like the affectation of a superiority not absolutely certain of its claims.<sup>1</sup>—“*The Progress of Music*,” Anon., 1833.

This gentleman, who for many years stood unrivalled in his profession as a bass-singer, died on the 14th of April, at his house in Berners Street, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, after a long-protracted and painful illness. Those who have heard Mr. Bartleman in the finest songs of Handel, Purcell, and other ancient composers, can well appreciate the loss the musical profession will sustain by the death of such a man. To a fine-toned, melodious voice, he added the most correct judgment and refined taste, with an expression peculiar to himself.—*Memoir*, 1821.

Though delicate in person and constitution, and often ill, Bartleman was lively and spirited to a remarkable degree. It used to puzzle me to find out when or how he learned; and indeed, I have heard Dr. Cooke say, “Those boys of mine learn of one another more than from me.” Of his early superiority he was as little vain as if it had consisted in spinning a top. . . . Success never altered him—applause never elevated him; and he died, I am confident, as he lived, beloved beyond the usual degree of love bestowed on those whose excellence “has no companion.”—*Miss Hawkins*.

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<sup>1</sup> Bartleman was made sensible of this defect. A newspaper critic in a provincial town where he had sung pointed out his peculiarity. Bartleman called upon him for an explanation. A meeting was appointed, and a musical clergyman attended as umpire. The piano was opened. “Now,” said the critic, turning to a duet in Haydn’s “Creation,” “listen to this passage.” He sang it. “I do not like it,” said Bartleman. “It is too thin and meagre—the tone is not sufficiently of one kind.” Upon this the critic sang the passage in Bartleman’s exact tone and manner. He had not got beyond the first few bars when the artist seized him by the arm. “Stop, sir; I see it, but you have made me miserable for life, for I shall never correct it.”—*Er*.

## Andrew Cherry.

1769-1812.

Cherry's *Few* is one of the finest pieces of acting I ever saw. I think it very superior to Bannister, who certainly played it well, but neither spoke the dialect nor looked the character so well as Cherry. He is an extremely little man, I think less than Quick, with a droll face. He is one of the most humorous men in the world off the stage, and a very good actor on it.—*Charles Mathews.*<sup>1</sup>

The 25th of the month showed us a substitute for King in that very clever actor, Cherry, who appeared in *Sir Benjamin Dove*, in "The Brothers;" and, as a master in his profession, he acted also *Lazarillo*, in "Two Strings to Your Bow." He not only filled the cast, in a great measure, of King, but seemed equally fitted to that of Dodd, and could go nearly to the breadth of Munden, little as he was. Cherry was a native of Limerick, contemporary with Mrs. Jordan, and his father was a bookseller.—*Boaden.*

Andrew Cherry, author of the "Soldier's Daughter," "Two Strings to Your Bow," was a comedian of great talent, but of *peculiar* humour. He made his *début* as *Sir Benjamin Dove*, in Cumberland's neglected comedy of "The Brothers;" but Munden, Quick, Dowton, Suett, Bannister, Fawcett, T. Knight, Emery, were all established favourites; and the next season brought Collins, who died early, but who was a very powerful actor, and Mathews into the field. Against such a phalanx of performers poor little Cherry could not hope for great success. Under the circumstances, his success was really extraordinary, but it did not satisfy his ambition.—*The Early Days of Edmund Kean.*

Andrew Cherry, the author of the "Soldier's Daughter," and several other dramatic pieces, made his first *début* as an actor in a strolling company, which exhibited at the little town of Naas, about fourteen miles from Dublin. His first character

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<sup>1</sup> Writing later, Mathews says: "Cherry's merit is by no means confined: his old men are uncommonly rich, and his country boys are the most simple and humorous of any I have seen after Blanchard; indeed, in any line of comedy he is a charming actor. He is a very excellent judge of dressing, and has capital clothes, and the best wigs I ever saw."—ED.

was *Colonel Feignwell*, in "A Bold Stroke for a Wife"—an arduous task for a boy of seventeen; but he obtained great applause, and the manager of this sharing company, after passing many encomiums on his exertions, presented him with *tenpence-halfpenny*, as his dividend of the profits of the night's performance. Young Cherry now launched out into a most extensive range of characters, and during the ten months he was with this manager he acted almost all the principal characters in tragedy, comedy, and farce; and yet, notwithstanding his exertions, he suffered all the vicissitudes and distress incident to such a precarious mode of life. He was frequently without the means of common subsistence, and sometimes unable to buy the very candles by which he should study the numerous characters that were assigned him.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

## John Fawcett.

1769-1837.

He was one of our few remaining actors who have striven successfully to individualize their performances, instead of considering them as mere opportunities to display certain energies, or to make certain faces and hits. His style was essentially hard, yet he managed, by art and care, to bend it so as to discriminate the varieties of character which he attempted. He had not the facility or richness of Munden, nor the antique elegance of Farren—he could not play grotesque parts like the first, nor elderly beaux like the last; but in representations of bluff honesty and rude manly feeling, he had no rival. His performances were eminently English; few performers, indeed, have spoken our language so purely, and none have represented so well those manly feelings of which we are habitually proud. Of the performances to which he himself alluded in his parting address—*Caleb Quotem*, *Job Thornbury*, *Dr. Pangloss*, *Sir Mark Chace*, and *Captain Copp*, I greatly prefer the two last, each of which seems to me, in its way, absolutely perfect. Besides these, I recollect his admirable acting of the *Farmer*, in the original "Maid and the Magpie:" staid form, almost crabbed, till the poor girl is taken to prison, then breaking out with unexpected energy of defence, which (when all seemed vain) was succeeded by a sad patience irresistibly touching.—*Talfourd.*



A great, original, masterly comedian, always natural, and extremely powerful.—*Boaden.*

## Mrs. Billington.

1770—1818.

I heard excellent music last night, and the last public notes of the sweetest singer I have ever heard, or probably ever shall hear—I mean, combined with so much power—for I have heard many moderately strong voices *still* sweeter, according to the usual equalization of heaven's gifts. Mrs. Billington professedly sang for the last time; but as I saw Mara's resurrection about six different times in ten years, I am not without hope of hearing her again. Her last Italian air was that which Tarchi taught me, "Sarah's Lamentation;" it was marked MS., and every one is wishing for it.—*Mrs. Trench*,<sup>1</sup> 1811.

Of all the female singers that England ever produced, no one ever obtained, or perhaps deserved, such celebrity as Mrs. Billington.<sup>2</sup> Her transcendent talents were not only the boast of the country, but the whole of Europe did their homage, and wherever she went she was honoured and caressed.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

In my judgment the most accomplished of all English singers.—*Boaden.*

The full-length of Mrs. Billington as Saint Cecilia, with a choir of angels fluttering around and making music to her voice, is now in New York, in the gallery of Colonel Lennox. This sweet singer, against the wish of her father, the famous hautboy of the Italian Opera orchestra, had changed her maiden name of Weichsell at fifteen for that of her husband, Billington, one of the Drury Lane band; and after a year's strolling in Ireland, had made her *début* in *Rosetta* in February, 1786, at once dazzling the town with the brilliancy of her

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<sup>1</sup> Mother of Richard Chenevix Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, a highly accomplished and exquisitely beautiful woman.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Her maiden name was Elizabeth Weichsell. Her father was a native of Freyburg, in Saxony. Her mother was a Miss Frederica Weirman, who performed for a few nights, in 1764, at Covent Garden, and did not appear again. Her voice was powerful, and resembled the tone of a clarinet. She died 1786.—ED.

vocalization and the flush of her youthful beauty, which even at this early age was of the full and luscious order.—*C. R. Leslie.*

Mrs. Billington, then in the meridian of her beauty and talent, was the heroine of the opera. Edwin, who in the second act was to have assumed the disguise of a young Tartar prince, being unable, from sudden illness, to change his dress, actually wooed the beautiful Mrs. Billington in tattered armour and *flannel*. But our misfortunes did not stop here; for during Mrs. Billington's *bravura* in the last act, Mr. Billington, her husband, who was seated in the orchestra, conceiving that the trumpeter did not accompany her with sufficient force, frequently called to him, in a subdued tone, "Louder, louder!" The leader of the band being of a similar opinion to Mr. Billington, repeated the same command so often that at length the indignant German, in an agony of passion and exhaustion, threw down his trumpet, and turning towards the audience violently exclaimed—"It is very easy to cry louder! louder! but, by gar! vere is de *vind*?" This unfortunate interrogatory showed us *where* there was an abundance; and a breeze ensued which nearly at once upset my little bark.—*Frederick Reynolds.*

By nature Mrs. Billington was largely gifted. Her voice was of that peculiar brilliancy in tone that has obtained the appellation of *fluty*, for with the richness and fulness of that instrument it had a birdlike lightness and brilliancy, whilst its compass upward was all but unlimited. Shield<sup>1</sup> composed a song for her that went up to G in *altissimo*—a height, we believe, never reached before or since. Her intonation was so correct that she was hardly ever known to sing out of tune. Her execution was perfect, and her fancy suggested more than her good taste

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<sup>1</sup> William Shield was born 1754. His father was an eminent singing-master. At the age of six Shield is said to have been able to perform Corelli's fifth work. His father dying, the choice was offered him of becoming a sailor, a boat-builder, or a barber. He chose boat-building. Closely as he was kept to work, he found leisure to prosecute his favourite study with such success as ultimately determined him in its adoption as a profession. His talents soon bringing him into notice, Harris, manager of Covent Garden Theatre, engaged him as bandmaster and composer to the house. Among numerous compositions of his are "The Wolf," "The Thorn," "O, Bring Me Wine," "The Post Captain," "Old Towler," "Village Maids," "The Heaving of the Lead," &c. He died January 25, 1829.—ED.

would allow her to introduce, for the age of "fiddle-singing," as it has been contemptuously termed, was only then about to commence. She, however, embellished every song she sang, changing the passages, and introduced more extensively the *expression of ornament*. But with all this power, imaginative and vocal, she nevertheless retained a chastity in her manner of executing Purcell and Handel, which made her the idol of the ancients. For her, it is known, the practice of harmonizing airs was first commenced. Carter's beautiful and pathetic "Oh, Nanny, wilt thou gang with me," was the most popular, and it certainly was an exquisite treat to hear such a voice descanting above the accompanying vocal harmony of Harrison, Knyvett, and Bartleman.—*The Progress of Music*, 1833.

Her face was beautiful and expressive, her figure graceful; her voice possessed a peculiar sweetness of tone, and was of great extent, but wanted what Dr. Burney would call *calibre*. The most scientific songs she executed with bewitching taste and affecting pathos; and though her voice was not overpowerful, it possessed great variety and a most perfect shake.—*The Manager's Note Book*.<sup>1</sup>

Haydn, the musician, was an enthusiastic admirer of the late Mrs. Billington; and one day calling on Sir Joshua Reynolds, he found her sitting for her portrait to that celebrated painter. This was Sir Joshua's famous singer, in which Mrs. Billington is represented in the character of St. Cecilia, listening to the celestial music. Haydn, having looked for some moments attentively at the portrait, said, "It is very like—a very fine likeness; but there is a strange mistake." "What is that?" said Sir Joshua, hastily. Haydn answered, "You have painted her listening to the angels; you ought to have represented the angels listening to her." Mrs. Billington was so much charmed by this compliment, that she sprang from her seat, and threw her fair arms around Haydn's neck.—*Theatrical Anecdotes*.

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<sup>1</sup> In Miss Berry's "Journal," Napoleon is to be found saying that "Vous avez une bien belle voix, c'est Madame Billington," and that he heard her in Italy.—ED.

## Mrs. Mountain.

1771-1840.

This charming songstress and no less charming woman is still living and in good health (1835). Her maiden name was Wilkinson, and some of her family were celebrated as wire and rope dancers. She was engaged by Tate Wilkinson (no relative) at York, as a substitute for Mrs. Jordan when that lady made her metropolitan essay (1785). About five or six years prior to this she (then a child) appeared at the Circus with Mrs. Bland, Russell, Mrs. C. Kemble, Mrs. Wybrow, and other children, in a piece by old Dibdin, called "The Boarding School, or Breaking Up." This performance was rendered by the great talent of the children so effective that the patent proprietors interfered, and the juvenile company narrowly escaped a gaol. As she commenced, so she concluded her career with an engagement at the Surrey, where she played with Incedon a few nights before she left the stage. About twenty years since, or upwards, she gave an entertainment by herself, which was very profitable, in the provinces. She married Mr. Mountain, the well-known leader. As they had no family the would-be wits of the day made the name subservient to some ridiculous puns, which I need not resuscitate.—*Records of a Veteran.*

Mrs. Mountain has convinced us that during her two or three years' recess from the London theatres she has not been idle; for on her first appearance last season at Drury Lane she burst upon us like a new character, by having made such wonderful advancement in her profession. She always appeared to the town as a very interesting singer, a good actress, and a pretty woman; but now it must be allowed that this lady ranks amongst the first-rate on the stage, when considered as a vocal performer, and has arrived almost at the very summit of her profession in the orchestra of an oratorio.—*C. H. Wilson.*

## Robert William Elliston.

1774-1831.

I can conceive nothing better than . . . Elliston in *gentleman's* comedy, and in some parts of tragedy.—*Byron.*

He was a most delightful companion, and it might have been said of him in homely phrase, with more point than of most people, that in conversation "he was as good as a comedy," aye, and one of the very best comedies, too. I remember few people who carried their professional charm more entirely into their private life. Mr. Elliston in manner was like that of many other actors: a distinct person behind the scenes and in society—*i.e.*, *in* and *out* of a theatre. In the former position, it always seemed to me that he felt it necessary to put "an antic disposition on," especially when he became a manager, in order to cope with the oddity and variety of characters and tempers he then encountered; but at these times I am fully persuaded that, like *Hamlet*, he was only mad "North-north-west."<sup>1</sup>—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

Elliston was ill-adapted for tragedy. Although possessing a highly-intelligent face, his limbs were not Apollo-shaped, nor could he boast the height and majesty of Holman. He was quite original, and could bid defiance to either Cooke or Kemble in a certain number of characters. His voice was of a superior quality, of great compass, and capable of any intonation; his face noble, and his height about five feet ten.—*IV. Donaldson, "Recollections."*

"I found the crown hanging on a bush," said an English usurper; "I picked the Surrey from the gutter," exclaimed the equally regal Robert William Elliston, who was, in truth, a magnifico of the first order—a hound of the first breed: his successors are "petty larceny" potentates — trundle-tails.

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<sup>1</sup> Elliston's peculiarity seems to have been a love of coming forward, placing his hand on his heart, and addressing the audience on every pretext. One season he had become so popular at the Haymarket that he was obliged to take his benefit at the Opera House. The crowd was so immense that on the doors being opened it swept past the check-takers and filled the theatre. Elliston, of course, came forward, pointed out the loss he must sustain if the audience did not pay, and sent a number of men among them with pewter plates to collect the unpaid dues. When the curtain drew up, the stage was found blocked with another audience, ten file deep. The people in front hissed this violation, amid shouts of "Off, off!" Again Elliston came forward, his hand on his heart, his mouth wreathed with smiles. He said that as Madame Bouti, a foreigner, had been suffered on one occasion to fill *her* stage with friends, he trusted that the same indulgence would be extended to a BRITON. The appeal was irresistible, and the people behind as well as in front cheered. He cleared 600*l.* by this benefit.—ED.

Robert William lived in open war with usurers, and did not combine the arduous duties of a manager with the anxious employment of a bill-discounter; he paid, but he never *took*, thirty per cent.; he looked a sheriff's officer into dust, and would have expired with virtuous horror at an exchange of monetary courtesies with his opposite neighbour of Charlotte Street, the bailiff for Surrey. The people of St. George's Fields should raise a monument to Elliston for the *Falstaff* that he brought among them. Nor before nor since have they of the Surrey beheld aught worthy of the knight's shoe-leather. On his second appearance in the part at Drury Lane, Elliston fell down in speechless intoxication; but he fell, only to rise at the Surrey.<sup>1</sup> Elliston's *Falstaff*! What a combination of the wit, the humorist, the sensual feeder, the worldly philosopher, and the *gentleman*! At once his manner redeemed the taste of *Prince Hal*—in a moment his tones, his look, and carriage convinced you that he could on occasion rise above the mere bolter of capons and swallower of sherries; he proved, what every other *Falstaff* has failed in, or, rather, what they never attempted, considering it no part of the character—that he could be a courtier. The *Falstaff* of other actors is the mere cookshop *Falstaff*—the *Falstaff* of Elliston might, if he pleased, have attended levees. We fear that few, very few, critics crossed the bridge to see the fat knight, which, it is our faith, was the highest triumph of Elliston as an actor, inasmuch as it combined, heightened, and enriched all the qualities which he

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<sup>1</sup> “When Elliston took the Surrey the last time, a furious play-bill warfare raged between him and his theatre, and Mr. Davidge and the Coburg. In the course of it Mr. Davidge had occasion to send a message to Elliston respecting some private transaction. ‘I come from Mr. Davidge, of the Coburg Theatre,’ said the messenger. Elliston heard him most imperturbably, and repeated the words, ‘Davidge—Coburg Theatre—Coburg—I don't remember ——’ ‘Sir,’ said the messenger, ‘Mr. Davidge, here, of the Coburg, close by.’ ‘It may be all as you say,’ said Elliston, solemnly; ‘I'll take your word, young man; I suppose there is such a theatre as the Coburg, and such a man as the Davidge; but this is the first time I ever heard the name of either.’ And striding off, left the astonished messenger to recover his amazement as he might.”—*Ellistoniana*. It is of the Coburg Theatre, renowned in its day for its blood-and-murder dramas, that the following story is told:—“On one occasion the scenes stuck in the grooves, and the gods were much offended at beholding the halves of a house with an interstice of a yard or so between them. At length a sweep called out, ‘Ve don't expect no good grammar here, but, *hang it*, you *might* close the scenes.’”—ED.

severally displayed in other parts. We shall never forget his look, attitude, and voice when narrating the famous Gadshill fight. As he proceeded, detailing his prowess, like a true liar, he became a convert to his own falsehood, and his frame dilated, and his voice deepened and rolled with his imaginary triumphs, and for the time he stood, in his own conviction, the breathing Hector of his own lie. Nothing could be more exquisite—no expression could more perfectly catch the subtle spirit of Shakspeare than the glance of Elliston—his flushed face, quivering with conquest, and his whole mountain of a body big with the hero, as he cried, “Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me!” Of a piece with this was his rallying under the exposure of the Prince; and when asked by *Hal*, “What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?”—gathering himself up, fairly melting his face with a smile, and his eye glowing like a carbuncle, Elliston fulminated rather than spoke, “By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye!” Poor Elliston! he sleeps in lead in St. John’s Church, and the Surrey is governed by Mr. Davidge.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1836.

Elliston, who certainly imitated John Palmer in his manner off the stage, had an affected morality of demeanour which ill accorded with his real life. In his youth this was peculiarly the case. Charles Incedon said, “There was a capital parson spoiled the day Elliston turned player.” The style of hypocrisy in which the great comedian indulged resembled that of his stage manner when A was to be deceived in the presence of B. Thus Elliston always appeared to be cajoling one set for the sake of amusing another, rather than for anything to be gained by the process. When at school the boys called him the “young crocodile,” for he had tears of contrition ready at the shortest notice. His love-adventures were numerous, and he was not very fortunate or tasteful in the selection of his dulcineas. Among others, when he was scarcely eighteen, was a tavern-keeper’s dame at Wapping. One day, whilst in earnest conversation with the lady, an alarm was given, and as it was necessary to conceal Robert William, he was placed in a hasped chest. There was Elliston, while the lady ran to the bar. Five minutes passed; still the noise continued—nay, increased. He tried to raise the lid, but she had prudently (?)

fastened it. He listened: the confusion in the house became more evident. He could hear persons running to and fro. Some calamity had occurred. What? He too soon guessed, for he heard the dripping of water and the cry of "Fire!" All considerations but those of personal safety vanished; he sought with all his might to extricate himself—in vain; frightful recollections of being buried alive flashed across his memory; but to be at once buried and burnt was too much, and his struggles were renewed until he sank back helpless and exhausted. "At last" (I quote his own words) "I had nothing for it but patience and prayer." "Prayer!" I ejaculated, "under the circumstances that brought you there, should have been preceded by repentance." "Sir," he replied, "I did not pray directly for myself, but that those who were endeavouring to subdue the fire *might be induced to take care of the furniture.*" The fire, which was only trifling, was at length quenched. Elliston's flame underwent the same process, for on the lady releasing him he wended homewards, and never again incurred a similar danger in the same premises.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

Of the great comedian, Robert William Elliston, who acted quite as much off the stage as he did on it, a thousand pleasant anecdotes might be recorded. Giving at all times a free vent to the sly humour, the good-natured satire, and keen enjoyment of a joke that were natural to him, his whim, eccentricity, readiness, and talent, gave to many of the adventures in which he was engaged an air of comedy, farce, or extravaganza, sufficiently dramatic, rendering them quite as amusing as one half of the entertainments now produced on the stage. Though the greater part of the anecdotes related of Elliston had their birth when he was "full of the god," it must not be inferred that he was naturally or habitually a drunkard. He was certainly, in some measure, a *bon vivant* and fond of his glass; but he required good fellowship to make the bottle pass to his mind. His great delight was to be *rex convivii*—to indulge in the song, the speech, and the sentiment; the joke, the tale, the anecdote. Elliston had a great opinion of his own oratorical powers, and imagined himself eminently qualified for the Senate. Having a keen eye to the *Treasury Bench*, he always had a strong idea that he should shine as a legislator, and seriously thought of becoming an M.P., in a parliamentary sense as well as in a theatrical one. No actor ever possessed



a greater command over an audience than did Elliston. For this he was indebted, among other things, for the general favour in which he was held by the public—a prepossessing person, winning voice, great good-nature, admirable presence of mind, and, if it must be said, extreme effrontery.—*W. T. Moncrieff.*

Kenny told me that Charles Lamb, sitting down once to play whist with Elliston, whose hands were very dirty, said, after looking at them for some time, “Well, Elliston, if *dirt* was trumps, what a hand you would have!”—*Thomas Moore.*

In green-rooms impervious to mortal eye, the Muse beholds thee wielding posthumous empire. Thin ghosts of *figurantes* (never plump on earth) circle thee endlessly, and still their song is, *Eye on endless phantasy.* Magnificent were thy *capriccios* on this globe of earth, Robert William Elliston! for as yet we know not thy new name in heaven. It irks me to think that, stript of thy regalities, thou shouldst ferry over, a poor forked shade, in crazy Stygian wherry. Methinks I hear the old boatman, paddling by the weedy wharf, with raucid voice bawling “SCULLS, SCULLS!” to which, with waving hand and majestic action, thou deignest no reply other than in two curt syllables, “No; OARS!”—*C. Lamb.*

What do some of the diurnal critics mean by their cant about “a certain age” and “the hand of time?” It is *they* who have grown old, not *he*, and they would shift the weight of years to his gaiety from their own wrinkled wisdom. Have they seen him in *Ranger*, “with wine in his head and money in his purse,” finely running his career of frolic, redeeming libertinism by a flow of animal spirits which makes it seem mere jesting, bringing back the “good old times” when the gaieties of youth and the infirmities of age were not visited with the penalties of felon baseness, and dancing, drinking, and making love and fun as if the world contained no treadmill? Let them go and see him in *Young Absolute*, playing off *Acres* on *Falkland*, with the roguish eye and inward chuckle; or disporting with *Falstaff* as *Prince Hal*, worthy to mate with “the great sublime” of jovial wits; or changing, swift as “meditation,” or as Mathews, “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” from idiocy to college thoughtfulness, and again to mercurial want of thought in “Three and the Deuce”—and then let them assert, if they dare, that he is grown older! If there were a little falling off in rapidity and force, surely it were better to enjoy the exertions

of a performer who has gone onward with ourselves, and who half awakens a thousand recollections of old joy, than to call for a stranger with nothing but youth on his side, who has no root in our experiences or affections, and who will attempt to confound our recollections with some new reading, and puzzle the faith of our childhood. But there is no falling off; our actor is as gay as if he had not Drury Lane to answer for, and as full of glee and hope as he was at five-and-twenty. The occasional want of continuity in his elocution, which nature meant a blemish, really gives effect to his happiest passages, when his glee comes out like champagne, after a short pull at the cork, bright, sparkling, and as full of body as of life and flavour. In gallantry there is no one who approaches him—he addresses a woman with a mingled ardour and respect of which no other actor has a conception, and puts more of love into his flirtation with a street acquaintance, than many an actor has been able to infuse into his representations of the amatory heroes of tragedy. Long—very long—may full audiences foster his good spirits, and may he give impulse to theirs!—*T. N. Talfourd.*

## Edward Knight.

1774—1826.

He was born at Birmingham in 1774, and was intended by his friends for an artist; but having at an early period a *penchant* for the stage, on the death of the person to whom he was articled, made his first appearance at Newcastle-under-Line, as *Hob*, in the farce of “*Hob in the Well* ;” but so astounding was his reception that it quite disconcerted him, and, unable to go on with the character, he ran off the stage, and it was performed by another. His ardour was for some time checked by this mishap, and he resumed the pencil for another year, but the ruling passion was strong. He ventured in a more obscure place, Raither, in North Wales, again played *Hob*, and was successful. After strolling about some time, he was engaged by Mr. Nunns, of the Stafford company. In that town he married a daughter of Mr. Clewes, a wine merchant. His next step to fame was owing merely to the whim of some merrily disposed wag, who was willing to raise a laugh at his expense. One night at Uttoxeter, after having raved through

the parts of *Arno*, *Silvester Daggerwood*, and *Lingo*, he was agreeably surprised by a note requesting his attendance at the inn adjoining the theatre, and intimating that he would receive information for the improvement of his theatrical pursuits. Everything, of course, was neglected for this important interview. He flew to the inn on the wings of speed, and was immediately shown into a room, where he was very cordially received by an unknown but grave-looking gentleman, whose inflexible steadiness of face could not give the least suspicion of a jest. After the usual compliments of that day, the stranger very politely assured him that he had received much pleasure from his performances, and was determined to put him into a situation where his talents might be shown to advantage. Mr. Knight stammered forth his gratitude, and had all ears open for the reception of this important benefit. The stranger proceeded to inform him that his name was Phillips, and that he was well known to Mr. Tate Wilkinson, the manager of the York Theatre. "Now, sir," he added, "you have only to make use of my name, which I fully authorize you to do, and you may rely upon being well received. Say that I have seen you on the stage, and declared my satisfaction at your performance." Mr. Knight was, of course, much delighted, and expressed, in the most lively terms, his sense of this important obligation. The next morning he wrote a very polite letter to Mr. Wilkinson, making the tender of his services, and not in the least doubting their acceptance, for the name of his newly formed the most prominent feature in the letter. In a short time, a very laconic epistle came from the York manager, that at once overthrew his splendid expectations. It was to this effect:—"Sir, I am not acquainted with any Mr. Phillips, except a rigid Quaker, and he is the last man in the world to recommend an actor to my theatre. I don't want you. TATE WILKINSON." This was certainly a mortifying repulse. His air-formed schemes at once melted into nothing; and the failure was so much the more painful as it was totally unexpected. In the bitterness of his anger, he wrote a second letter to the manager:—"Sir, I should as soon think of applying to a Methodist parson to preach for my benefit, as to a Quaker to recommend me to Mr. Wilkinson. I don't want to come. E. KNIGHT." This letter was too much in Mr. Wilkinson's own peculiar style to meet with an unfavourable reception. Nothing, however, resulted from it at the time. A whole year

rolled on with the Stafford company, at the end of which Mr. Knight was agreeably surprised by a second letter from his former correspondent. In brevity and elegance it was in no wise inferior to his former epistle, but the matter of it sounded much more sweetly to our hero's ears. The following is, to the best of our knowledge, a literal transcript :—" Mr. Methodist Parson, I have a living that produces twenty-five shillings per week. Will you hold forth? TATE WILKINSON." This sudden change was not altogether owing to the preceding correspondence, but in part to the secession of Mathews, who had been engaged at the Haymarket. He lost a beloved wife at the early age of twenty-four, who left him burdened with the care of a small family. He had been married five years. He was united secondly, in 1807, to Miss Susan Smith, sister of Mrs. Bartley, the then heroine of the York stage. At York seven years passed away without any other material occurrence, when he received proposals from Mr. Wroughton, at that time stage-manager of Drury Lane, which, of course, were eagerly accepted. On the destruction of Drury Lane Theatre by fire, many of the principal performers considered themselves as released from their treaties, and embarked in other adventures. Mr. Knight was one of the few that had abilities to profit by this opportunity. On October the 14th, 1809, he made his first appearance at the Lyceum as *Timothy Quaint*, in the "Soldier's Daughter," and *Robin Roughhead*, in "Fortune's Frolic." He was equally successful in *Jerry Blossom*, *Sim*, *Spado*, *Trip*, &c., and continued a favourite till illness compelled him to retire. His powers as a comic actor were certainly considerable. There was an odd quickness and a certain droll play about every muscle in his face, that fully prepared the audience for the jest that was to follow. His *Sim*, in "Wild Oats," may be termed the most chaste and natural performance on the stage. On one occasion, in the exercise of his profession, Knight had a very narrow escape with his life. On the evening of February 17th, 1816, when performing with Miss Kelly, in the farce of "Modern Antiques," a maniac named Barnett fired a pistol at the lady, which had nearly given him his quietus. His remains were removed to a vault in Pancras New Church, on the 27th of February, when, among the mourners, were Mr. Elliston, Dr. Pearson, Mr. Carpue, Mr. G. Soane, &c., &c.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826.

## Robert Bradbury.

1774-1831.

Bradbury commenced life in his native town, Manchester, as a carpenter, got engaged at the theatre as scene-shifter, with Riley, the author of the "Itinerant." A clown falling sick during the run of the pantomime, brought the young carpenter forward, and Bradbury very soon appeared before a London audience at the Surrey, and became the great buffo after Grimaldi. Bradbury is mentioned in the "Life of Grimaldi." It says: "He was engaged at the Wells to fill Joey's place in the pantomime during his absence in the country on a trial." In the interim Bradbury so gained on the good folks of Clerkenwell, that when the renowned Joey returned, the managers told him it would be a dangerous experiment to make any change, and thought it would be as well to let Bradbury finish the season. "Then," exclaimed Grimaldi, "I am ruined."—*Recollections of an Actor.*

John Braham.<sup>1</sup>

1774-1856.

Braham's performance of *Jephtha's Lamentation* is one of the finest pieces of tragic singing in our time, and combines every excellency music can possess.—*Mrs. Trench, 1814.*

Mr. Mathews had known Mr. Braham in the autumn of 1803, at Liverpool, and it followed that he gave a perfect imitation of him both in private and public life. Of this Mr. Braham heard, and with all the liberality of good sense

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<sup>1</sup> "I remember Braham," says a writer in the year 1831, "nearly half a century. He came out at the Royalty Theatre the year Kean was born. He was never called or known as Abraham in my recollection. His name appeared in the bills thus—'Master Braham, pupil of Mr. Leoni.' A pantomime called 'Hobson's Choice' was presented there in 1787, in which young Braham sang. He was very little noticed, and attracted no attention for years after. I fancy he must have been about fourteen, but if so he was small for his age. Mrs. Gibbs was the star there; she was then a fine-grown girl, scarcely sixteen. Mrs. C. Kemble (then Miss Decamp), Mrs. Bland (then Miss Romanzini), and Samuel Russell (*the "Jerry Sneak"*), were all mere children at this time, and were just becoming known to the public. Of all these persons Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. C. Kemble attracted and retained attention most for some years, Braham certainly least."

and conscious talent, he good-humouredly pressed my husband to show him—what not more than one man in twenty is acquainted with—*himself*. In vain did he solicit; when one day dining together at a large party, after much importunity of the kind to Braham No. 2, it was discovered that Braham No. 1 had stolen a march upon his host and hostess; in fact, he had disappeared during the dessert, and it was said had left the house. After this fact was ascertained, it was urged that in the absence of the great original, Mr. Mathews could do no less than represent him, for the consolation of his bereaved friends; and under such circumstances he at length yielded, and Mr. Braham's absence was fully compensated for the time by the imitator, and *Mr. Braham* even favoured the company with one of his most popular songs. When the general enjoyment was at its height, two ladies, between whom Mr. Braham had sat at dinner, seemed as if suddenly discomposed, when a figure rose slowly from under the table, and in tones which seemed uttered as if intended in illustration of the recent mimicry pronounced "Very well, Mathews! exceedingly like indeed; nay, perfect, if I know myself," and *the Braham* stood confessed.—*Life of Mathews*.

In no part of his art is Braham more distinguished than in the use of the falsetto; his success in this respect, indeed, forms an era in singing. When in the zenith of his powers, from a facility of taking up the falsetto on two or three notes of his compass at pleasure, he had so completely assimilated the natural and falsetto at their junction, that it was impossible to discover where he took it, though a peculiar tone in the highest notes was clearly perceptible. Before his time the junction had always been very clumsily conducted by English singers. Johnstone, who had a fine falsetto, managed it so ill, that he obtained, from the abruptness of his transitions, the cognomen of "Bubble and Squeak." Braham could proceed with the utmost rapidity and correctness through the whole of his compass, by semi-tones, without the hearer being able to ascertain where the falsetto commenced.—*Percy Anecdotes*.

I remember Braham in his prime. His voice was a tenor of the purest quality, of extraordinary power, and of singular sweetness. It ranged from *La* below the lines to the upper *Si*. With it he at times produced a sensation beyond the power of description. He was without a rival; but he called into being a host of imitators, most of whom were nearly as vulgar as they

were incapable. Nothing can be conceived more superb than Braham's singing of "Comfort ye, my people." I remember hearing him in the "Messiah" at York Cathedral in 1833. How his exquisite notes rose above the swell of the orchestra and the organ! His execution was marvellous: his articulation perfect. His father's name was Abraham; and as he was short and stout his neighbours nicknamed him "Punch." The title clung; and always after he was spoken of as "Abe Punch." Braham's education when a boy was utterly neglected. He now and then made a few shillings by singing in the choir of the great synagogue; and there his voice attracted the attention of one of the brothers Goldsmid, then a very opulent family. On the conclusion of the service young Abraham was requested to call on Abraham Goldsmid. Repairing to Leman Street, Goodman's Fields (in 1793 this being the aristocratic *quartier* of the Jews) he was introduced by Goldsmid to Leoni Lee, a clever musician. By Lee young Abraham was instructed in the rudiments of music and singing; and two years after he made his appearance at the Garrick Theatre<sup>1</sup> under the name of Braham. His success was prompt and decisive. I recollect an anecdote of Braham. He was performing in a *pasticcio* with Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. Bland, Kelly, and Jack Bannister. The scene represented the interior of an old country inn. (Enter Braham with a bundle slung to a stick on his shoulder): "I have been traversing this desolate country for days with no friend to cheer me. (Sits.) I am weary—yet no rest, no food, scarcely life—oh! heaven, pity me. Shall I ever realize my hopes? (Knocks on the table.) What ho, there, house! (Knocks again.) Will no one come?" (Enter Landlord). "I beg pardon, sir, but—(starts)—I know

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<sup>1</sup> "This Thespian nook is in Leman Street, and has, we believe, descended through all the tribes of Israel. On its first opening the proprietor of the Pavilion—trembling for his monopoly of absurdity and horror—tried every means to destroy it. The surrounding public, however, supported the new theatre, and after many struggles with the bench, money is now—at least, when it is offered—'taken at the doors.' There is one gorgeous incident connected with the theatre: Mr. Braham received thirty pounds for singing two or three songs. Many of the pieces produced at the Pavilion and Garrick are from the pen of a person named —, who may be seen, in his hours not employed in composition, on the pavements of White-chapel, with a green shade over his face, and a placard on his breast, soliciting the charity of the passengers for 'the successful author of a hundred dramas.'"—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1836.

that face (aside). What can I do for you, sir? Shall it be supper?" Braham: "Gracious heaven! 'tis he—the voice—the look—the (with calmness)—yes, I want food." Landlord: "Tell me what brings one so young as thou appearest to be through this dangerous forest?" Braham: "I *will*. For days, for months, oh! for years, I have been in search of my father." Landlord: "Your father!" Braham: "Yes! my father. 'Tis strange—but that voice—that look—that figure—tell me—that *you* are my father." Landlord: "No, I tell thee no; I am *not* thy father." Braham: "Heaven protect me! Who, tell me, WHO IS MY FATHER?" Scarcely had Braham put this question when a little Jew stood up in an excited manner in the midst of a densely crowded pit and exclaimed, "I knowed yer farder well. His name was Abey Punch!" The performance was suspended for some minutes in the roars of laughter that followed this revelation.—*Henry Russell*.

Braham's voice is a tenor, enlarged in compass by a falsetto, and its whole range of really useful and good notes extends from A in the bass to E in alto—a scale of twenty notes. The tone, when not forced, approached the very best sounds of a clarinet, beautifully played—less reedy, though perhaps always a little lowered by that defect. It was so perfectly even and equal, and he possessed so thorough a command over it, that he could produce any given quantity or quality upon any part of it at pleasure; while, if he ran through his whole compass by semi-tones, it was impossible to point out at what precise interval he took or relinquished the falsetto, though the peculiar quality of that voice when he rose high, was sufficiently perceptible. But to this faculty (the true *portamento* of Italian vocalization) he also added the power of colouring the tone according to the passion: he could increase or attenuate its volume, not merely making it louder or softer, but by a distinctly different expression of tone, so to speak. Braham has had few competitors—no rival. The nearest approach to rivalry was in the person of Mr. Sapio.—*The Progress of Music*.

Whoever has heard Braham sing the first line of "Waft her, angels, through the skies" (from "Jephthah"), and recollects such first line separately and apart from the rest of the song, will have heard the perfection of his tone, and will probably admit that he can produce sounds breathing hope, adoration, and fervent piety,—sounds most touching and full of beauty.



Whoever has heard him in the recitative preceding this air, "Deeper and deeper still," will have listened to as extraordinary changes of tone, expressing remorse, hesitation, the deepest anguish and despair, awe, heart-rending yet firm and resolute obedience to Divine power. In the order of musical effects it ranks with the finest effects of Mrs. Siddons in the drama.<sup>1</sup>—*Quarterly Musical Magazine.*

Braham was born in Rotherhithe, in 1759.<sup>2</sup> His father was a Portuguese Jew, and was old at the time of young Braham's birth. He went abroad, and died there soon after. Leoni, who took Braham in 1783 or 1784, exercised over him not only the control of a teacher, but that of a parent. After the failure of Palmer's Royalty scheme Leoni went to Jamaica, taking Braham with him. In 1797 Leoni died there, and his pupil returned to England, and shortly afterwards assumed that station in the musical world which he has held indisputably ever since. With regard to the name having been altered in the playbills from Abraham—which, it has been asserted, was really his appellation—this appears very improbable, as it would have been likely to give offence to many patrons of the Royalty Theatre, who were principally Jews. Besides, from the opening of that theatre to the time of its destruction, two or more performers of that persuasion have invariably formed members of the company. Among them were included Mrs. Bland, Isaacs, the bass-singer, Sloman, Mrs. Wallack (sen.), Delpini, and Leoni himself, Kean's reputed father and uncle, and a variety of other persons, who were engaged there because their persuasion was a favourable circumstance in the way of attracting their brethren.—*Records of a Veteran.*

The first time Weber<sup>3</sup> heard Braham, he said to a friend, "This is the greatest singer in Europe." He was then singing in the "Freischütz."—*Anecdotes of Braham.*

<sup>1</sup> Braham was conversing with a friend concerning the merciless way in which he had been criticized, who defended his critics on the ground of his having assumed all styles. "Do you mean to say," asked Braham, "that I should have been a better singer had my practice been less multifarious?" "I do." Braham sank a few moments into a reverie, then suddenly exclaimed, "I never had an audience that could appreciate me; give me such an audience, and then see how I'll sing."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> A mistake. Braham was born in 1774.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Maria von Weber was born in a small town in Holstein in 1786-7. His early musical education was conducted by Henschkel. He subsequently took lessons from the brother of Haydn. His earliest performances

He is a beast of an actor, though an angel of a singer.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

Braham was not merely a scientific vocalist, he was a scientific musician. No man understood better, or more thoroughly appreciated in others, purity of style, yet no man oftener violated the canons of good taste. For this reason I cannot call him a *legitimate* singer. I have heard him sing the best sacred music at the house of friends, whom he knew to be refined and fastidious musicians, and then his rendering of Handel has been glorious, and worthy of his theme. I have heard him at an oratorio at the theatre the very next night sing the same airs to a miscellaneous audience, and so overlay the original composition with florid interpolations as entirely to distract the listener's attention from the solemnity and simplicity of the theme. This violation of propriety was attributable to the fact of his having observed that a display of flexible vocalization always brought down thunder from the gods in the gallery; and therefore he was tempted by the greed of claptrap applause to sacrifice his own convictions of propriety to the demands of the vulgar and unenlightened.—*Rev. F. Young, "Life of C. M. Young."*

There is a fine scorn in his face, which nature meant to be of Christians. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the Shibboleth: how it breaks out when he sings, "The children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!" The auditors for the moment are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense.—*C. Lamb.*

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were published in 1798. His opera of "The Girl of the Wood," composed when he was fourteen years old, was performed to applauding audiences in Vienna, Prague, and St. Petersburg. This opera was afterwards published under the title of "Silvana." His opera of "Abu Hassan" was composed in 1810. In 1813 he was appointed Director of the Opera at Prague, whence he was called to Dresden in 1816, where he occupied the post of Maestro di Cappella to the King of Saxony. His celebrated "Freischütz" was produced at Berlin in 1822. The publication of this opera at once elevated Von Weber to the rank of one of the first composers in Germany, and, with the exception of the "Zauberflöte," no performance ever became so instantaneously popular. This opera first led to his invitation to England, and to compose an opera for the English stage. He died in 1826 at the house of Sir George Smart in Great Portland Street. He was buried in the Catholic Chapel at Moorfields.—ED.

## Charles Kemble.

1775-1854.

Though not heroic in his person, nor subtle in his art, too much frequently upon the strain, and rather pleasing than great, yet with no mean share of his family advantages; born for the stage, and naturally studious, he might be fairly set *next* to his brother (John), at whatever distance. It was always to be remarked that he never *imitated* him either in the tone or cadence of speech; and in the action or display of the person, he went upon a principle much less refined and picturesque.—Boaden, “*Life of Jordan.*”<sup>1</sup>

I thought the *Faulconbridge* of Charles Kemble as perfect as the *Coriolanus* of his brother John. Nature, as well as art, had admirably adapted the brothers for these two characters. Charles, then young, possessed a heroic face and figure; and the spirit he threw into the reputed son of Cœur de Lion, as he played the character, was too natural not to be his own.—Leslie, “*Autobiography.*”

Mr. Charles Kemble’s absence from the theatre, by whatever cause occasioned, makes a lamentable chasm in the scenic art. Were he not personally gifted as he is, it would be a sad thing to lose the last of the Kembles from Covent Garden—to look in vain for the living and vigorous representative of that truly noble house which has laid on us all a great debt of gratitude, and with which he seemed still to connect us. John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons had not quite left this their proper seat while he remained there, for we had associated him with them in their most signal triumphs, to which he lent all the grace and vigour of youth, which were theirs no longer. But it is not only on this account that we bitterly regret his secession, for he was endowed with rich and various faculties, which can be found in no one else in the same perfection and harmony. Where now shall we seek the high Roman fashion of look, and gesture, and attitude? Where shall old chivalry retain her living image, and high thoughts, “seated in a heart of courtesy,” have adequate expression? Where shall the indignant honesty of a young patriot spirit “show fiery off?”

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<sup>1</sup> In the “*Life of Siddons,*” Boaden awards him high praise.

Whither shall we look for gentlemanly mirth, for gallant ease, for delicate raillery, and gay, glittering enterprise?—*Leigh Hunt*.

Charles Kemble is not so fine a man as John, and we cannot choose but call him rather clumsy, especially about the ankles; but then he has a noble, natural air, and has studied successfully the art or the science of manner, demeanour, carriage, so as to make the most of his figure, which is cast in almost Herculean mould. His face, though far inferior in heroic expression to John's, is yet noble; and he has a voice mellow and manly, and of much compass, though incapable of those pathetic and profound tones which, in spite of his asthma, used to issue forth from that broad chest of his, when "Black Jack was in power to-night," in volume that surprised those who had heard him only on more common occasions, or when he was indisposed to make, or incapable of making his highest efforts. For many years Charles, though always a favourite with a London audience, could justly be said to be but a second-rate actor, even in his best characters; and in his worst he was hardly a third-rate one. But the acting of all the Kembles is of slow growth. About twenty years ago, when Charles could not have been much under forty, his acting brightened up into a brilliancy, and expanded into a breadth of manner that showed he was about to enter on a new era. He did so; and, ere long, in some characters had no equal among his contemporaries, and we suspect few, if any, superiors among his predecessors.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1832.<sup>1</sup>

The great beauty of all my father's performances, but particularly of *Hamlet*, is a wonderful accuracy in the detail of the character which he represents—an accuracy which modulates the

<sup>1</sup> The same writer, speaking of Mrs. Charles Kemble, *née* Miss Decamp, says:—"But we remember us of a delightful; dark-eyed, dark-haired girl, whose motion was itself music ere her voice was heard, and the glance of her gleaming eyes, ere yet her lips were severed, itself speech. In all melodramatic representations, in that exquisite species of historical narrative, pantomime, where face, frame, and limbs have all to be eloquent, and to tell tales of passion beyond the power of mere airy words; in the dance that is seen to be the language of the exhilarated heart, when it seeks to communicate, to cherish, or to expend its joy in movements of the animal frame, not merely quickened by the spirit, but seemingly themselves spiritualized—in all this, who was once comparable in her sparkling girlhood to that dangerous yet unwicked witch, the charm-and-spell bearing enchantress, Decamp?"

emphasis of every word, the nature of every gesture, the expression of every look, and which renders the whole a most laborious and minute study, toilsome in the conception and acquirement, and most toilsome in the execution. My father possesses certain physical defects—a faintness of colouring in the face and eye, a weakness of voice; and the corresponding intellectual deficiencies—a want of intensity, vigour, and concentrating power. Those circumstances have led him (probably unconsciously) to give his attention and study to the finer and more fleeting shades of character, the more graceful and delicate manifestations of feeling, the exquisite variety of all minor parts, the classic keeping of a highly wrought whole; to all these, polished and refined tastes, an acute sense of the beauty of harmonious proportions, and a native grace, gentleness, and refinement of mind and manner, have been his prompters; but they cannot inspire those startling and tremendous bursts of passion which belong to the highest walks of tragedy, and to which he never gave their fullest expression. I fancy my aunt Siddons united the excellencies of both these styles. . . . I have acted *Ophelia* three times with my father, and each time, in that beautiful scene where his madness and his love gush forth together like a torrent swollen with storms, that bears a thousand blossoms on its troubled waters, I have experienced such deep emotion as hardly to be able to speak. The exquisite tenderness of his voice, the wild compassion and forlorn pity of his looks, bestowing that on others which, above all others, he most needed; the melancholy restlessness, the bitter self-scorning; every shadow of expression and intonation was so full of all the mingled anguish that the human heart is capable of enduring, that my eyes scarce fixed on his ere they filled with tears; and long before the scene was over, the letters and jewel-cases I was tendering to him were wet with them. The hardness of professed actors and actresses is something amazing. After this part, I could not but recall the various *Ophelias* I have seen, and commend them for the astonishing absence of everything like feeling which they exhibited. Oh, it made my heart sore to act it!--*Fanny Kemble.*

## Charles Mathews.

1775-1835.

The late Mr. Mathews, a man of genius in his way, an imitator of mind as well as manner, and a worthy contributor to the wit which he collected from friends and kindred, was a disburser of much admirable "acute nonsense," which it is a pity not to preserve.<sup>1</sup> What could be better than his Scotch-woman? or his foreigners? or the gentleman who "with infinite promptitude of mind, cut off the lion's head?" or the Englishman who after contemplating Mount Vesuvius, and comparing it with its fame (and himself), exclaimed, snapping his fingers at it, "You're a humbug!"—*Leigh Hunt*.

A comic world in one.—*Boaden*.

Hook's next production was the farce of "Catch Him Who Can," brought out at the Haymarket (1806), the music supplied as in the former case by his father. It was written for the purpose of bringing into juxtaposition the peculiar talents of Liston and Mathews, the plot turning on the escape of a supposed murderer. So admirable, indeed, was the rapidity with which Mathews, as the nobleman's servant, assumed some

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<sup>1</sup> James Smith, one of the authors of the "Rejected Addresses," gives a curious illustration of a higher faculty in Mathews than the mimetic:—"I never met Coleridge but once, and that was under Mathews' roof. The poet then lived (where indeed he died) at Mr. Gilman's, at Highgate. Some of the party—Hook, T. Hill, and (I think) Poole and myself—had already assembled. It was a winter's day: the snow began to fall, and doubts arising as to the possibility of *Mrs.* Gilman's making her way under such circumstances, Mathews, with his inimitable talents of entering into the *mind* as well as the *manner* of others, walked up and down the drawing-room, and began to imitate Coleridge by anticipation, somewhat as follows:—"My dear Mr. Mathews, such was the inveteracy of the angry element in its fleecy descent, that to encounter it was barely possible to Mr. Gilman and myself. For one of the softer sex the affair was altogether impracticable. *Mrs.* Gilman, after making several efforts, was obliged to desist, and Mr. Gilman and I have therefore made our appearance without her.' Scarcely had we ceased to laugh at this exhibition when the gate-bell rung, and—as the demon of imitation would have it—the two men made their appearance, and Coleridge began, 'My dear Mr. Mathews, such was the inveteracy of the element,' &c. . . . and concluded almost in the language of the benevolent banker who had just discounted his oration. You may imagine the effect this produced upon our risible organs, which we with difficulty restrained."

six or seven different disguises, and so complete his personation, particularly of *Mr. Pennyman* (a favourite character of the actor's off the stage, and then first introduced to the public), that the audience on the first night, fairly taken in, failed to recognise his identity, and received him with perfect silence. The applause was of course rapturous on the discovery of the deception.—*Barham's "Life of Hook."*

My nurse assured me that I was a long, thin, skewer of a child; of a restless, fidgety temperament, and by no means regular features—quite the contrary. The agreeable twist of my would-be features was occasioned by a species of hysteric fits to which I was subject in infancy, one of which distorted my mouth and eyebrows to such a degree as to render me almost hideous for a time; though my partial nurse declared "my eyes made up for all, they were so bright and lively." Be this as it may, certain it is that after the recovery from this attack, folks laughed the moment they saw me, and said, "Bless the little dear! it's not a beauty, to be sure; but what a funny face it has!" The "off-side" of my mouth, as a coachman would say, took such an affection for my ear, that it seemed to make a perpetual struggle to form a closer communication with it; and one eyebrow became fixed as a rusty weathercock, while the other propped up an inch apparently beyond its proper position. The effects remain to this day, though moderated.—*Charles Mathews.*

The infinite variety of his transformations will be best shown by a brief description of the characters he personated. On the rising of the curtain he entered as *Multiple*, a strolling actor in great agitation at being refused an engagement by *Velinspeck*, a country manager, who, it appears, had expressed doubts of his talents, and particularly of his versatility. In a short soliloquy he announced his determination to convince this insulting manager of the grossness of his error, and departed to make the requisite preparations. We are next introduced to *Mr. Velinspeck*, who gives a ludicrous detail of the disasters which had befallen the various members of his company, and the straits to which he is in consequence reduced. His complaints are interrupted by a knocking at the door, and Mathews enters disguised as *Matthew Stuffy*, an applicant for a situation as prompter, for which he says he is peculiarly qualified by that affection of the eyes commonly called squinting, which enables him to keep one eye on the performers, and the other on the

book at the same time. This *Stuff* is one of the richest bits of humour we ever witnessed ; his endless eulogies upon the state of things "in the late immortal Mr. Garrick's time" are highly ludicrous. The prompter now departs, but is immediately succeeded by a *French tragedian*, who proposes to *Velinspeck* an entertainment of recitation and singing. This character is intended for a portrait of Talma, and the resemblance must be instantly felt and acknowledged by all who are acquainted with the peculiarities of that Roscius of the French stage. It is always received with clamorous applause by those who have seen Talma, for its fidelity. The command of countenance which Mathews here displays is wonderful ; never was anything more completely French than the face he assumes, and never was any character dressed more to the life. Next enters *Robin Scrawkey*, a runaway apprentice, smit with the desire of "cleaving the general ear with horrid speech." After a ludicrous colloquy between him and the manager, he expresses his apprehension of being pursued by his master, and takes refuge in a room on the first floor, which is open to the audience. He here quickly changes his dress, slips down the back stairs, and in the lapse of two minutes enters again as *Andrew M'Sillergrip*, a Scotch pawnbroker in search of his runaway apprentice, the aforesaid *Robin Scrawkey*, whom he pursues upstairs, and is heard to assail him with blows and violent abuse. He again alters his dress, and re-appears immediately as *Mrs. M'Sillergrip*, who expresses great fears of an attack upon her honour by the manager, and joins the imaginary party upstairs. The skill of Mathews in carrying on a conversation between three persons is here exercised with most astonishing effect. Finally, he enters as a fat *Coachman* out of patience at waiting for three worthies, whom he has engaged to convey to Dover ; and presently, to the utmost astonishment and confusion of the manager, convinces him that the whole of the characters who have appeared before him have been personated by the identical comedian whose talents he had just before estimated so lightly. — *Contemporary Paper*.<sup>1</sup>

He seems to have continuous chords in his mind that vibrate to those in the minds of others, as he gives not only the looks,

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<sup>1</sup> I have transcribed this critique that the reader of this book may form some idea of the extraordinary talent exhibited by the great comedian.—ED.



tones, and manners of the persons he personifies, but their very trains of thinking, and the expressions they indulge in.—*Lord Byron.*

It was evident that Mathews was to be looked *into* as well as *at*. Perplexingly various were the shapes he assumed in the course of any single evening's performance; but however perfect his successive portraitures, the entertaining links of introduction and connexion evidenced the intrinsic man.—*Wightwick, in Fraser's Magazine, 1833.*

The public is only aware of his genius—I and his intimate friends know also his private worth; and if I may mix up one of his private good qualities with his public talents, I can assert that I never knew a man more scrupulously but unaffectedly honourable and honest in all his theatrical dealings with me, and his engagements with me were merely verbal.—*George Colman.*<sup>1</sup>

There was but one Charles Mathews in the world—there never can be such another! Mimics, buffoons, jesters, wags, and even admirable comedians we shall never want; but what are the best of them compared to *him*?—*Horace Smith.*<sup>2</sup>

His acting was not like that of even the best of his contemporaries, a mere representation of some striking peculiarities of character, but it was a complete and perfect identification.—*Joshua Barnes.*

Poor Mathews! he was a man of harmless eccentricities, and of the strangest anomalies. Amid the many things that he believed, or affected to believe, one was, that “no man ever caught a fish by rod and line.” “No, no,” he would exclaim,

<sup>1</sup> In a letter from one of Mathews's correspondents, dated 1824, occurs the following interesting passage:—“I have met at the house of the father of my worthy colleague, John Hamilton Reynolds, an odd, quaint being, by name Thomas Hood. He appears to be too modest to *let* a pun; but when it is effected it is capital. On better acquaintance (though he is the most shy cock I ever encountered) I think I perceive under his disguise one of the shrewdest wags of this age. I predict that before your present authors are worn bare he will be your man.”

<sup>2</sup> Mathews, whose powers in conversation, and whose flow of anecdote in private life transcended his public efforts, told a variety of tales of the Kingswood colliers, in one of which he represented an old collier looking for some of the implements of his trade, exclaiming, “Jan, what's thee mother done with the new coal-sacks?” “Made pillow-cases on 'em,” replied the son. “Confound her *proud* heart!” rejoins the collier; “why couldn't she take *t'ould* ones?”—*Records of a Veteran.*

“a *net* might deceive anything, but fishes are not such cursed fools as not to know that cat-gut and wire isn't good for 'em!” He had an intense, an unceasing love of approbation, and this led him occasionally obtrusively to occupy the attention of the company he was in. I once actually heard him sing fourteen comic songs (those strange mixtures of melody and mimicry which were created by, lived, and died with him) in one evening. He implicitly believed in his own tragic powers; he felt he had the mind to conceive, and—as far as enunciation alone went—the power to execute; he did not see that his appearance, his gesture, and his eternal restlessness, all partook of the ludicrous. He was a little prone to speech-making at public meetings, and was on the tenterhooks to bring forth some witticisms that should “set the table in a roar;” his extemporaneous jokes, however, were seldom good. He had no eye for painting; the most miserable daubs were foisted on him, and as he affected a taste, he was continually the victim of print and picture dealers. He could not bear (few can) to have the genuineness of any *original* painting or curiosity in his collection impugned. A celebrated upholsterer going through Mathews's gallery, was called upon to admire the cassollette (sent to Garrick with the freedom of Stratford, and purchased by Mathews at an enormous price), made of the Shakspeare mulberry tree. The gentleman in question, who was a connoisseur in wood, declared that the material was of walnut, not of mulberry. Mathews grew livid with anger, his rage was really awful; and this trivial circumstance (for the man of furniture persisted) wholly estranged the parties. He had what might be termed a *knack* at music, but he was not a musician; he played the violin with taste (his original tutor was Mr. Charles Cummins, Professor of Music, Leeds, who when a boy was, with his father, Mr. Cummins, the Yorkshire Kemble, in all the towns of the northern circuit, where Mathews was then low comedian); could play a little on the piano and organ, and was fond of attempting any instrument that came in his way. His industry in his art, and in all that in any way, however remotely, appertained to it, had no parallel; he was studying fresh characters to the day of his death.—*Records of a Veteran*, 1835.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Julian Young, in his Diary appended to his very brief Memoir of his father, speaks frequently of Mathews. “He certainly was

Mathews, "whose eye begets occasion for his wit," once told me of his going a day's journey with an asthmatic passenger, not dangerously ill, although muffled up in a nightcap and flannels, who never attempted to utter except when the stage stopped at an inn ; but at every house of call, where the waiter came to the coach door with the usual "please to light, gemmen !" the gasping invalid breathed out to him, as well as he could, "*Butter-milk!*" The pen can produce no effect from so simple an incident, but Mathews, with one touch of his extraordinary talent, can give you the very man—can present him to your eyes and ears, stuck up in the corner of a coach, and *butter-milking* it to the very life. It is one of those portraits (with the addition of vocal resemblance) which you would swear must be like, although you never saw the original—humorous as a sketch by Hogarth, chaste as a picture by Wilkie.—*George Colman.*<sup>1</sup>

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unique," he says, "in his way, and full of incongruities. I never knew any man so alive to the eccentricities of others who was so dead to his own. I never knew a man who made the world laugh so much, who laughed so seldom himself. I never knew a man who, when *in* society, could make the dullest merry, so melancholy *out* of it. I have seen him grind his teeth and assume a look of anguish when a haunch of venison has been carved unskilfully in his presence. I have seen him, though in high feather and high talk when in a sunny chamber, if transferred to a badly-lighted room, withdraw into a corner and sit by himself in moody silence. He was strangely impressionable to externals. I have known him refuse permission to a Royal Duke to see over his picture-gallery on Highgate Hill, because the day of his call was cloudy." Other eccentricities are enumerated, and the whole closes with a just eulogy on his private worth.

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Hook was perhaps the only man of his day who beat Mathews as a practical joker. Such a genius for contriving mischief there never was. He would carry a highlander from a tobacconist's shop, after dark, and stagger with it towards a cab in which he would deposit the painted figure, giving the cabman the address, perhaps, of some influential person, and bidding him drive carefully as the gentleman inside was a nobleman slightly intoxicated. Once finding himself in a cab without money to discharge the hire, he had himself driven to a doctor's. On his arrival he rung the bell furiously, and finding the doctor at home, entreated him with a pale and concerned face to carry his instruments at once to such-and-such an address, as there was a lady lying there whose life might now, whilst he spoke, be leaving her. There was a cab at the door ; would the doctor jump in ? The doctor did jump in, and was driven to the residence of a very decorous spinster, who had no sooner learned his mission, than she made at him with her nails and drove him into the street. The doctor very sullenly returned to his house ; nor could he get rid of the cabman till he had paid him the full fare he had demanded with many menaces and

Dined with James Ballantyne, and met R. Cadell and my old friend Mathews the comedian, with his son, now grown up a clever lad, who makes songs in the style of James Smith or Colman, and sings them with spirit. There have been odd associations attending my two last meetings with Mathews. The last time I saw him he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week. The time before was in 1815. Poor Byron lunched with us at Long's. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim; he was as playful as a kitten. Well, I never saw him again. So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I should like better that he should throw in his talent of mimicry and humour into the present current tone of the company, than that he should be required to give this, that, and t'other *bit*, selected from his public recitations. They are good, certainly—excellent; but then you *must* laugh, and that is always severe to me.—*Sir W. Scott.*

He's the tallest man in the world, and the funniest. He has no regular mouth, but speaks from a little hole in his cheek.—*William Lewis.*<sup>1</sup>

Few public characters have been more free than Mr. Mathews from stain or blackening shade. His faults were not

some oaths.—Some ordinary habits of his were to hang pieces of meat on the bell-handles of suburban villas, in the evening, so that during the night every stray dog that happened to pass would give a tug; by this means the bell would be set ringing five times an hour to the consternation of the family, who, with candles in hand, might in vain search the garden, or peep into the road for the cause. He would cut signboards in half, and affix the odd pieces to each other, so that the signboard owners next day would have the pleasure of witnessing their various occupations interpreted by the most ridiculous announcements in the world. He would stitch his friend's clothes up in such a fashion that when, on the following morning, the friend got into them, the conclusion that he would at once jump to was that he had from some extraordinary and unaccountable cause become fearfully swelled during the night—a conclusion which Hook would take care to confirm by expressing his great concern at his friend's appearance, and entreating him to be allowed to call a doctor.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> The comedian's idea of Mathews' height was an error generally shared by all who saw him. Mathews' height was five feet ten inches; but his slimness made him pass for a giant. Tate Wilkinson called him a may-pole and pronounced him too tall for low comedy. "You're too thin, sir," said he, "for anything but the Apothecary in 'Romeo and Juliet,'" and added, "that he had never seen anybody so thin to be alive."

vices, but foibles ; the chief, perhaps the only serious one, was an occasional and not unfrequent fretfulness or irritability, which was the more remarkable from its contrast with his usual good temper and high spirits. It was, we believe, a nervous defect arising from a naturally delicate constitution, weakened by successive accidents, and may probably have checked his success as an actor, by causing a hurry and uneasiness in those performances in which he felt at all insecure of the sympathy of his audience. Thus he often seemed to want, especially in the more regular drama, the ease, and, as it is called, the *aplomb*, which never failed him in his own peculiar performances—his “At Homes.” He had always an ambition to be thought a great comedian, and a repugnance to the reputation of a mimic ;<sup>1</sup> and this made him restless and uncomfortable in the winter theatres, where his talents as an actor, though certainly considerable, did not place him quite in the foremost line of comedy. But this annoyance was unreasonable ; his competitors were the most powerful artists, and if he was not so great a comic *actor* as the one or the other of these, he had a vein of comic *invention* which none of them approached. Mimicry was not its essence, but simply one of its means. Its essence was the perception and appropriation of what was comic in actual nature, not only in her manners, which are the materials of the mimic, but in her characters, which are the proper subjects of the dramatist. Such a talent seems to us to take its place not only above that of the mere mimic, but above that of the mere actor, however excellent in his art, and to vindicate its place in the same compartment with the writers of our broader comedy.—*Quarterly Review*, 1839.

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<sup>1</sup> In Coleridge's autobiography is preserved a remark which Mathews might have heard the poet utter : “The talent for mimicry seems strongest where the human race are most degraded. The poor, naked, half-human savages of New Holland were found excellent mimics ; and in civilized society minds of the very lowest stamp alone satirize by *copying*.”—*Biog. Lit.*, vol. i. Yet our greatest actors have been admirable mimics—Garrick, Foote, Kemble, Henderson, Emery, Munden, &c. Of these Garrick and Foote publicly performed imitations designed to satirize.—ED.

## Miss Mellon (Duchess of St. Albans.)

1775-1837.

There might be often seen Harriet Mellon,<sup>1</sup> then a youthful, slim, and beautiful creature; she would come all joy and simplicity for a day's recreation. How merry and happy she was! perhaps happier than when splendour hedged her in from the enjoyment of simple pleasures, the love of which I believe to have been inherent in her nature. I see her now, returning from a tumble in a neighbouring pond, in the middle of which her horse had unexpectedly chosen to drink. How unaffectedly she protested, when dragged out, that she did not care for the accident, and walked home, though with difficulty, across the common, with her muslin garments saturated with muddy water, and her beautiful hair dripping down her back! How we laughed while we afterwards dragged off the wet clothes from her fine form! Then again, what peals of merriment attended her reappearance in the borrowed ill-fitting dress that had been cast upon her, and the uncouth turban that bound her straightened hair!—*Life of Charles Mathews.*

The public do not generally know that Coutts was not the first banker who had distinguished this young actress. When she was in Stanton's company, Mr. Wright, a banker at Stafford, showed her great attention; and it was creditable as well as valuable, for his wife and daughters concurred in protecting her. It was there that the member, Sheridan,<sup>2</sup> saw her,

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<sup>1</sup> She was twice married: first to Mr. Coutts, the banker, and then to the Duke of St. Albans. She made her appearance at Covent Garden on the 31st of January, 1795, as *Lydia Languish*, in the "Rivals."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Wilson has written of this meeting with Sheridan:—Sheridan had written to desire that Miss Mellon would call on him. "With admirable coolness he told her that a young actress having seceded from his company, Miss Mellon had always been kept 'in his mind,' as he had formerly said, and had now a chance of taking the absent lady's place, and as a specimen of her declamation, he requested her to read the scenes of *Lydia Languish* and *Mrs. Malaprop* aloud from his own play of 'The Rivals.' She felt greatly frightened, and answered, with the naïve unaffected manner which she retained through life, 'I dare not, sir, for my life! I would rather read it to all England. Suppose, sir, you did me the honour of reading it to me?' There was something so unassuming and child-like in the way she made this daring request that the manager entered into the oddity of the matter, and read nearly the whole play to

and conceived he might strengthen himself *abroad and at home* by giving her an immediate engagement at Drury Lane. She was certainly above mediocrity as an actress, though I used to think too careless to do all that she might have done. Her figure was elegant in those days, and there was rather a comic expression in her countenance. Had Jordan never appeared she might have reached the first rank and been contented with her station in the theatre. Few, in any kind of miscarriage, have received such ample consolation. Chance itself once contributed a prize of 10,000*l.* to this minion of Fortune's frolic. I think there seems to have been a good deal of sagacity in her conduct; she saw her object with that singleness which is necessary to all great success, and made her very disposition itself a herald to her elevation. I never thought her one of those who

“Plan secret good, and *blush* to find it fame.”

But a little ostentation may be pardoned in our imperfect virtue.—*Boaden.*

Miss Mellon was one evening standing near the green-room fire, and while waiting for the play to begin she was humming some popular dance, and just tracing the steps unconsciously. She was roused by the voice of Miss Farren, whispering, “You happy girl; I would give worlds to be like you.” Poor Miss Mellon, recollecting her thirty-shilling salary, thought she was ridiculed by “a lady with thirty guineas a week, who was to marry a lord;” and she replied with some slight vexation, “that there certainly must be a vast deal to be envied in *her* position by one who commanded what she pleased!” Pressing her hand kindly, Miss Farren's eyes became full of tears, as she replied, “I cannot command such a *light heart* as prompted your little song.”—*Mrs. Wilson's “Life of the Duchess of St. Albans.”*

Mrs. Coutts, with the Duke of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte Beauclerk, called to take leave of us. When at Abbotsford, his suit throve but coldly. She made me, I believe, a confidant in sincerity. She had refused him twice, and decidedly: he was merely on the footing of friendship. I urged it was

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his delighted young auditor. She became so identified with the drama that she forgot all dread of the author, and on his request she read the scenes of *Lydia* and her *Aunt* with so much spirit that Mr. Sheridan ‘applauded repeatedly,’ told her she could play either character, and gave her an engagement.”

akin to love. She allowed she might marry the Duke, only she had at present not the least intention that way. It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutts's parties, and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth; most willing to do good if the means be shown her. She can be very entertaining too, and she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without ostentation.—*Sir W. Scott*.<sup>1</sup>

### John Liston.<sup>2</sup>

1776—1846.

There is one face of Farley, one face of Knight, one (but what a one it is!) of Liston.—*C. Lamb*.

It is a curious fact that the greater portion of our best comedians made, by their own choice, their dramatic *entrée* upon tragedy stilts. Among these may be numbered Munden, Lewis, Bannister, Elliston, Jones, Downton, Bartley, Wrench, and last, but "not least in our dear love," the exquisite Liston.—*Mrs. C. Mathews*.

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<sup>1</sup> Lockhart, in his "Life of Scott," devotes several pages to an account of a visit paid to Sir Walter by the Duchess, who was then Mrs. Coutts. She arrived at Abbotsford with a train of three carriages, each drawn by four horses. Her retinue consisted of her future lord, the Duke of St. Albans, one of his Grace's sisters, a sort of "lady in waiting," two physicians, "and, besides other menials of every grade, two bed-chamber women for Mrs. Coutts' own person, she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because in her widowed condition she was fearful of ghosts." There were already assembled at Abbotsford several ladies of high rank, who, witnessing this ostentation on the part of an actress who, when a girl, had been chased from her home by a vulgar virago of a mother, took it into their heads to snub her. The good-natured Sir Walter, pained at the conduct of his noble guests, took the youngest and prettiest of them aside, and lectured her on her manners. The beautiful peeress thanked him for treating her as his daughter; and one by one the other ladies being made to run the gauntlet of Sir Walter's rebukes, Mrs. Coutts was speedily set at ease. The narrative is curious as a typical illustration of the sentiments with which the society to which Harriet Mellon claimed to belong regarded her.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Liston, as well as G. F. Cooke, seemed privileged to take what liberties he liked with his audience. Barham tells an anecdote of Hook, who, in conjunction with Liston, played the following trick off on some country friends of his:—A young gentleman, the son of a baronet, wished to escort his *affiancée* to a London theatre. Hook procured them two dress-circle seats. When the curtain rose, Liston (who had been primed by



The great peculiarity of Liston's manner, on and off the stage, is its gravity. *What* he says is less remarkable than the way in which he says it. A fellow-performer, who adds to the defect of stuttering a love of telling long and tedious stories, was speaking of some person who had gone abroad, and endeavouring to recollect the place: "He has gone to—to—let's see; it wasn't Pennsylvania—no, no—" "Perhaps, sir," said Liston, without moving a muscle, "perhaps it was Pentonville."—On another occasion, a performer, at the close of the season, gave Mr. Liston the gratuitous information that he was going to Plymouth. "I have a friend there," said Liston; "and perhaps you'll do me the favour to take a *bag of salt-water* to him from me."—*Records of a Stage Veteran*, 1826.<sup>1</sup>

Liston is exquisite in his line: Edwin was equally so. The rich humour of these two eminent artists is distinct. That of the departed comedian was peculiar to himself, and (as the living actor now singeth) "*vice versay*;" but I know not how I can better express my opinion of both than by stating that I admire Liston now as I admired Edwin formerly; and, that when Edwin was, and Liston is in his element, I have no conception of a greater comic treat than the performance of either.  
—*George Colman*.

He is the best *quiet* comedian that we remember. This style, we admit, is not regarded as his *forte* by the world, nor perhaps altogether by himself, for nothing moves the populace

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Hook) appeared: his first words were greeted with laughter; he paused, looked round him with an offended air, and approaching the footlights, exclaimed, melodramatically, "I don't understand this conduct, ladies and gentlemen. I am not accustomed to be laughed at. I can't imagine what you can see ridiculous in me. Why, I declare, there's Harry B——, too, and his cousin, Martha J——," pointing full at the country couple; "what business have they to come here and laugh at me, I should like to know? I'll go and tell his father, and hear what *he* thinks of it." The audience to a man turned and stared at the unfortunate pair, who, probably imagining they were in a madhouse, scrambled from their seats and rushed from the house, amid peals of laughter.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> He was a great punster. Once whilst at Plymouth, a youthful midshipman swaggered into the theatre flourishing his dirk. "Why don't you attend to the announcement at the bottom of the bills," said Liston to the doorkeeper. "Can't you read—'*Children in arms not admitted*.'"—He once asked Mathews to play for his benefit. Mathews having to act elsewhere, excused himself by saying, "He would if he could, but he couldn't split himself in halves." "I don't know that," said Liston: "I have often seen you play in two pieces."

but buffooneries, and the actor must have peculiar strength of mind who does not barter his judgment for huzzas. But a hundred others can equal Liston in setting the rabble in a roar. His exclusive province is calm drollery—the laugh which he excites without exhibiting, and the easy pungency with which the sarcasm is shot, apparently without taking aim at any one.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1840.

Give Liston the *ghost* of a character, he invested its thinness in corporeal substance : or, to choose another illustration, an outline of figure was all that was wanting to his art ; he infused into it the richness of his own comic imagination, in aid of irresistible features, and completed the work designed by another hand.—*Boaden*.

Mr. Liston, long promised, has at last appeared, and has played in his most felicitous style. He stands more on his dignity than he did at his old quarters : he does not use the same freedoms to the audience or the performers into which he was apt to deviate ; and accordingly, his acting gives more unmingled satisfaction than usual. His humour is, in itself, of so rich and abundant a cast, that it is best when most chastened and confined within the strictest boundaries—when it is not lavished on questionable irregularities, but seems always ready to overflow and scarcely to be “constrained by mastery.” He played *Young Master Launcelot*, in the “Merchant of Venice,” to Mr. Kean’s *Shylock* ; and the play, as acted by them, afforded one of the richest combinations of talent recently seen.—*Talfourd*.

John Liston, a very popular actor of low comedy, whose natural humour and peculiar drolleries afforded many a rich treat to the playgoers of London, was born in St. Anne’s parish, Soho, and in the early period of his life was engaged in the uninviting employment of a teacher in a day-school. Forsaking the thralldom of a schoolroom and fancying he possessed the necessary requisites for the stage, he formed an acquaintance with, and often exhibited as an amateur performer on the same boards as the late Charles Mathews, both of whom at first mistook their *forte*, and strutted forth as heroes in tragedy. Having made sundry provincial trips, he was at length seen at Newcastle by Mr. C. Kemble, who recommended him to Mr. Colman, and he appeared in 1805 before a London audience at the Haymarket. He also obtained an engagement at Covent Garden, where he remained, increasing in public favour, till 1823, when Elliston having offered him 40*l.* a week, he

transferred his services to Drury Lane, and continued there till 1831, but the enormous salary of 100*l.* a week tempted him to enlist under the banners of Madame Vestris at the Olympic Theatre, where he performed six seasons, and may be said to have closed his theatrical career. He died rich.—*Memoir of John Liston.*

## Charles Mayne Young.

1777-1856.

Those who can recollect Young's *Hamlet* must admit that it has never been excelled since his day, and I question if it has ever been equalled.—*W. Donaldson.*

He was certainly at once the next best actor to Kemble—a man of reading and reflection, with a graceful person, expressive countenance, and fine sonorous voice.—*Boaden.*

He stands certainly next to Kemble in tragedy.—*C. R. Leslie.*

He is a mannerist as well as Kean—a mannerist in a more graceful and polished style—and so far he has unquestionably the advantage. But the great question is—What is he besides this? In our judgment there is not the least comparison in all that most touches, elevates, and subdues—in all those parts where manner is forgotten; and “one touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” Mr. Young's art, though far above Kean's, is as much below that of Kemble. It is not only less majestic, but has not the same poetical proportion and harmony. His mode of treading the stage is firm, intelligent, and decisive; but his action, noble in itself, is not only redundant, but out of keeping. He gives us a picturesque accompaniment to a mere meditation; to what is calmly passing in his own mind, or to a description of a past event, the same sweep of arm or violent clasping of hands, which he would use when in actual struggle with present and visible agencies. Thus, while in some degree he raises words into things, he also half melts down actions into words. He too often plays the orator in his soliloquies, and the philosopher in his passionate encounters. His voice is most musical in passages of continuous melancholy—most potent in energetic declamation; but has very little sweet gradation in its tones. It flows along in a full, deep, rapid stream, or winds plaintively on through all the course of philosophic thought; but it has no undercurrents—no eddies

of playful tenderness. He is altogether most excellent where one single feeling has to be developed—where one point is to be perpetually insisted on—where one leading idea governs the whole character. In a part of mournful beauty he is perfectly delicious—the very personification of a melodious sigh. Again, in a proud soldierly character, or an indignant patriot, where there is one firm purpose, he plays in a fiery spirit entirely his own. And, in a piece where the declamation abounds in images of pomp and luxury, he displays a rich Oriental manner which no one can rival.—*Leigh Hunt.*

I had never seen Young act! Every one about me told me he could not hold a farthing rushlight to me; but he can! He *is* an actor; and though I flatter myself that he could not act *Othello* as I do, yet what chance should I have in *Iago* after him, with his personal advantages and his d— musical voice? I don't believe he could play *Faffier* as well as I can; but fancy me in *Pierre* after him! I tell you what, Young is not only an actor such as I did not dream him to have been, but he is a gentleman!—*Edmund Kean.*

In figure, stature, and deportment, Young had the advantage over Kean, for he had height which Kean had not; and though Young's limbs were not particularly well moulded, he moved them gracefully; and his head, and throat, and bust were classically moulded. He trod the boards with freedom. His countenance was equally well adapted for the expression of pathos or of pride: thus in such parts as *Hamlet*, *Beverley*, *The Stranger*, *Daran*, *Pierre*, *Zanga*, and *Cassius*, he looked the men he represented. His voice was full-bodied, rich, powerful, and capable of every variety of modulation, and therefore, in declamatory power, he was greatly superior to Kean and Kemble too.—*Rev. F. Young, "Life of C. Young."*

His performance of *Hamlet*, if it be not fully equal to Shakspeare's design, is an elegant and striking piece of acting, and has a degree of popularity which justified its repetitions. In the frenzy and sorrows of *Lear*, and in the knavery of *Shylock*, his powers are perhaps less in their element. He is excellent in parts where there is no great undulation of feeling, where one single passion is to be wrought out by repeated efforts, each rising above the other in power and effect; where graceful and energetic action will supply the defects of an inflexible countenance, and sonorous declamation will render nice gradation of tone and delicacy of inflection needless.

There are characters in which he is unrivalled and almost perfect: his *Pierre*, if not so lofty, is more natural and soldierly even than Kemble's; his *Chamont* is full of brotherly pride, noble impetuosity, and heroic scorn; and his *Faques* is "most musical, most melancholy," attuned to the very temperament of the gentle wood-walks among which he muses. There are some peculiar parts in comedy, too, which he gives with singular truth—as a testy philanthropist, or an eccentric humorist, with a vein of kindness beneath his oddities. Characters of this description will in his hands become almost as vivid as in those of Terry, while he will lend to them a degree of refinement, and sometimes impart to them a tinge of poetical and romantic colouring, which that admirable actor cannot bestow.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1822.

## John Emery.

1777—1822.

Emery, like Liston, possessed those qualities which indicate the first-rate artist—pathos and humour; and never since Emery's death has *Dandie Dinmont*, *Tyke*, or *Giles*, been brought out in such bold and original relief.<sup>1</sup>—*W. Donaldson*.

Emery, though not literally born in Yorkshire, was bred there. Few men were so highly accomplished as this comedian. He was an excellent musician, and played the violin at twelve years of age in the orchestra; he was a fine draughtsman, and painted in oil with the skill of an artist. Perhaps no man was ever so completely successful as Emery in the Yorkshire character; it appeared through life to have been "meat and drink to him to see a clown." He was so perfect a representative of the *loutish cunning* of the three Ridings, that it was difficult to believe that he had, or could have any personal or mental qualities to discriminate the man from the actor. To say truth, he delighted to exhibit "the knowing lad," and he

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<sup>1</sup> A notable delineation of Emery was *Tyke*, in "The School of Reform." Acting this once, a sailor in the pit was so enraged at *Tyke's* duplicity that but for his messmates he would have jumped on the stage, and soundly thrashed Emery. At the scene in the fourth act, when *Tyke* finds the old man, whose purse he takes, to be his father, and exclaims, "What! rob my own feyther!" the sailor, unable to contain himself, roared, in a passion, "Yes, you vagabond; you'd rob a church!"—ED.

had a fund of stories, which he told in the green-room of the theatre, and at table where he dined, some of which have surely never been equalled for exactness.—*Boaden.*

His style was as much his own, and his excellence in it as far removed from approach, as that of any actor we have ever seen. His faculty of portraying stupidity enlivened by one single ray of acuteness; of exhibiting stout and stony profligacy; of hitting off to the life provincial knaveries and peculiarities, would at any time have rendered him popular. But not for his perfection in these representations did we chiefly admire him living, or desire to remember him now he is gone. His *forte* lay in showing the might of human passion and affection, not only unaided by circumstance, but attended by everything which could tend to associate them with the ludicrous or the vulgar. The parts in which he displayed this prodigious power were as far as possible removed from the elegant and romantic; and his own stout frame, and broad, iron countenance did not give him any extrinsic aid to refine or exalt them. But in spite of all these obstacles, the energy of passion or the strength of agony was triumphant. Every muscle was strained to bursting, every fibre informed with sense and feeling, every quiver of the lip and involuntary motion of the hands spoke the might of that emotion which he was more than counterfeiting; and all little provincialisms, all traits of vulgarity, were forgotten in wonder and sympathy. A small portion of his feeling and energy, infused into a person of graceful figure and refined taste, would make a popular tragedian. . . . Among the classical heroes of the stage he was a kind of Antæus, earth-born, yet gigantic. His *Tyke* was the grandest specimen of the rude sublime; his *Giles*, in the "Miller's Man," was almost as intense, and the whole conception of a loftier cast.—*Talfourd.*

He was born at Sunderland, Durham, on the 22nd of December, 1777, and was educated at Ecclesfield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where he doubtless acquired that knowledge of the dialect which obtained for him so much celebrity. He may be said to have been born an actor, both his parents having followed that occupation with some degree of provincial fame. His father designed him for the orchestra, but, aspiring to the honours of the stage, he laid aside the fiddle for the notes of dramatic applause, which he obtained on his first appearance in *Crazy* ("Peeping Tom") at the Brighton Theatre.

He afterwards joined the York Company, under the eccentric Tate Wilkinson, who spoke of him, as Mathews states, as "a great actor;" which opinion was confirmed by a London audience on his first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre in the year 1798, on which occasion he selected the very opposite characters of *Frank Oakland*, in "A Cure for the Heartache," and *Lovegold*, in the farce of "The Miser," in both of which parts he obtained great applause. To enumerate the many characters he has since so ably sustained would be superfluous, though it may not, perhaps, be deemed impertinent to point out the variety of his histrionic powers. In the arch, unsophisticated son of nature, he was excellent; in the stupid dolt he was equally so; and in old men, in their various shades, he has been allowed to have been no mean proficient. In parts designedly written for him he had no competitor, and *Tyke* ("School of Reform"), and *Giles* ("Miller's Man"), in parts of which his acting was truly terrific and appalling, will long, we fear, want representatives. Besides his histrionic powers, Emery was otherwise highly gifted by nature. He was an excellent musician, playing finely on the violin—a taste for *poetizing* (if we may be pardoned the expression), as his numerous songs will testify; an artist of no ordinary talent—his drawings of coast-scenery particularly, being much admired, and when offered for sale fetching high prices. He died at his house in Hyde Street, Bloomsbury, London, July 25th, aged forty-five years. He had been for some time indisposed, and died from a thorough decay of nature.—*Memoir*, 1822.

Nothing could be more earnest or true than the manner of Mr. Emery; this told excellently in his *Tyke*, and characters of a tragic cast. But when he carried the same rigid exclusiveness of attention to the stage business, and wilful blunders and oblivion of everything before the curtain into his comedy, it produced a harsh and dissonant effect. He was out of keeping with the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. There was as little link between him and them as betwixt himself and the audience.—*Charles Lamb*.

## Montague Talbot.

1778-1831.

First Talbot comes—the first indeed—  
 But fated never to succeed  
 In the discerning eyes of those  
 Who form their taste on Kemble's nose,  
 And deem that genius a dead loss is  
 Without dark brows and long proboscis.  
 Talbot certainly must despair  
 To rival Kemble's sombrous stare,  
 Or reach that quintessence of charms  
 With which black Roscius folds his arms.  
 A trifling air and stripling form,  
 Ill-fitted to the tragic storm ;  
 A baby face, that sometimes shows  
 Alike in transports and in woes,  
 Will ne'er permit him to resemble  
 Or soar the tragic flights of Kemble ;  
 Yet in some scenes together placed,  
 With *greater* feeling, *equal* taste,  
 From a judicious audience draws  
 As *much* and as deserved applause.  
 But whatso'er his tragic claim,  
 He reigns o'er comedy *supreme*—  
 By art and nature chastely fit  
 To play the gentleman or wit ;  
 Not Harris's nor Colman's boards,  
 Not all that Drury Lane affords,  
 Can paint the rakish *Charles* so well,  
 Or give such life to *Mirabel* ;  
 Or show for light and airy sport  
 So exquisite a *Doricourt*.—*Crofton Croker*.

Montague Talbot was the light comedian of Dublin. His line of characters was the elegant and refined gentleman of the old school. Talbot was a distinct actor from Lewis, who excelled in another range. With such rare qualities Talbot could not get a position in London. Both of the great houses were barred against him, and finding metropolitan renown was out of his reach, he determined to remain in a land that appre-



ciated his abilities ; and in 1809 the Belfast Theatre came under his sway, where for a number of years he ruled the destinies of the drama with credit and honour.—*Walter Donaldson.*

Henry Ireland had been an early associate and friend of Montague Talbot. They resided *vis-à-vis*, in chambers on the ground floor, in a narrow court in the Temple when youths. They had but one heart, one mind ; all between them was candour and confidence. It happened, however, that all at once Talbot found his friend reserved in his manner and secluded in his habits. The suddenness of the change was remarkable. It was evident that Ireland had some secret and absorbing occupation ; and whenever Talbot attempted to enter his friend's chamber, he found the door locked, and always had to wait a few minutes before he obtained admission. He then observed that Ireland's desk was closed and all papers hidden—a new custom. At first Talbot rallied Ireland upon his unwonted reserve, then reproached him for it. All was alike in vain : Ireland seemed resolved that he should not penetrate the “heart of his mystery,” and Talbot's curiosity was upon the rack. One morning, the day being warm, Ireland had opened the window of his den, and placing himself before it at his desk, with the door locked, he was so situated as to be able to discern an interloper. Thus it seemed impossible that a surprise could happen. Talbot withdrew from his own desk—also at the window—for some time, in order to lull suspicion in Ireland's mind, and afterwards crept out of his door upon his hands and knees, till he arrived under the window, where his unconscious friend sat in fancied security. Talbot then raised himself slowly and quietly, and when he had attained the window-sill, dexterously darted up and pounced upon Ireland's papers. . . . Thus caught, poor Ireland made a merit of communicating what he could no longer withhold, and ingenuously owned his Shakspeare forgeries to his friend, before public detection, in a no less determined manner, compelled him to make his confessions to the world. From this moment Talbot saw the progress of his clever imposition, although he did not assist in it.<sup>1</sup>—*Life of Mathews.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ireland was sixteen years of age when he forged a series of papers which he ascribed to Shakspeare. The papers wer submitted to a number of literary persons, among whom were Dr. Parr, James Boswell, Herbert Croft, Pye (poet laureate), and Valpy, who wrote the following certificate : “We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, have, in the presence and

Talbot was an admirable young *Mirabel* and the like ; he was so learned in the art of the toilet, that he not only *painted* with a camel's-hair brush his moustache and whiskers upon his lip and cheeks, but also painted in sepia and Indian ink *curls* upon his forehead, and this so admirably that the deception could not be detected even in the orchestra.—*Records of a Stage Veteran.*

## Richard Jones.

1778-1851.

Who is this? all boots and breeches,  
 Cravat and cape, and spurs and switches,  
 Grins and grimaces, shrugs and capers,  
 With affectation, spleen, and vapours?  
 Oh, Mr. Richard Jones, your humble—  
 Prithee give o'er to mouth and mumble :  
 Stand still, speak plain, and let us hear  
 What was intended for the ear.  
 In faith, without the timely aid  
 Of bills, no part you ever played—  
*Hob, Handy, Shuffleton, or Rover,*  
 Sharper, stroller, lounge, lover,  
 Could, amid your madcap pother,  
 Ever distinguish from each other.  
 'Tis true that Lewis jumps and prates,  
 And mumbles and extravagates ;  
 And it equally as true is  
 That, Mr. Jones, you are not Lewis.  
 If, Jones, to your ears my caustic lays  
 May seem too niggard of their praise,  
 Perhaps it's true, and shall I own  
 They seem not so to you alone?  
 And fear'd I not to turn a brain  
 Already too volatile and vain,

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by the favour of Mr. Ireland, inspected the Shakspeare papers, and are convinced of their authenticity." He afterwards wrote a tragedy, which he called "Vortigern and Rowena," the composition referred to in the text. This was also believed to be Shakspeare's, and was produced at Drury Lane Theatre. The fraud was detected by Malone. Ireland afterwards published a book which he called his "Confessions."—ED.

I'd say, "It equally as true is  
That, Mr. Jones, you may be Lewis."<sup>1</sup>—C. Croker.

In 1809 Richard Jones made his *début* at Covent Garden, in Macklin's comedy of "Love à la Mode," as *Squire Groom*. Lewis attended behind the scenes to witness his *protégé's* first attempt. When the cue was given for his entrance, Jones became transfixed with fear, and instead of giving the "view halloo," was struck dumb. Lewis, perceiving the dilemma of the new actor, roared, "Yoicks ! yoicks !" The audience hearing those well-known sounds, exclaimed, "A second Lewis !" Slapping Jones on the back, Lewis told him to go in and win. Jones, lacking courage, dashed on the stage amid the most deafening plaudits ; and as he paced about in his jockey-dress—thus showing off his slim, tall, and well-formed person—minutes absolutely elapsed before he could utter a word for the applause. His success was most complete, and Jones remained in London as the true successor of Lewis as long as the legitimate drama had a home.—*Recollections of an Actor*.

## Mrs. Glover.

1781-1850.

On my arrival in London, in June, 1822, I was enlisted to fill a *rôle* in the tragedy of "Hamlet," at the Lyceum Theatre. Mrs. Glover assumed the part of the *Prince of Denmark*, and announced this extraordinary attempt as an attraction on her benefit-night. This highly-gifted actress was not disappointed, for the theatre was filled in every part. Her noble figure, handsome and expressive face, rich and powerful voice, all contributed to rivet the attention of the *élite* assembled on this occasion ; while continued bursts of applause greeted her finished elocution as she delivered the soliloquies so well known to her delighted auditors. In the stage-box were seated Edmund Kean, Michael Kelly, Munden, and the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird. At the end of the first act Kean came

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<sup>1</sup> A series of these verses was published in Dublin at the commencement, I believe, of the present century. They were obviously suggested by the "Rosciad," though to what degree they approach that vigorous satire the specimen quoted will enable the reader to judge. They were widely read at the time of their publication.—ED.

behind the scenes and shook Mrs. Glover, not by one, but by both hands, and exclaimed, "Excellent! excellent!" The splendid actress, smiling, cried, "Away, you flatterer! you come in mockery to scorn and scoff at our solemnity!"—*Walter Donaldson*.

The coincidences of life are many, and often singular. At the very time that Mrs. Abington was evincing to us what her powers had been by what they still were, Mr. Harris displayed in the person of Miss Betterton, from the Bath Theatre, the only actress who even in the slightest degree resembled her. Then, however, she was considered as a tragedian, which naturally she was *not*, and acted *Elwina* to the *Percy* of Miss More. She was an early proficient in the studies of her profession, and possessed a sound and critical understanding. This young lady is now (1833) Mrs. Glover, the ablest actress in existence.—*Boaden*.

This lady has not a tragic voice, and very far from a tragic face. She was dressed well, however, and is a commanding figure, though monstrously fat.—*R. C. Leslie*, 1813.

## Tom Cooke.

1781-1848.

The name of Tom Cooke, so long renowned at Old Drury as vocalist, leader, director, and composer, is not yet forgotten. This versatile musical genius commenced his career as a boy in the orchestra of the Dublin Theatre. Ere he reached manhood he was promoted to the rank of leader; 1803 brought him before the public as a composer; this was in consequence of the non-arrival of the *finale* to the first act of Colman's operatic farce of "Love Laughs at Locksmiths," just produced at the Haymarket. Having no electric telegraphs, steamboats, or railways in those times, London and Dublin occupied days in regard to communication. As the case was urgent, Tom Cooke undertook to furnish a *finale*; and when the original arrived, although the work of a veteran, Michael Kelly, yet the composition of the juvenile musician, Cooke, was declared the superior, and was ever afterwards retained as part and parcel of the opera. In 1812 Tom Cooke announced himself, on his benefit night, for the *Seraskier*, in Storace's opera of "The Siege of Belgrade." This attempt took the town by surprise; for

although Braham, two years previous, created a *furor* in the character, Cooke, by his masterly science, electrified the audience at the falling of the curtain.—*Donaldson*.

Tom Cooke is certainly the most facetious of fiddlers, and is the only person at present (1833) connected with theatres who smacks of the olden days of quips and cranks. Some of his conundrums are most amusing absurdities; for instance. "Which is the best shop to get a fiddle at?" asked a pupil. "A chemist's," said he, "because, if you buy a drug there, they'll always give you a *vial in!*" Once, while rehearsing a song, Braham said to Cooke, who was leading, "I drop my voice there at night" (intimating that he wished the accompaniment more *piano*). "*You* drop your voice, do you?" said Cooke. "I should like to be by and pick it up."—*Records of a Stage Veteran*.

It may be asserted, without any chance of contradiction, that no living musician has a greater knowledge than T. Cooke of the various musical instruments now in use, on nine of which he performed solos for his benefit in one night, at Drury Lane Theatre, about four years ago, and for all of which he writes with much facility.—*Dictionary of Musicians*.

### Miss Louisa Brunton (Countess of Craven).

1782.

Miss Louisa Brunton, daughter of a respected gentleman for many years proprietor of the Norwich Theatre, was not, we believe, originally intended for the stage; although her uncommon graces of person, exceeding loveliness of countenance, with many polite acquirements, eminently qualified her for a profession where extraordinary beauty and form of face are deemed essential. Miss Brunton made her first appearance on the stage at Covent Garden Theatre on the 25th of October, 1803, in the character of *Lady Townly*, in the "Provoked Husband," which, novice as she was, she sustained with superior elegance and judgment. Miss Brunton next appeared in *Beatrice*, in which representation she confirmed the favourable opinion previously formed of her powers. Thenceforward, keeping the even tenor of her way, she for four succeeding seasons sustained a variety of characters in tragedy as well as in comedy, in either of which she proved an acknow-

ledged ornament. At the above-mentioned period we had the pleasure of meeting Miss Brunton in familiar society, at the table of our early and esteemed friends, Mr. and Mrs. Litchfield, when she was—

“ Adorned  
With all that heaven and earth could give  
To make her amiable.”

Miss Brunton was one of the personally gifted few upon whose beauty there were no dissentients. It was of that serene, unexacting quality which engages even female hearts; her youthful vivacity was so femininely gentle, so tempered by delicate discretion, and she was withal so outwardly unconscious of her surpassing loveliness, that envy itself must have been pleased to acknowledge it. The Earl of Craven's devotion, early in its beginning and publicly understood, silenced and put to flight many incipient aspirants to the heart and hand of this favourite of nature. Briefly, for little remains to be told, Miss Brunton, at the beginning of December, 1807, with characteristic modesty, made her final curtesy on the stage without the formality of leave-taking, and on the 30th of the same month, as the public journals announced, “Miss Brunton, of Covent Garden Theatre, was married to the Earl of Craven, at seven in the evening, at Craven House, and the following day the happy pair set off to Coombe Abbey.” The earl was in his thirty-seventh year, the bride in her twenty-fifth.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*

### Miss Biffin.

1784—1850.

A most accomplished person, who having been born without legs or arms, contrived to paint miniatures and cut watch-papers with her nose; the above feats I have seen her with mine own eyes perform at Croydon, where she was fairest of the fair. I can illustrate this account by an anecdote, equally true, which can be vouched for. Miss Biffin before her marriage—for married she is—if alive and even if dead, was taken to Covent Garden Theatre early in the evening before the performance began by the gentleman to whom she was afterwards united. He having some other engagement, deposited his fair charge in the corner of the back seat of one of the upper front boxes, whereupon, aided by long drapery, such as children in arms

wear, and a large shawl, she sat unmoved as immovable. The engagement, however, of her beau proved longer than the performance of the theatre. The audience retired, the lights were extinguished, and still Miss Biffin remained. The box-keeper ventured to suggest that as all the company were out, and most of the lights were out too, it was necessary she should retire. Unwilling to discover her misfortune, and not at all knowing how far she might trust the boxkeeper, she expressed great uneasiness that her friend had not arrived, as promised. "We can't wait here for your friend, Miss—you really must go," was the only reply she obtained. At length Mr. Brandon, then housekeeper and boxkeeper, hearing the discussion, came to the spot, and insinuated the absolute necessity of Miss Biffin's departure, hinting something extremely ungallant about a constable. "Sir," said Miss Biffin, "I would give the world to go, but I cannot go without my friend." "You can't have any friend here to-night, ma'am," said Mr. Brandon, "for the doors are shut." "What shall I do, sir?" said the lady. "If you will give me your arm, ma'am, I'll see you safe down to the stage-door, where you can send for a coach." "Arm, sir," said the lady, "I wish I could; but I've got no arms." "Dear me!" said the box, book, and housekeeper, "how very odd! However, ma'am, if you will get on your legs—" "I have not got any legs, sir." Mr. Brandon grew deadly pale, the boxkeeper felt faint. Just at that moment Miss Biffin's friend arrived *viâ* the stage-door. He, perfectly alive to all the little peculiarities of his beloved, settled the affair in a moment by bundling her up, lifting her from her seat, and carrying her off upon his shoulders as a butcher's boy would transport a fillet of veal in his tray.—*Horace Smith.*

## Mrs. Bartley.

1785-1850.

The female portion of the staff of the theatre<sup>1</sup> had at its head an actress second only to Mrs. Siddons, and this was Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley. Her *Lady Macbeth*, *Constance*, and *Queen Katherine* were powerful embodiments, and I question if they have ever since been so finely portrayed. Miss Smith was formed by nature for the higher walk of her profession.

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<sup>1</sup> Crow Street Theatre, Dublin.

She had a noble and expressive face, full, strong, and melodious voice, capable of any intonation, and an original conception of her author.—*Donaldson*.

Mrs. Bartley was a fine tragic actress, and the only one to succeed Mrs. Siddons. She was playing with much success her parts, when suddenly came a bright star, Miss O'Neill, and immediately took the lead, and Mrs. Bartley was as a first tragic actress extinguished. Her husband took her off the stage, and they went to America, where they made a good deal of money. Poor Mrs. Bartley was for many years paralyzed, and suffered great pain; her mind was very much weakened too. It was only the constant kind attention and care she received that prolonged her life, and made it comparatively happy. I remember Mr. Lane, the celebrated artist and lithographer, and an intimate friend of the Bartleys, telling us one day he had just been calling in Woburn Square to inquire after Mrs. Bartley, and heard this droll Malaprop from the maid-servant who opened the door, "My mistress is a little better to-day, sir. Master has used an imprecation (embrocation) that made her tingle all over."—*Recollections of John Adolphus*.

## Charles Mackay.

1786-1857.

A very rich and peculiar treat has been afforded to the frequenters of Drury Lane Theatre by the performances of Mr. Mackay, the celebrated representative of the choicest comic characters in the Scottish romances. It is asserted that he has received the testimony of the great novelist (Scott) himself to the spirit and fidelity of these impersonations. This gentleman first appeared as *Bailie Nicol Jarvie*, in the delicious opera of "Rob Roy." In this character he succeeded completely in making his audience feel that they now for the first time saw the idea of the novelist embodied on the scene. Other actors are "sophisticate;" he was "the thing itself." It seemed that not a step, a look, or a tone could have been changed without taking something from the verisimilitude of the portrait. Not only did he realize the professional traits, the national characteristics, and the individual peculiarities of the weaver and magistrate of Glasgow, but he brought out delicately and finely that vein of romance which runs through almost all the



creations of the author. Mr. Mackay's acting more resembles our idea of the comedians of the last age than anything else we have seen ; it is more quiet, more entirely fitted to the part, and derives less aid from mere personal peculiarities than that of any of our London humorists.—*Talfourd*, 1829.

Taking him in the single character of *Bailie Nicol Jarvie* I am not sure I ever saw anything in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time. He is completely the personage of the drama, the purse-proud consequential magistrate, humane and irritable in the same moment, and the true Scotsman in every turn of thought and action.—*Sir Walter Scott*.

Although Mr. Mackay found in the Waverley dramas his principal stock of characters, there were many other plays in which he performed. He delineated with rare success some of the more comic personages of the legitimate drama ; and in a wide range of parts—embracing such characters as *Rolamo*, in "Clari," *Old Dornton*, in the "Road to Ruin," &c.—he exhibited a power and pathos which many an audience has been compelled to acknowledge. Even in his later years, and long after he had established his fame as a first-rate comedian, he was found making a "first appearance" in a new part.—*Peter Paterson*,

## William Farren.

1786-1861.

For *Shylock*, though out of his usual line, Mr. Farren has a great desire, and frequently plays it for his benefit. He is not very portly now, but when he enacted *Shylock* at Birmingham he was certainly one of Pharaoh's lean kine. The performance went pretty smoothly until *Shylock* says—

"The pound of flesh that I demand is mine ;  
'Tis dearly bought, and I will have it."

when a fellow in the gallery called out, "Oh ! let old Skinny have the pound of flesh ; you can see he wants it bad enough."—*Records of a Stage Veteran*.

Mr. Farren has made a bold attempt to disprove the assertions of the critics, as to the narrowness of his sphere, by playing several of Mr. Terry's and Mr. Dowton's characters. As he is a man of sense and observation, he can

never play anything foolishly, and is far too discreet to make a direct failure; but he has not succeeded in giving pleasure, except in those parts which are peculiarly and exclusively his own. His acting is not the result of a natural and vigorous capacity and aptitude, but of wonderful ingenuity and skill. He is a young man who plays old parts, whose great art consists in disguising his voice, his shape, and his features; affecting in the full vigour of life the decrepitude and powerless passions and vanities of age; and succeeding in proportion as he is unlike himself, and as he reverses all his own hearty and pleasurable sympathies. His success in this way is undoubtedly curious; and when, as in *Lord Ogleby*, he engrafts on this assumption of age and decay, singular delicacy of manner, and aristocratic generosity of feeling, and mingles an undying vivacity and pride with the appearance of physical weakness, the portraiture which he gives is no less agreeable than singular. But this talent is obviously limited to a small compass; it is not like a potent sympathy which readily seizes on every variety of emotion, and happily impregnates every imitation of humanity with appropriate warmth and passion. Mr. Farren's *Admiral Franklyn* is only a testy old man, and his *Dr. Cantwell* is totally without the *unction* absolutely necessary to the success of a meek and saintly hypocrite. Perhaps he could represent a fiery enthusiast, whose "outward tenement," broken and decayed, shows the genuine fury within, because the character would bear an essential resemblance to the miser, which he played with strange force, like an animated mummy. But, for the religionist of this world, whom Dowton so completely pictures, he is totally unfit. He would not even impose on old *Lady Lambert*, or obtain admission into *Mawworm's* pulpit. In *Lord Ogleby*, however, he makes amends for all.—*Leigh Hunt*.

An ingenious and elegant actor of elderly gentlemen; but dry, hard, ungenial.—*Talfourd*.

On Monday evening (July 21st, 1855) Mr. Farren took leave of the public at the Haymarket Theatre, the scene of all his later triumphs, supported by his friends and many veterans of the profession, after having acted once more, and for the last time, a short scene from the "Clandestine Marriage." Every leading living actor seems to have been anxious to do something on the occasion, and by performing fragments room was made for the loving help of a great many; even a corner

was made for Mr. Albert Smith, who sang one of his songs. The unrestrained cordiality with which "Farewell" was said by the public to one of the most finished actors by whom the stage has been adorned during the present century, could not fail to excite emotion even in bystanders, and how much more in the person of the artist towards whom all that warm feeling was expressed. Mr. Farren was unable to speak his own good-bye; all had to be felt, and there was nothing to be said.—*H. Morley's "Journal of a London Playgoer."*

## John Pritt Harley.

1786-1858.

His sire was a draper, and he himself is said to have been initiated into the mysteries of staymaking, and to have tried those of physic and the law, ere he settled down to comic acting and delighting the town.—*Dr. Doran.*

As to Fawcett,<sup>1</sup> Harley is not only like, but the same thing; as though the veteran had been driven back upon his early days with all the confidence and vigour of his maturity anticipated. Whether at a distant time Harley may ever equal his predecessor in characters of advanced life and rustic, or, at any rate, not refined feeling, remains a question. His *buoyancy* is everything at present.—*Boaden, 1831.*

## Edmund Kean.

1787-1833.

Just returned from seeing Kean in *Richard*. By Jove, he is a soul! Life, nature, truth, without exaggeration or diminution. Kemble's *Hamlet* is perfect; but *Hamlet* is not nature. *Richard* is a man; and Kean is *Richard*.—*Byron.*

You did me the honour to ask what I thought of Kean. I saw him but once, and imperfectly, being shut up, like a mouse in a telescope, in one of the wretched private boxes, which savour more of self-denial, penance, and privation, than any

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<sup>1</sup> Boaden speaks of Fawcett as "a great, original, masterly comedian; always natural and extremely powerful." To what degree Harley realized Boaden's conjectures we most of us know.—ED.

views of pride or pleasure. . . . Yet he delighted me in *Richard III*. He carries one's views backwards and forwards as to the character, instead of confining them, like other actors, within the limits of the present hour; and he gives a breadth of colouring to his part that strongly excites the imagination. He showed me that *Richard* possessed a mine of humour and pleasantry, with all the grace of high breeding grafted on strong and brilliant intellect. He gave probability to the drama by throwing this favourable light on the character, particularly in the scene with *Lady Anne*; and he made it more consistent with the varied lot of "poor humanity." He reminded me constantly of Bonaparte—that restless quickness, that Catiline inquietude, that fearful somewhat resembling the impatience of a lion in his cage. Though I am not a lover of the drama (will you despise me for the avowal?) I could willingly have heard him repeat his part that same evening.—*Mrs. R. Trench*,<sup>1</sup> 1813.

Mrs. Dimond offers me a place in her box to-night, whence will be seen Massinger's horrible *Sir Giles Overreach*, played by Mr. Kean. If he can stretch that hideous character as he does others, quite beyond all the authors meant or wished, it will shock us too much for endurance, though in these days people do require mustard to everything.—*Mrs. Piozzi*.<sup>2</sup>

From the days of David Garrick, Kean was the *only* actor

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere Mrs. Trench says: "I took my boys to see 'Macbeth' last night, but found that, though they read Shakspeare, they did not readily catch the language of the scene. They understood Kean well: his tones are so natural; but the raised voice and declamatory style in which most others pronounce tragedy, render it, I see, nearly unintelligible to children. I was astonished by Kean's talents in all that follows the murder, highly as I before thought of them. I suppose remorse never was more finely expressed, and I quitted the house with more admiration of him, and even of Shakspeare, than ever I had felt before."

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Piozzi died in 1821, in her eighty-second year. Whoever has heard of Dr. Johnson has heard of Mrs. Piozzi. She may be said to have been the last of the immortal circle of wits, poets, and painters, who live for ever in Boswell's book. Those who knew her at Bath, where she died, describe her manners in her extreme old age as highly polished and graceful. "Her fine mental faculties," says the Bath paper that chronicled her death, "remained wholly unimpaired. Her memory was uncommonly retentive on all subjects, enriched by apt quotations, in which she was most happy, and her letters and conversation to the last had the same racy spirit that made her the animating principle and ornament of the distinguished society she moved in at the more early portion of her life."—ED.

that never allowed a London manager to place his name in the bills for a *secondary* character. Even Garrick himself, when an engaged performer, had to personate inferior parts.—*Donaldson*.

It is impossible to form a higher conception of *Richard III.* than that given by Kean: never was character represented by greater distinctness and precision, and perfectly articulated in every part. If Kean did not succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character, he gave a vigour and relief to the part which we have never seen surpassed. He was more refined than Cooke; bolder and more original than Kemble. The scene with *Lady Anne* was an admirable specimen of bold and smiling duplicity. Wily adulation was firmly marked by his eye, and he appeared like the first tempter in the garden. Kean's attitude in leaning against the pillar was one of the most graceful and striking positions ever witnessed. It would serve a Titian, Raphael, or Salvator Rosa as a model. The transition from the fiercest passion to the most familiar tone, was a quality which Kean possessed over every other actor that ever appeared. Many attempted this style, and all have most egregiously failed.—*Hazlitt*.

He exhibited humanity as it is, in all its aspects, varieties, and conflicts of passion. Hence his supreme ascendancy over the feelings of his audience—the hearts of thousands beating as one man's beneath his faithful and marvellous portraiture of emotions, affections, and infirmities of a nature common to all.—*Anon*.

Kean, with all his powers, I think, failed in the part of *Lear* as a whole.—*T. Campbell*.

Kean, a much greater actor than Cooke, fell below probably his own expectation in *Macbeth*; in the natural he was little accustomed to fail; it was in the supernatural demands of the character that he sunk under the burden; where mere physical force, and very admirable invention too, were yet insufficient to maintain him. Upon the pinnacle of that temple the head became uncertain and the body weak.—*Boaden*.

Kean had flashes of power equal to Garrick; but he could not sustain a character throughout as Garrick did.—*J. Bannister*.

I never saw finer acting than Kean's *Othello*, not even excepting any performance of Mrs. Siddons. His finest passages were those most deeply pathetic.—*Leslie's "Autobiography."*

We were very near the stage, where I could enjoy and appreciate Kean's acting. He has the disadvantage of a small person, but with an amazing power of expression in his face. He is less noble and dignified than Kemble, but I think his genius is as great in his way. Every word he utters is full of power, and I know not whether he most excels in the terrific or in the tender and pathetic. His face, though not handsome, is picturesque, and the manner in which he wore his hair was peculiarly so.—*Ibid.* 1816.

During the height of the Kean mania, one of our young Westminster Hall orators dining with Kean at Lord ——'s, told this histrionic phenomenon, among other compliments of a similar stamp, that he had never seen acting until the preceding evening. "Indeed!" said Kean; "why you must have seen others, sir, I should conceive, in *Richard III.*" "I have seen," replied the barrister, "both Cooke and Kemble; but they must excuse me, Mr. Kean, if I should turn from them, and frankly say to you, with *Hamlet*, 'Here's metal more attractive.'" Kean felt highly flattered. The conversation then turning on a curious law-suit, Kean, after a pause, asked the barrister if he had ever visited the Exeter Theatre. "Very rarely indeed," was the reply, "though, by-the-bye, now I recollect, during the last assizes, I dropped in towards the conclusion of "*Richard III.*" *Richmond* was in the hands of a very promising young fellow; but such a *Richard*!—such a harsh, croaking, barn brawler! I forget his name, but—" "I'll tell it you," interrupted the Drury Lane hero, rising and tapping the great lawyer over the shoulder: "I'll tell it you—KEAN."—*F. Reynolds.*

Kean had never yet I believe disappointed a London audience but on one occasion. He had gone to dine somewhere about ten miles from town with some players. Temptation and the bottle were too strong for him; he outstayed his time, got drunk, and lost all recollection of Shakspeare, *Shylock*, and Drury Lane. His friends, frightened at the indiscretion they had caused, despatched Kean's servant with his empty chariot, and a well-framed story that the horses had been frightened, that the carriage had been upset, and the tragedian's shoulder dislocated. This story was repeated from the stage by the manager; and the rising indignation of the audience was instantly calmed down into commiseration and regret. The following morning Kean was shocked and bewildered at dis-

covering the truth of his situation. But how must his embarrassment have been increased on learning that several gentlemen had already arrived from town to make anxious inquiries after him? Luckily his old associates, the actors, had, with great presence of mind and practised effrontery, carried on the deception of the preceding night. The village apothecary lent himself to it, and with a grave countenance confirmed the report; and Kean was obliged to become a party, *nolens volens*, to the hoax. His chamber was accordingly darkened, his face whitened, and his shoulder bandaged. No one discovered the cheat; and to crown it completely, he appeared in an incredibly short time on the boards of old Drury again, the public being carefully informed that his respect and gratitude towards them urged him to risk the exertion, and to go through his arduous parts with his arm in a sling!—*T. C. Grattan*.<sup>1</sup>

Kean was unquestionably a man of genius: neither his physical deficiencies, nor his utter want of general education, nor the vulgar tricks which he had brought from his original walk of harlequin and punchinello, prevented him from reaching a splendid excellence of passionate vigour in some four or five of the best parts in our tragic drama. Beyond this elevated but very narrow range he was at best a secondary player. In *Shylock*, *Richard III.*, *Othello*, in *Sir Giles Overreach* and in *Zanga* he was great. In *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Wolsey*, *Lear*, *Brutus*, *Coriolanus*, *King John*, &c. &c., he never approached within any measurable distance of the learned, philosophical, and majestic Kemble; and where both rivals wanted the support of Shakespere, the failure of the younger was still more con-

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<sup>1</sup> "On his return from America, he presented," says Mr. Grattan, "a mixture of subdued fierceness, unsatisfied triumph, and suppressed debauchery. He had in a great measure recovered his place before the public, but he had lost all the respectability of private life. He lived in the Hummums Hotel, Covent Garden; his wife occupied obscure lodgings in Westminster, and was, as well as his son, quite at variance with him. His health had been greatly shattered during his American campaign—chiefly, I believe, from his mental sufferings. He told me he had been *mad* at Montreal or Quebec for several days, and related an incident which proved it—namely, his having mounted a fiery horse, dressed in the full costume of the Huron tribe of Indians, of which he had been elected a chief, and after joining them in their village or camp, haranguing them, parading them, and no doubt amusing them much, being carried back by some pursuing friends to the place from whence he came, and treated for a considerable time as a lunatic."—*My Acquaintance with the late Edmund Kean*, 1833.

spicuous. In several characters, particularly in *Iago*, he always appeared to us inferior to Mr. Young; in many more, including *Romco* and *Hamlet*, to Mr. Charles Kemble; and it seems to be a matter of admitted doubt whether in two even of his best performances he was; on the whole, superior to Cooke. In comedy he was detestable.<sup>1</sup>—*Quarterly Review*, 1835.

During the Christmas vacation, Thomas Young was in the habit of giving frequent dinners to his friends and acquaintances, at which his son Charles was allowed to appear as soon as dessert was put upon the table. On one of these occasions, . . . as Charles was descending the stairs to the dining-room, in his smartest clothes, he saw a slatternly woman seated on one of the chairs in the hall, with a boy standing by her side, dressed in fantastic garb, with the blackest and most penetrating eyes he had ever beheld in human head. His first impression was that the two were strolling gipsies from Bartholomew Fair who had come for medical advice. He was soon undeceived; for he had no sooner taken his place by his father's side, and heard the servant whisper their presence in the hall, than, to his surprise, the master, instead of manifesting displeasure, smirked and smiled, and with an air of self-complacent patronage, desired his butler to "bring in the boy." On his entry he was taken by the hand, patted on the head, and requested to favour the company with a specimen of his histrionic ability. With a self-possession marvellous in one so young he stood forth, knitted his brow, hunched up one shoulder-blade, and with sardonic grin and husky voice spouted forth *Gloster's* opening soliloquy in "Richard III." He then recited selections from some of our minor poets, both grave and gay, danced a horn-pipe, sang songs, both comic and pathetic, and for fully an hour displayed such versatility as to elicit vociferous applause from his auditors, and substantial evidence of its sincerity by a shower of crown pieces and shillings. The door was no sooner closed

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<sup>1</sup> In the course of the season of 1814 Kean played sixty-eight nights. The total amount of money received at Drury Lane Theatre on these nights was 32,642*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* When he came to the theatre the receipts averaged 212*l.* per night. During his nights the general average was 509*l.* 9*s.* The largest receipt on the presentation of *Shylock* was 531*l.* 2*s.*; of *Richard III.*, 655*l.* 13*s.*; of *Hamlet*, 660*l.*; of *Iago*, 573*l.*; of *Othello*, 673*l.* The number of persons who visited the theatre during these sixty-eight nights was 166,742. The result of the calculations is that the theatre cleared by his services alone during these nights upwards of 20,000*l.*



than everybody present desired to know the name of the youthful prodigy. . . . The host replied that "this was not the first time he had had him to amuse his friends: that he knew nothing of the lad's history or antecedents, but that his name was Edmund Kean."—*Life of C. M. Young.*

Monday, 28, 1814.—I went with Lady Conyngham to the play to see Kean for the first time. It was "Richard III." It pleased me, but I was not enthusiastic. His expression of the passions is natural and strong, but I do not like his declamation; his voice, naturally not agreeable, becomes monotonous. Thursday, 31st.—Went in the Duke of Devonshire's box to see Kean in *Hamlet*. I must confess I am disappointed in his talent. To my mind he is without grace and without elevation of mind, because he never seems to rise with the poet in those sublime passages which abound in "Hamlet," and of what is called recitation of verse he understands nothing.—*Miss Berry's Journal.*

The most celebrated tragedian of our time died at Richmond on May 15th, 1833.<sup>2</sup> He was born, we believe, on the 17th of March, 1788, and nearly as soon as he could walk he appeared as a boy actor on the stage, and went through all the difficulties and dangers of a young player's life. At Drury Lane Theatre, when Kemble was in the height of his glory, the obscure child, the unknown heir-apparent to the tragic throne, was used in processions, &c. Subsequently, at the Haymarket, he delivered messages and performed in small parts, with no advantage to himself, the company, or the audience; and he was remarkable for the silence and shyness with which he took his seat in the green-room, his eye alone "discoursing most eloquent music." Through various country theatres he passed with various success,

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Berry, a quaint old lady, who died in 1852, aged about ninety. She was the intimate friend of Horace Walpole, and imbibed from him the sharp garrulity and Anglo-Gallican idiom that characterize and perhaps deform her Memoirs.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> His name was Edmund Carey. In "The Early Days of Edmund Kean," it is said: "His parentage was continually questioned by himself, and he frequently, to many persons who were not particularly in his confidence, affirmed his belief to be that Mrs. Carey was not his mother, but that he owed his existence to a lady who through life assumed the title of his aunt. That lady was, nearly sixty years since, under the protection of the Duke of Norfolk, and was introduced by him to Garrick, who gave her an introduction to the managers of Drury, where she appeared soon after the death of the British Roscius."

until he joined the Exeter company. Here he attracted the admiration of Dr. Drury, a gentleman of taste and influence; and through his interference, Mr. Arnold, on the part of the Committee of Drury Lane Theatre, went to Dorchester, for the express purpose of seeing Kean act. The result of the interview was an engagement; and in January, 1814, he appeared on the boards of Drury.<sup>1</sup> Of all his provincial audiences, we believe that the good people of Exeter were most alive to his transcendent merit, while the inhabitants of Guernsey have distinguished themselves by disrelishing his acting, and literally

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<sup>1</sup> "Some one or two years after his metropolitan *debut* he was engaged in the circuit of Mr. J—— C——. His success was immense, and he received nightly half the receipts of the house. The average exceeded 50*l.* per night. Kean's share was brought to him each night after the play by Mr. J—— C——, to whom, however, nothing could induce him to speak one word; but with a doggedness that appeared premeditated, when the well-known knock came to the door of his dressing-room, he always said *aloud* to his servant, 'See what *that man* wants.' Years rolled on, and time, which generally strengthens our attachments and weakens our asperities, brought Mr. J—— C—— and Kean in contact, about 1827, when the once flourishing manager, stricken by sorrow and by years, was feeling the pangs of poverty his own exertions could no longer avert. His theatre had passed into other hands, and as an actor his services were not required. Kean came into a town where Mr. C—— was sojourning, and he applied to the tragedian to play one night for his benefit. Kean consented; the night was fixed for the one after Kean's engagement. Some nights previous to its occurrence he, with some of the actors of the company, met at a tavern in the town. The room was a public one, where the comedians and many of the patrons of the theatre occasionally assembled. There, on the occasion in question, was Mr. C——. The jest went round, not unaccompanied with the bowl, of course; and the *ci-devant* manager, thinking all former ill-feeling buried, rose, made a speech allusive to Kean's generosity, and acquainted the company that Kean, having known him in his prosperity, had consented to play gratuitously for his benefit. This was received with loud acclamations, amid which Kean rose (and those who were present are as little likely to forget the expression of his countenance at that moment as in any of his dramatic triumphs) and said: 'Don't let us misunderstand one another. I am bound to you by no ties of former acquaintance. I don't play for you because you were once *my* manager, or *a* manager. If ever a man deserved his destiny it is you. If ever there was a family of tyrants, it is yours. I do *not* play for you from former friendship, but I play for you because you are a *fallen man*.' The effect was electrical; but the person to whom it was addressed pocketed the affront and the receipts of the night in question, which were very great. Kean explained his conduct thus—I believe I may say exactly in these words: 'I am sorry that to —— I forgot myself; but when me and mine were *starving*, that fellow refused to let a subscription for me be entertained in the theatre.'"—*Recollections of Kean.*

driving him from their stage. Guernsey should have had a Claremont or a Creswell made on a scale low enough for its intellect. Kean's first appearance at Drury Lane on the 26th of January, 1814, in *Shylock*, in the disastrous—we were almost about to say, the most disastrous days of Drury—we shall not easily forget! The house was empty of nearly all but critics, and those who came in with oranges or orders; and the listlessness of the small spiritless audience at the first night of a new *Shylock*, was the “languor which is not repose.” There came on a small man, with an Italian face and fatal eye, which struck all. Attention soon ripened into enthusiasm; and never, perhaps, did Kean play with such startling effect as on this night to the surprised few! His voice was harsh, his style new, his action abrupt and angular; but there was the decision, the inspiration of genius in the look, the tone, the bearing; the hard unbending Jew was before us in the full vigour of his malignity; the injuries upon him and upon his tribe saddened in his eyes, but through them you could trace the dark spirit of revenge, glaring in fearful, imperishable fury. That night was the starting-post on the great course upon which he was destined to run his splendid race! “No one as an actor,” says an eloquent writer in the *Athenæum*, “ever had the ball so completely at his foot as Kean had; nay, the ball at *his* foot waited not for the impelling touch—like the fairy clue which ran before the steps of Fortunatus, leading him to happiness and fame—it speeded before him; but the inveterate whims of genius lured him into every bye-path of passion and pleasure, and hurried him on—

‘from flower to flower,  
A wearied chase—a wasted hour!’

Frank in his nature, impetuous in his soul, he knew no calmness of object or enjoyment; ‘aut Cæsar aut nullus’ was his motto—he must either fly or *burrow!* and he never disguised his vices or his virtues. With the genius to have been more than a Garrick in his art, he had the follies and passions at times to reduce him almost beneath a Cooke in his habits. He could, at Drury Lane, electrify a Byron, and chill the blood at his heart with the fearful energies of his wondrous genius; and, quitting the peers, he could, on the same evening, delight the *spirits* of the *lower* house with his brilliant, dashing gaieties and *acted* songs. Those who have seen his third act of

'Othello' must ever tremble in their memories, and those who have heard him *recite* 'Black-eyed Susan' to the pathos of his own music, sadden still; such passion and such pathos are not easily borne at the moment or unremembered afterwards."—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1833.

One part he plays in all respects as finely as on his first appearance—*Shylock*; and, indeed, it struck me when I saw it the other night (1831) as more harmonious and entire than it was years ago, and sufficiently fervid and intense in all its passages. I used to think the trial scene in the fourth act languid compared with the rest of the performance, but now it seems quite worthy of all that precedes it; and the close—where generally no effect has been produced—is marked by a mild and peculiar beauty. His look is that of a man who asserts his claim to suffer as one of a race of sufferers; and when he turns his sorrowful face in silence to the frothy coxcomb who rails at him, we feel the immeasurable superiority of one who finds in the very excess of his misery his kindred with a tribe oppressed for ages to the insect boaster of the day. His *Sir Giles* is not so terrible as it was when it sent Lord Byron into hysterics and made Mrs. Glover tremble; but it is sustained by a quiet consciousness of power and superiority to principle or fear, and the deficiency of physical force in the last scene is supplied with consummate skill. His *Othello*, which, as once played, was equal to anything perhaps ever presented on the stage, had been altered greatly for the worse before his physical power abated: the once noble tide of passion which "knew no retiring off, but kept right on," was chequered and broken, and tearful, sometimes hysterical affection, was substituted for the solemn repose of despair. It is still very fine in parts, but it does not hold its former relative position even to his other performances; and those who saw it in his early days, and who can never assuredly forget it, would do well to abstain from seeing it now. But of all Mr. Kean's parts, that which any one who desires to retain an unclouded admiration of his powers should most sedulously avoid, is *Richard*. For myself, I never thought this, though from circumstances one of his most popular performances, altogether worthy of him, though it had many brilliant hits, and was nobly redeemed by the fighting at the end; and now the last act, where all should be bustle, fire, and fury, is painfully and pitifully feeble. He whispers when he should shout, creeps and totters about the

stage when he should spring or rush forward, and is even palpably assisted by his adversary to fight or fall. Yet his last look at *Richmond* as he stands is fearful;<sup>1</sup> as if the agony of death gave him power to menace his conqueror with the ghostly terrors of the world into which the murderous tyrant is entering.—*Talfourd*.

From the January of 1814 to that of 1833 Edmund Kean was the star of the British stage, and what may be reckoned as most noticeable in this nation of shopkeepers, that his individual talents drew more, and for the exertion of those talents he himself received more than any *three* performers that co-existed with him. His books show a sum nearly averaging 10,000*l.* a year for eighteen years. How with his active life so vast a sum could have been expended—for he never gambled—is one of the things that those who knew him best can never cease to wonder at. He had some silly habits of display—such as travelling on all occasions in a carriage-and-four, but his household expenses were always on a moderate scale. Yet a few days before his death he was in danger of an arrest for a sum not exceeding 100*l.*—*Recollections of Kean*.

Kean was, in acting, what Wilson was on canvas: he depended on striking, and cared not how coarsely his colours were laid on if the effect was produced.—*Records of a Veteran*.

Kean was an extraordinary actor and an extraordinary man. Without any advantages of education, and perhaps with all the disadvantages that could beset a birth and youth of poverty and desertion—for he seems never to have known who his father was, and even his mother's identity was doubtful—he yet

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<sup>1</sup> Kean was notoriously a passionate-tempered man. One night he went to hear Fuller, a mimic, give representations of the leading actors, including Kean. The tragedian frequently rapped his applause during the performance; but when Fuller came to the imitation of Kean, he paused. Kean looked approval, and Fuller commenced. In a few moments Kean threw a glass of wine in his face; there was a fight, after which Kean, by way of apology, said, "That if he thought he was such a wretch as Fuller represented him he would hang himself."—He acted at Birmingham once, where his benefit was a total failure. The play was Massinger's "New Way to Pay Old Debts." Allusion is made to the marriage of a lady: Kean suddenly exclaimed, "Take her, sir, and the Birmingham audience into the bargain."—The editor of a Cheltenham journal severely criticized him. Kean played *Silvester Daggerwood* for his benefit, and performed the part with a horsewhip in his hand, saying, aloud, "I keep this little instrument to punish cheating aldermen and lying editors."—ED.

struggled through difficulties that might have destroyed a mind of less energy, until he struggled with triumphant success. With no recommendation of person—a low and meagre figure, a Jewish physiognomy, and a stifled and husky voice—he seemed to be excluded by nature from all chance of personating tragedy; the grim expression of his countenance and the sullen sound of his voice prohibited comedy; yet at his first step on the London stage he was acknowledged to be the founder of a new school, to give new meaning to some of the highest characters of Shakspeare; to refresh the feelings and change the worship of those who had for a quarter of a century bowed down to the supremacy of the Kembles; and finally to pour a new and most welcome flood of wealth into the long-exhausted treasury of the theatre. This wonder was worked by the true operator of all earthly wonders—energy. The Kemble school was magnificent and majestic. Kean was his school alone, for it had neither founder nor follower but himself, and its spirit was vividness, poignancy, and intensity.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1840.

Kean possesses particular physical qualifications: an eye like an orb of light, a voice exquisitely touching and melodious in its tenderness, and in the harsh dissonance of vehement passion terribly true: to these he adds the intellectual ones of vigour, intensity, amazing power of concentrating effect—these give him an entire mastery over his audience in all striking, sudden, impassioned passages, in fulfilling which he has contented himself, leaving unheeded what he could not compass—the unity of conception, the refinement of detail, and evenness of execution.—*Fanny Kemble*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In a note to this passage Miss Kemble (Mrs. Butler) says:—"Kean is gone, and with him are gone *Othello*, *Shylock*, and *Richard*. I have lived among those whose theatrical creed would not permit them to acknowledge him as a great actor; but they must be bigoted indeed who would deny that he was a great genius—a man of most original and striking powers, careless of art, perhaps because he did not need it, but possessing those rare gifts of nature without which art is as a dead body. Who that ever heard will ever forget the beauty, the unutterable tenderness of his reply to *Desdemona's* entreaties for *Cassio*—'Let him come when he will; I can deny thee nothing;' the deep despondency of his 'Oh, now farewell;' the miserable anguish of his 'Oh, *Desdemona*, away, away!' Who that ever saw will ever forget the fascination of his dying eyes in *Richard*, when deprived of his sword; the wondrous power of his look seemed yet to avert the uplifted arm of *Richmond*. If he was irregular and unartist-like in his performance, so is Niagara compared with the waterworks of Versailles."

Daniel Terry.<sup>1</sup>

1789-1829.

He was intended by his parents for an architect, for which purpose they placed him under Mr. S. Wyatt, with whom he remained five years; but having very early imbibed a strong liking for the profession of an actor, he abandoned that pursuit. His first dramatic essay is stated to have been *Heartwell*, in the farce of "The Prize," a part affording but little scope for the display of histrionic talent. In 1803, he was staying at Sheffield, and embraced that opportunity of playing *Tressel*, in "Richard III.," *Cromwell*, in "Henry VIII.," and a few other minor parts, experimentally; but, whether dis-

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<sup>1</sup> Terry was once the somewhat unwilling participant of one of Theodore Hook's most audacious frolics. Hook, when hungry, and when without the money or the opportunity to procure a dinner, very often imitated the example of Goldsmith's loose friend, and forced himself upon strangers. Terry and Hook walking one day up a street near Soho Square, were suddenly brought to by a strong smell of dinner. Hook solicitously eyed the house; he was hungry, and he looked at Terry. Terry expressed his envy of those who were to enjoy the venison, whereupon Hook offered to make Terry a bet that he would dine at that house, "and," added he, "if you will call for me here at ten o'clock, I will give you a faithful account of mine host's cheer." Saying this he briskly rapped at the door. Terry, with a shrug of wonder, walked away. Hook on being admitted was at once conducted to the drawing-room, which was half full of people, and had set a good portion of the company grinning before the host noticed him. So very comical indeed was Hook that in a short time he had circled himself with a number of appreciative listeners, through which the host found it difficult to make his way. Explanations ensued, Hook protested he had mistaken the house—offered his humble apologies—begged permission to withdraw. The host would not hear of this, and after much entreaty, in which most of the guests joined, Hook was prevailed upon to remain. At the dinner-table his jokes kept the company in shouts of laughter, the host grew too faint with merriment to dispense the hospitalities of the table, the ladies ogled the good-looking stranger, and the guests spoke together in their eagerness to drink wine with him. In the drawing-room Hook seated himself at the piano, and burst into one of his extempore songs. Presently ten o'clock struck, and in walked Terry. Hardly had he entered when Hook, looking towards the host, sang, as a farewell and explanatory verse:

"I am very much pleased with your fare,  
 Your cellar's as prime as your cook;  
 My friend's Mr. Terry, the player,  
 And I'm Mr. Theodore Hook."—ED.

appointed in his expectations of eminent success, or from some other cause, he again returned to his original pursuit, which he finally quitted in 1805, and entered himself as a volunteer in the *corps dramatique* of Mr. Stephen Kemble, then performing in some of the principal towns in the north of England. With this company he remained, until its dissolution in August 1806, and gained in it considerable experience as an actor, by a year and a half's very varied and laborious practice. From hence Mr. Terry went to Liverpool, where he made slow but sure steps in public favour, and continued there until November, 1809, when he was engaged by Mr. Henry Siddons to lead the business at Edinburgh, on the secession of Mr. Meggott. Whilst there he made the acquaintance of Mr. Ballantyne, the celebrated publisher, and was by him introduced to Sir Walter Scott, who ever afterwards remained with him on the most intimate and friendly footing. In the summer of 1812, he was induced by the offer of an engagement at the Haymarket Theatre to take leave of his friends and the stage at Edinburgh, to court, what is ever the ultimatum of an actor's ambition, the favourable testimony of a London audience. He consequently made his first appearance in London on the Haymarket boards, on the 20th May, 1812, in the character of *Lord Ogleby*, in the "Clandestine Marriage," and was favourably received. He continued during this and the next season to play in succession a variety of old and new parts, with undiminished success. At the expiration of the second season he joined the Covent Garden company, where he continued until some disagreement about remuneration induced him to go over to the rival establishment, then under the management of Elliston. Here he remained until 1825, when, in conjunction with Mr. Yates, he purchased the Adelphi Theatre; and this is one of the occasions alluded to, that Sir Walter proved himself "a friend indeed," becoming, it is said, his security for the payment of his part of the purchase-money. This speculation was looked upon as a good one, and this theatre continued to thrive for two seasons under their joint management. About this time unpleasant rumours of pecuniary embarrassments on the part of Mr. Terry (totally unconnected with Mr. Yates or the theatre, and, indeed, incurred previous to their partnership), began to attract so much public notice, as to render a dissolution of their partnership necessary. This was accomplished, and Mr. Terry compounded in a handsome dividend with his



creditors. It is with great reluctance that this subject is at all alluded to, but the circumstances are so recent, and were so much the topic of public conversation at the time, that they could hardly escape being adverted to, more especially as they are thought to have occasioned, or at least hastened, that event which it has been our melancholy duty to record. Mr. Terry's shattered nerves sank under the many painful trials to which his unfortunate circumstances subjected him; he was unable to rally and combat with adversity. After the settlement of his affairs, he was re-engaged at Drury Lane Theatre, and appeared there in the characters of *Sir Peter Teazle* and *Peter Simpson*, on the opening night of the last season. On this occasion his acting evinced a considerable falling off of his accustomed powers; his limbs seemed palsied and his memory imperfect. He relinquished his engagement from ill-health, and after lingering some time, expired. As an actor, Mr. Terry, though by no means versatile, was in no character which he ever undertook otherwise than respectable. In *Peter Simpson*, *Admiral Frankland*, *Mr. Litigant*, the *Green Man*, and many other parts, he may be almost said to have been unique; and though he may have left some better actors, in particular parts, behind him, there are none who will give more general satisfaction. Whilst in Edinburgh he was married to Miss Nasmyth, a daughter or sister of the celebrated portrait-painter of that name. By this lady he has left some children, who, it is said, have recently come into some property.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1829.

He had received a good education, and been regularly trained as an architect, but abandoned that profession at an early period of life for the stage, and was now (1810) beginning to attract attention as a valuable and efficient actor. Scott had many opportunities of appreciating his many excellent and agreeable qualities. He had the manners and feelings of a gentleman. Like John Kemble he was deeply skilled in the old literature of the drama, and he rivalled Scott's own enthusiasm for the antiquities of *vertu*. . . . His small lively features had acquired, before I knew him, a truly ludicrous cast of Scott's graver expression; he had taught his tiny eyebrow the very trick of the poet's meditative frown; and to crown all, he so affected his tone and accent that, though a native of Bath, a stranger could hardly have doubted he must be a Scotchman.—*Lockhart*.

## Miss Fanny Kelly.

1790.

In the roundness of her limbs, the ease and grace of her motions, and the entire absence of anything sharp or angular in her form, she resembles Miss O'Neill, like whom she is formed to succeed best in the representation of characters where passion and suffering have taken possession of the soul; where the will is passive; and a fair form is agitated by emotions which display "the irresistible might of weakness." Her voice has more compass than Miss O'Neill's; its lower tones are almost as ripe and mellow, and her upper notes, which she sends forth in the playful passages, have an angelical clearness and sweetness, which remind us of the singing of Miss Stephens. Her action, though it has never the triumphant character which her predecessor sometimes assumed, is free, unembarrassed, and natural. But these excellencies are trivial compared to that fine conception of the fervour and the delicacy of the part which she manifests, and which enables her to identify herself, not only with its more prominent features, but its smallest varieties—its "lightest words." There is nothing sentimental or reflective in her acting; her mind never seems to have leisure for reverting to itself; her heart is evidently too busy to allow of opportunity for thought. She remembers that the emotions of a life are to be crowded into a few short hours—that the first dawning of love in an innocent bosom, its full maturity and strength, its power of anticipating time, of developing the loftiest energies in one who was but lately a child, of defying the pale appearances of death, and, finally, embracing death with gladness—and all the correspondent excitement of the intellect and the fancy, which suddenly bloom forth in the warmth of the affections—form part of that wonderful creation which it is her aim to embody.

—*Hazlitt*, 1821.

Went to see Miss Kelly in *Fuilet*. Very bad; but (as it seems) good enough for the public, who are delighted with her.—*T. Moore*.

Frances Maria Kelly, an actress and singer of high repute, was born at Brighton on the 15th of December, 1790. Her father was an officer in the army, and brother to Michael

Kelly, under whom she studied music and singing. She made her first appearance on the boards of a theatre at a very early age, as a member of the chorus at Drury Lane. Her *début* as an actress was at Glasgow, in 1807. In 1808 she was a member of Mr. Colman's company, at the Haymarket. Subsequently at the English Opera House, under Mr. Arnold's management. She earned many laurels as a singer, succeeding to several of the characters which had been filled by the eminent vocalist, Madame Storace. From the English Opera House she went to Drury Lane. Whilst performing at that theatre, she was fired at by a lunatic in the pit, when a scene of extraordinary excitement ensued. The man was subsequently tried for the murderous attempt, but acquitted on the ground of insanity. A similar attempt upon her life was afterwards made at Dublin, fortunately with no greater success. Miss Kelly was an actress of great versatility and talent. She was successful in the comedy parts filled by Mrs. Jordan, and still more in domestic melodrama. She built the small theatre in Dean Street, Soho, but derived little emolument from her enterprise.—*E. Walford.*

## John Vandenhoff.

1790-1861.

His conduct is not disrespectful to the audience, nor disreputable to himself; he excites attention, but he does not exact it; though his judgment is sound, he submits it with deference; he never appears solicitous to investigate a sentence, but goes at once to the sentiment it enforces. His business is not to methodize words, but to express passions; he is never pertinacious, pedantic, or critical; he neither whines nor declaims; he acts. What he utters seems to be without study; it seems to be extemporaneous words arising from the situation conceived at the time upon the spot. Thus his acting can be no other than nature, and thus he excites no cavil upon the meaning of epithets, no creation of opinions, no dereliction of understanding. His power is over the heart. He never inflates tragedy into bombast, nor degrades comedy into buffoonery.—*A. Barnes.*

The daring effort of Vandenhoff—one of the most adventurous within the range of tragedy—if not attended with

brilliant success, sufficiently acquitted him of the charge of presumption. His general conception of the character (*Richard III.*) was just; and though few of the minuter traits were original, they were often marked by much nicety of touch, and brought out with felicitous skill. The pervading life and fire of the part—the vein of jocularly and triumphant consciousness of power, were indeed wanting; and without these, no performance of *Richard* can, as a whole, take any elevated or permanent station in our memories. Yet there was an ease in the conversational passages and occasional bursts of energy in the passionate, which redeemed the actor from anything approaching to disgrace. The manner in which he dashed from his couch in the tent-scene, striking about his sword in half-awakened agony and terror, was really picturesque and fearful.—*Literary Gazette.*

This gentleman's theatrical history has been a singular one; I believe he, like John Kemble, was originally intended for the Catholic Church. I remember seeing him (Vandenhoff) for the first time, in the company of Lee, the Taunton manager, at that town. He was then, I suppose, just of age; acted *Achmet* and *Norval*, and, I think, *Iago* and *Othello*. He then impressed me with the notion of his possessing a mature judgment, but lacking energy. He afterwards went to Bath, where he was not very successful, and from thence to Liverpool, where, in a short time, he became the idol of all classes; came to London, and was but coldly received; returned to Lancashire, and regained his provincial celebrity, and ultimately came again to town as a leading tragedian. It is fatal to an actor's *greatness* that he should have been a favourite for any number of years in any *one* province. All our metropolitan actors who attained *great* fame were rather birds of passage in their early days: take for instances, Garrick, Kemble, Cooke, Kean, Henderson, Mathews, Munden, Dowton, &c. The idols of particular provincial towns have attained a respectable station in London, seldom more: for instance, Miss Jarman, Miss Huddart, Mr. Balls, Mr. Egerton, &c. There are some exceptions to this rule, but they are rare.—*Records of a Veteran.*

## James Wallack.

1791-1864.

Mr. Wallack has evidently formed himself on the model of Kemble, and has succeeded in copying much of his dignity of movement and majesty of action. Had we never seen that noblest Roman of all, we should have been exceedingly struck by Wallack's gestures and attitudes. He fails, however, to exhibit any of those intense recurrences to nature with which Kemble was wont to surprise the heart in the midst of the most rigid of his personations of character. He has, indeed, little of fervid enthusiasm or touching pathos.—*Tal-fourd*.

Wallack was to act in the "Rent Day." . . . I cried most bitterly during the whole piece; for as in the very first scene Wallack asks his wife if she will go with him to America, and she replies, "What! leave the farm?" I set off from thence and ceased no more. Wallack played admirably; I had never seen him before, and was greatly delighted with his acting. I thought him handsome of a rustic kind, the very thing for the part he played—a fine English yeoman.—*Fanny Kemble*.

## Miss O'Neill (Lady Becher).

1791.

Miss O'Neill is said to be more natural than Mrs. Siddons was, but to gain no more by it than waxwork does by being a closer representation of nature than the Apollo Belvedere. Very few discriminate sufficiently in the arts between the merit of an *exact* representation and an *ennobled* one; and people are not fair enough in general to allow that something must be sacrificed of fidelity in order to reach that elevated imitation which alone gives strong and repeated pleasure.—*Mrs. R. Trench*, 1814.

I wanted to see Miss O'Neill. She is a charming creature without doubt, and charms, as it should seem, without intending it, calling in no aid from dress or air, or studied elegance, such as in old days one expected to find in a public professor or dramatic recitation; but like Dryden's Cleopatra—

“ She casts a look so languishingly sweet,  
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,  
Neglecting, she can take them.”

Comparing such an actress with Mrs. Siddons is like holding up a pearl of nice purity, and asking you if it is not superior to a brilliant of the first weight and water.—*Mrs. Piozzi*.<sup>1</sup>

Miss O'Neill made her *début* at the Theatre Royal, Crow Street, in 1811, in “The Soldier's Daughter” as the *Widow Cheerly*. This young actress, for she was only nineteen years of age, succeeded two staid actresses of great ability; and no matter whether as *Volumnia*, *Constance*, *Fuliet*, or *Lady Teazle*, she proved that Ireland had not lost her prestige since the days of Woffington. Miss O'Neill left Dublin in 1815, and made her first appearance at Covent Garden in *Fuliet*, and never in the metropolis was such an impression made by any actress.—*W. Donaldson*.

Miss O'Neill, I never saw, having made and kept a determination to see nothing which should disturb or divide my recollection of Siddons.—*Byron*.

On the first night of her appearance at Covent Garden, she established a fame by far exceeding that of *any* actress before her, although possessing the advantages of high provincial celebrity, years of experience, and family interest. Miss O'Neill is truly original, and previous to her *entrée* on the London boards, never witnessed any of the great people. Her figure is of the finest model, her features beautiful, yet full of expression, displaying at once purity of mind and loveliness of countenance. Her demeanour is graceful and modest, her voice melody itself in all its tones, and with the exception of the greatest actress of her day, the celebrated and original *Lady Randolph*—*Mrs. Crawford*—Miss O'Neill is the only actress with that genuine feeling that is capable of melting her audience to tears. In her hand the handkerchief is not hoisted as the only signal of distress. Her pauses are always judicious and impressive; her attitudes appropriate and effective, either in regard to ease or dignity. She indulges in no sudden starts, no straining after

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<sup>1</sup> “Our ladies are all in hysterics, our gentlemen's hands quite blistered with clapping, and her stage companions worn to a thread with standing up like chains in a children's country dance, while she alone commands the attention of such audiences as Bath never witnessed. The boxkeepers said last night that the numbers Kean drew after him were nothing to it.”  
—*Piozzi*, 1818.

effect, no wringing of hands, nor screaming at the top of her voice; no casting her eyes around the boxes searching for applause, or addressing her discourse to the lustre or the gods in the upper region; no whining or pining, moaning or groaning, roaring or bellowing.—*Anon.*<sup>1</sup>

I have seen Miss O'Neill twice, and as times go, that is worth something. You have no doubt heard so much about her that anything I can say will come "tardy off," yet I'll tell you what I think of her. She is an actress of strong and well-directed sense and powerful feeling; her voice is good, particularly in its undertones, and without effort, or affectation, or anything like the common stage style of speaking; it is modulated entirely by the thought or feeling she has to express. The same may be said of her countenance, and nearly as much of her action. This, though always correct and graceful to a certain degree, is sometimes excessive; as, for instance, in her soliloquy with the phial as *Juliet*. She is not a mere maker of detached points, a strong marker of individual passages; she does not point a word into something that sounds like an epigram, and which, by dazzling you for a moment, leaves you in doubt whether it be right or wrong; but her excellence consists in exhibiting a regular, unbroken, and consistent character, from which she never departs for the purpose of bringing down a huzza. She cannot be compared with Mrs. Siddons at present, but she is much nearer to her in excellence than any of the others are to Miss O'Neill.—*F. Poole,*<sup>2</sup> 1814.

I saw her in the north of Ireland in *Cowslip*, and even in that was much struck with her. I recommended her to Jones in Dublin, and ultimately to Henry Harris. I think very highly of her comedy. The idea of her copying from Kean is delicious; that is a genuine bit of Keanism.—*Charles Mathews.*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Donaldson's "Recollections of an Actor."

<sup>2</sup> The author of "Paul Pry."—*Ed.*

<sup>3</sup> Miss O'Neill's father was the manager of a small strolling company in Ireland. He was an eccentric of the first water. If any member of his company disappointed him, O'Neill had one speech—"Confusion burst his skull, a blackguard! What will I do? Here, give me a greatcoat, and I'll double his part with my own." The greatcoat was the universal panacea, whatever the general costume of the play might be. If the *Ghost* in "Hamlet" complained to Mr. O'Neill of the lack of armour in the wardrobe, the manager would shrug up his shoulders, and after a pause exclaim, "Oh, bother! sure if ye'll put on a greatcoat ye'll do very well." Matters of much greater moment he met with the same indifference. Once pro-

Miss O'Neill owes everything to extreme sensibility. She gives herself up entirely to the impression of circumstances; is borne along the tide of passion and absorbed in her sufferings; she realizes all that is suggested by the progress of the story, and answers the utmost expectation of the beholder. She does not lift the imagination out of itself. Every nerve is strained, her frame is convulsed, her breath suspended, her forehead knit together, fate encloses her round and seizes on his struggling victim. Nothing can be more natural and affecting than her whole conception of those parts in which she has appeared.—*Boaden*.<sup>1</sup>

This young lady, in addition to a very pleasing person and a good voice, possessed, no doubt, a considerable portion of feeling, but which, in my opinion, was of too boisterous and vehement a nature. In this judgment, however, I was again in the minority, for by the verdict of the million Miss O'Neill was pronounced a younger and a better Mrs. Siddons.—*F. Reynolds*.

Of John Kemble as a man, Talma always spoke in terms of affection, of unqualified respect for and admiration of him as an actor. He entertained a high opinion too of points in Kean's acting. But his praises of Miss O'Neill were boundless. Certainly the French stage could produce nothing at all comparable with her for sensibility, tenderness, and pathos; it possessed nothing so exquisitely feminine. The phrase currently attributed to him respecting that accomplished actress, that

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ceeding by a barge along a small river, the captain and O'Neill quarrelled, and in the scuffle O'Neill was knocked overboard. He swam to shore, and called out, "Confusion burst your soul! I suppose you thought I couldn't swim." A knot of novices once joined Mr. O'Neill, and having played some time without receiving their pay, they resolved to take proceedings against him. He met the charge with a counter-claim against them for a considerable sum due to him by them for spoiling all the plays and farces they appeared in. To avoid the *exposé* they abandoned the claim.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Grant of Laggan (as she is styled by her son) speaks of Miss O'Neill in her 207th letter:—"Your gifted countrywoman, Miss O'Neill, has been delighting us all by her powers. I saw her play *Mrs. Haller*, which she did admirably. The house was much crowded. . . . I never saw such an all-alive creature, or one whose feelings are so youthfully keen. Miss O'Neill lodges near us, and having known a little of Mary, she has called here with her brother and sister. She is admirable on the stage, and most respectable at all times. The intelligent composure and elegant simplicity of her manners please me exceedingly."—1818.



“she had tears in her voice,” he *might* have applied to her, but it was not his own: it had been used as the affected compliment to Mademoiselle Duchesnois for years before.<sup>1</sup>—*Recollections of Talma.*

Miss O'Neill is in society what she is on the stage—gentle, pleasing, and interesting.—*Miss Berry's "Journal."*

## William Henry West Betty.

1792.

The “Betty-Boy” was undoubtedly a child of precocious and marvellous power to imbibe dramatic instruction, and to repeat it faithfully. He was withal handsome in face, and graceful in figure, and altogether an engaging and surprising youth.—*Mrs. C. Mathews.*<sup>2</sup>

Sir, my opinion of that young gentleman's talents will never transpire during my life. I have written my convictions down: they have been attested by competent witnesses, and sealed and deposited in the iron safe at my banker's, to be drawn forth and opened, with other important documents, at my death. The world will then know what Mr. Elliston thought of Master Betty.—*Elliston.*<sup>3</sup>

While young Betty was in all his glory, I went with Fox and Mrs. Fox, after dining with them in Arlington Street, to see him act *Hamlet*; and, during the play-scene, Fox, to my infinite surprise, said, “This is finer than Garrick.”—*Samuel Rogers.*

Northcote then spoke of the boy, as he always called him. He asked if I had ever seen him act; and I said, yes, and was one of his admirers. He answered, “Oh, yes, it was such a beautiful effusion of natural sensibility; and then that graceful play of the limbs in youth gave such an advantage over every one about him.” Humphreys, the artist,

<sup>1</sup> It was, according to Thackeray, applied to Rubini. See his “English Humorists.”—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Mudie was another infant phenomenon of that period. John Kemble was once asked whether she was really the child she was said to be. In his solemn tone of jesting he answered, “*Child!* Why, sir, when I was a very young actor in the York company, that little creature kept an inn at Tadcaster, and had a large family of children.”

<sup>3</sup> This was Elliston's invariable mysterious reply when questioned as to his opinion of Betty.—ED.

said, "He had never seen the little Apollo off the pedestal before."—*Hazlitt's "Conversations with Northcote."*

It would be impossible to describe the enthusiasm which he excited—it seemed an epidemic mania; at the doors of the theatre where he was to perform for the evening, the people crowded as early as one o'clock; and when the hour of admittance came the rush was so dreadful, that numbers were nightly injured by the pressure. One hundred pounds a night was now given to Young Betty; and he soon quitted the stage with a large fortune, accumulated at a period in life when other boys are only on the point of entering a public school.—*Percy Anecdotes.*

The popularity of that baby-faced boy, who possessed not even the elements of a good actor, was an hallucination in the public mind, and a disgrace to our theatrical history. It enabled managers to give him sums for his childish ranting that were never accorded to the acting of a Garrick or a Siddons. His bust was stuck up in marble by the best sculptors; he was painted by Opie and Northcote; and the verses that were poured out upon him were in a style of idolatrous adulation. Actors and actresses of merit were obliged to appear on the stage with this minion, and even to affect the general taste for him, in order to avoid giving offence.—*Thomas Campbell.*

I hate all *prodigies*—partly, I fancy, because I have no faith in them. Under this prejudice I saw his first performance, and was so disgusted by a monotony, a preaching-like tone, that I gave up my place at the end of the third act, and walked behind the scenes, where myriads of critics were gathered, to listen to their remarks. Here some vociferated that Garrick was returned to the stage; whilst others whispered, "The Bottle Conjuror" is come again. But as all that is said for him is in a *loud* voice, and all against him in a *low* one, praise must go forth, and criticism be scarcely heard. Indeed, on returning to my seat, in the fifth act, I found he had great spirit, great fire in the impassioned scenes, which gave variety to his tones, and made me say, "This is a clever boy;" and had I never seen boys act, I might have thought him extraordinary.—*Mrs. Inchbald.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Inchbald, though she commenced her career as an actress, is too completely identified with literature to find a place among actors. She was

Dressed as a slave, in white linen pantaloons, a short, close russet jacket trimmed with sable, and a turban hat or cap, at command of the tyrant on came the desire of all eyes, Master William Henry West Betty. With the sagacity of an old stager, I walked quietly into the house at the end of the first act, made my way into the lobby of the first circle, planted myself at the back of one of the boxes outside, and saw him make his *bow*, and never stirred till the curtain fell at the end of the play. I had a good glass, and saw him perfectly. He was a fair, pleasing youth, well formed, and remarkably graceful. The first thing that struck me was, that it was *passion* for the profession that had made him an actor. He was doing what he loved to do, and was putting his whole force into it. The next thing that I felt was, that he had amazing docility, and great aptitude at catching what he was taught; he could convey passions which he had never felt, nor seen in operation but upon the stage; grace, energy, fire, vehemence, were his own; the understanding was of a maturer brain. He seemed, however, to think all he said; and had he been taught to pronounce with accuracy, there was nothing beyond his obvious requisites for the profession.—*Boaden*.<sup>1</sup>

Betty had some fantastic notions in dress, which he indulged despite the remonstrances of his friends. One summer he sported a pair of indescribables made of children's map-pocket-handkerchiefs. Our readers may see the sort of things we mean—maps of London and its environs, &c.—marked up at haberdashers at a penny apiece. A gentleman suggested to the late young Roscius the singularity of such garments. "My good sir," replied Betty, "you don't perceive the convenience and utility they are of; for instance, as I am driving I may become doubtful as to my route; under the gig-apron there I have all the information I want upon my thigh." This Betty called his map-ography.—*Records of a Veteran*.

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born in 1753. She was the intimate friend of the Kembles, and the *protégée* of the younger Colman, who produced some of her early dramas. She is best known as the author of "The Simple Story." Boaden has written her life, and has made it perhaps the most uninteresting memoir that was ever penned. She died 1821, aged sixty-eight.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> His first appearance at Covent Garden, where Boaden saw him, was December 1, 1804. As early as one o'clock the people began to pour into the Piazzas and fill Bow Street. In the house was a large body of constables, and outside a strong detachment of the Guards. Thousands

## William Charles Macready.

1793.

Macready's performance in *Tell* (in Knowles' "William Tell") is always first-rate. No actor ever affected me more than Macready did in some scenes of that play.—*S. Rogers.*

Macready was educated for the Church; but it was owing to Mrs. Siddons's suggestion that he embraced the stage. When the elder Macready was away at Newcastle his son was home for the holidays, and Mrs. Siddons was at that time on a starring visit to the North. The leading actor of the theatre not suiting the Queen of Tragedy, she requested the manager to allow his son to undertake the part of *Biron* in "Isabella." The anxious father was shocked at the request, and replied with dignity that he intended his son for the Church. "The Church!" exclaimed the great actress; "have you any interest—any patron?" "None whatever," answered Macready senior. "Well, then, your son will live and die a curate on 50*l.* or 70*l.* a year; but if successful, the stage will bring a thousand a year." The wily manager took the hint; allowed William to appear, and from that period he got advanced till, in 1817, he burst on a London public, where a fortune has crowned his efforts. This anecdote I had from the father of Brinley Richards, the composer.<sup>1</sup>—*Donaldson.*

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pressed forward when the doors opened, and the house being immediately filled, the crowd made ineffectual efforts to press back. The shrieks and screams of the choking, trampled people were terrible. Fights for places grew; the constables were beaten back; the boxes were invaded; the pit-way being narrow, many went round to the box-office, paid box-prices, and passed from the boxes into the pit. The heat was so fearful that men all but lifeless were lifted up and dragged through the boxes into the lobbies which had windows. This young Roscius is said to have drawn an average of 650*l.* a night to Drury Lane as *Young Norval*. At first he was paid 50*l.* a night, but in three nights this was raised to 100*l.*—*ED.*

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, the old showman, was always very proud of having numbered Edmund Kean among his company. When Macready's name had become well known, Richardson was asked if he had ever seen him. "No, muster," he answered, "I knows nothing about him; in fact, he's some wagabone as nobody knows—one of them chaps as ain't had any eddication for the thing. He never was with me, as Edmund Kean and them riglars was."—*ED.*

When Mr. Macready was a very young man, he adapted and compiled a drama from Walter Scott's "Rokeby," and played the character of *Bertram Risingham* in it himself. It must be one or two and twenty years since I saw him in this at Newcastle-upon-Tyne (his father being manager of the theatre). The impression he then made on me I now vividly remember. The manner in which he executed the task of selecting portions of the poem and imitating Scott's style in the connecting lines, essentially necessary to form it into dialogue, impressed me with an opinion of Mr. M.'s literary powers.—*Records of a Stage Veteran*, 1836.

By the force of his own genius he has been step by step overcoming the reluctant prejudices of the critics. He has played *Pierre*, *King John*, *Hastings*, and the *Stranger*; and last and finest of all, *Werner*, in Lord Byron's play, adapted by himself to the stage. His *Pierre* was occasionally too familiar, and now and then too loud; but it had beauties of the highest order, of which I chiefly remember his passionate taunt of the gang of conspirators, and his silent reproach to *Jaffier* by holding up his manacled hands, and looking upon the poor traitor with steadfast sorrow. In *King John* there is a want of the amenity with which Kemble reconciled the weak and odious monarch to the nature which his actions outraged and his weakness degraded; and some of the more declamatory speeches were given with a hurry which scarcely permitted them to be understood; but the scene where he suggests to *Hubert* the murder of *Arthur*, and that of his own death, were more masterly; the last, as a representation of death by poison, true, forcible, and terrific, yet without anything to disgust, is an extraordinary triumph of art. His *Hastings* is only striking in one scene—that where he is doomed to die, and utters forgiveness to his betrayer. Of his old parts none has been so perfect as the *Stranger*. Every look and tone is that of a man who fancies he hates mankind because his heart is overflowing with love which cannot be satisfied. *Werner* is represented by Mr. Macready as a man proud, voluptuous, and, above all, weak—craving after the return of his fatherly love with more anxiety from his sense of inability to repose on his own character and resources, and vainly lavishing his fondness on a son whose stern, simple, unrelenting nature repels all his advances with disdain. There is slender hint of this conception in the text; but it is made out by the actor, so that it must stand dis-

tinct and alone in the memories of all who may see it.—*Talfourd*.<sup>1</sup>

Kean had a thorough contempt for Macready's acting; and the latter, affecting to be indignant at the mode in which Mr. Kean had conducted himself (in always keeping a step or two behind him, whereby the spectator had a full view of the one performer's countenance, and only a side view of the other), bounced into my room, and at first vowed he would play with him no more. He finally wound up by saying, "And pray, what is the—next p—lay you ex—pect me to appear in with that low—man." I replied that I would send him word. I went up into Kean's dressing-room, where I found him scraping the colour off his face, and sustaining the operation by copious draughts of cold brandy-and-water. On my asking him what play he would next appear in with Macready, he ejaculated, "How the —— should I know what the fellow plays in!"—*Alfred Bunn*, "*The Stage*," &c.<sup>2</sup>

His first appearance in London was a decided hit; but the establishment of his fame and position on the London stage with such competitors as Kemble, Kean, and Young, was a long and arduous struggle, and for nearly ten years it had to be maintained before he could be said to be a great tragedian, worthy of representing the great Shakspearian tragic characters. The

<sup>1</sup> Talfourd was born 1795. His father was a brewer at Reading. At the age of eighteen he was sent to London to study law under Chitty, the pleader. He was called to the bar in 1821. In early life he was a voluminous contributor to the periodical literature of his day. Later he produced three dramas, of which "Ion" (1836) was the most esteemed. In 1849 he was appointed one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas. He was a man of unquestionable ability, reaching distinction in every walk he pursued—the law, the senate, the drama; for his virtues, his genial sympathies, and his uniform character, loved by his friends and esteemed by all who knew him.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Elliston's opinion of Macready, according to Alfred Bunn (about whom, if the reader desire information, he may turn to the early numbers of *Punch*) was not more flattering than Kean's. "Elliston," says Bunn, "had the proper worship for true genius, but the proper contempt for *pseudo* genius; and he never gave better proof of his discernment than one evening when on entering the green-room, he was accosted in the most supercilious manner by a performer (Macready) dressed for the character of *Rob Roy* (a part which the histrio thought derogatory to his reputation, though it was the making of it) with, 'Pray, Mr. Elliston, when do we act Shakspeare?' and he pithily replied to this very magnificent three-tailed Bashaw, 'When you can!'"

highest place in tragedy was held for nearly a quarter of a century by Mr. Macready. This eminent actor studied for his profession, and considered that to be a great actor it was advisable for him to become a good scholar, an accomplished gentleman, a well-ordered man, with a well-regulated mind and finely cultivated taste.—*Dr. Madden's "Life of Lady Blessington."*

His successful impersonation of *Richard III.*, and his masterly delineation of *Virginius*, at once determined his position as an actor of the first class—second to none. All the parts in which I ever saw him, such as *Orestes*, *Mirandola*, *William Tell*, *Rob Roy*, and *Claude Melnotte*, he certainly had made his own. He was a man of more reading and cultivation than Young; and while the latter amused himself in the hunting-field or the drawing-rooms of his aristocratic patrons, the former gave himself heart and soul to the study of his art, and greatly improved his powers by intellectual friction with such minds as those of Bulwer, Forster, Dickens, Knowles, and Albany Fonblanque. Moreover, he was what is called an original actor.—*Rev. J. Young, "Life of C. M. Young."*

I was at a dinner-party when Harley the actor told a good story of Macready in America. He was rehearsing *Hamlet* with a man who, in playing *Guildenstern*, continually (as bad actors are apt to do) pressed too near him. Remonstrances had no effect, and at length he came so very close that Macready said, "What, sir, you would not shake hands with Hamlet, would you?" "I don't know," said the other; "I do with my own President."—*Recollections of John Adolphus.*

Farewell, Macready, since to-night we part :

Full-handed thunders often have confest

Thy power well-used to move the public breast.

We thank thee with one voice, and from the heart.

Farewell, Macready, since this night we part.

Go take thine honours home ; rank with the best ;

Garrick, and statelier Kemble, and the rest,

Who made a nation purer thro' their art.

Thine is it that the drama did not die,

Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime,

And those gilt gauds men-children swarm to see.

Farewell, Macready ; moral, grave, sublime,

Our Shakspeare's bland and universal eye  
 Dwells pleased, thro' twice a hundred years on thee.  
*Alfred Tennyson.*

At a rehearsal of the banquet-scene in "Macbeth," the *First Murderer*, in spite of Macready's adjurations, persisted in walking down to the centre of the stage, and thereby entirely hiding *Macbeth* from the audience. The tragedian impatiently called for a carpenter, a brass-headed nail, and a hammer. The carpenter came. "Do you see that plank there. Drive the nail into that spot." It was done. "Now, you sir" (this to the *Murderer*), "look at that nail. Come down to that spot, not an inch further—and wait there till I come." Mr. Utility did as he was desired, and Macready's mind was easy. Night came, and with it the banquet-scene. The *First Murderer* enters, walks down the stage, stops suddenly, then turns round and round, apparently looking for something he had dropped. The audience began to titter. Macready stalks to the man's side: "In heaven's name, what are you about?" "Sure," exclaims the *Murderer*, "ain't I looking for that blessed nail of yours!"—*Chambers.*

## Miss Stephens<sup>1</sup> (Countess of Essex).

1794.

Miss Stephens began her career early, but did not come prominently forward till about 1812. She commenced her musical education under Lanza, who proceeded to form her voice with care, but also with the slow progression of the Italian

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<sup>1</sup> In 1821 appeared Miss Wilson, who bid fair at the onset of her career to rival Miss Stephens. The following notice of her performance will illustrate the enthusiasm with which she was greeted:—"She first performed *Mandane* in the noble opera of "Artaxerxes," on Thursday, the 18th of January, a day which, on this account, will long be distinguished in the annals of music. Her voice is of great compass—more complete perhaps in the higher than in the lower notes—but admirable throughout the whole of its range. It has not that body and depth of sweetness which Miss Stephens pours forth in so rich and sustained a tide, but more of tricksome delicacy than hers. We have heard no one except Catalani who could ascend with so graceful an ease into the highest heaven of sound, and sport and revel at will in its liquid elements. The theatre, crowded to the roof, welcomed her with tremendous acclamations; which evidently confused her at first, though her tremors did not prevent the audience from dis-



method. Subsequently she became the pupil of Welsh, who applied himself industriously to the task of fitting her for the stage, and of bringing her out. Her round, full, rich, *lovely* voice, her natural manner, her simple style, deformed by no sort of affectation, immediately won upon the public; and both in the orchestra, the church, and the theatre, she became universally admired. No female singer, perhaps, ever built so true an English style on Italian rudiments. Her ballad singing was perfection. There was also high beauty and no slight polish in her concert and oratorio singing, and though the manner was anything but impassioned, it was sensible and graceful. Her purity rendered her performance the very model of what our nation terms "chaste singing."—*The Progress of Music.*

Miss Stephens is not at the head of a class; but to my feelings entirely unlike all other singers. It was sixteen years last Twelfth-night since I heard her last, when the curtain of Covent Garden drew up on the opening scene of "Love in a Village," and discovered her sitting with Miss Matthews among the honeysuckles and roses to send forth a stream of such delicious sound as I had never fancied proceeding from human lips. Since then how many lady-singers have flourished and faded and been forgotten! Others there may be with a greater compass of voice, which I doubt not, or profounder musical science, as I am credibly informed, but never any one with tones so breathing of all womanly sweetness, and an absence of manner so irresistible. Except that Miss Stephens has become somewhat thinner in person, and that her voice is diminished in volume, I find no difference between her earlier and her present self. On the stage she

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covering extraordinary capabilities even in the charming duet of "Fair Aurora," with which the piece opens. Her "Fly, soft Ideas," gave full proof of her science and taste, as well as voice; and her "Monster away," was admirably acted as well as sung. She was best, however, where the composer is best; for her execution of "If e'er the cruel tyrant Love" was the most delicious of the whole. The "Soldier Tired," however, was her greatest effort, and a greater of any kind we never witnessed. We usually consider this as a vulgar composition; but, amidst its most difficult passages, she contrived to introduce infinite delicacies, which made the heart quiver with strange delight, and rendered the bravura almost as beautiful as it is amazing. The most wonderful exertions of Kean and Miss O'Neill never smote with more electric force on the audience, or drew from it more rapturous expressions of welcome."

looks no older, nor has her style acquired a particle of vulgarity or coarseness ; but the same unaffected simplicity, the same quiet pathos, the same graceful tenderness which enchanted me in the beginning of 1814, remain unharmed in 1830. Her *Polly* is only too interesting : it is so modest, affectionate, and feminine, that it turns the burlesque and the satire to "favour and to prettiness."—*Talfourd*, 1830.

With a voice of the loveliest kind—for that is the epithet that best describes the analogy between the visual sensation of beauty of form, feature, and complexion, and the filling up of the sister sense of hearing by her full, round, pure, rich, and satiating tones—"a sacred and homefelt delight," that belonged perhaps to her alone, and was in perfect accordance with English notions and English sensibilities, was experienced by the hearer. No one ever gratified the general public more than Miss Stephens, because she was natural, chaste, and faultless, though she aspired not to move the heart by those violences which constitute the excesses, and for that very reason the fascination of the voluptuousness of Italian art.—*On Giving an Opera to the English*, 1834.

This most enchanting singer made her first appearance in the old, sweet part of *Polly*, in the "Beggars' Opera," and we thought never sang so well. The beautiful repose of her acting, the irresistible way in which she condescends to beseech support when she might extort reluctant wonder, and the graceful awkwardness and *naïveté* of her manner, more captivating than the most finished elegance, complete the charm of her singing. The pathos of her "Can Love be controlled by advice?" and "Oh, ponder well," the mingled science and sentiment of "Cease your funning," and the fine, bird-like triumph of "He so pleased me," are like nothing else to be heard on the stage, and leave all competition far behind.—*Leigh Hunt*.

## Robert Keeley.

1794-1869.

Chelmsford is decidedly the most theatrical town in England. Keeley was once unfortunate enough to go thither as a star ; the first night he acted to a select few, the second night the numbers were scantier than before, and on the third and last night, the auditors were few and far between. The last piece

was "The Hundred-Pound Note," in which Keeley played the conundrum-making *Billy Black*. In the last scene he advanced to the lights, and said, "I've one more, and this *is* a good un. 'Why is the Chelmsford Theatre like a half-moon? D'ye give it up? Because it's *never full!*'"—*Records of a Stage Veteran*.

This actor is the most genuine comedian who has made his appearance for years. His performances are finely executed little bits of the good old school of acting. In the farce of "The Duel," he plays a cockney tailor to the life, and almost rivals the famous *Ferry Sneak* of Russell. He shows all that can be done within the compass of his parts, and never attempts to go beyond them—a very rare excellence in comedians of these days.—*Talfourd*.

It would be difficult to name an actor, from the stage past or present, whose comic efforts are so natural and unstrained as those of Mr. Keeley. His touch is so easy that under it extravagance itself loses the air of unreality. He never grimaces, he never winks at the audience, he never takes anybody but himself into his confidence, yet what a never-tiring figure of fun he is!—how unconscious he seems of the laughter he provokes!—and what a solidity he appears to give to the most trivial expressions!—*H. Morley*.

## Lucius Junius Brutus Booth.

1796–1852.

In 1817 a trial was offered to Booth at Covent Garden, where he made his *début* in *Richard III*. At the end of the tragedy there was a doubt whether it was a success or not; and the manager being out of town, those acting as deputies had no power to treat with the actor. In this dilemma overtures were made to Booth to essay his abilities at Drury Lane in the part of *Iago*. This offer was accepted, and he made his appearance in the tragedy of "Othello" to a densely filled theatre. Kean was the *Moor*; but at the commencement strangers were in doubt who was Kean or who was Booth, there was such a similarity between the rivals. But as the tragedy progressed to the third act all doubt fled, and Kean displayed such acting as not only electrified the young, but the oldest critics pronounced it beyond all precedent. Booth discovered that he had made a false move in placing himself in

collision with the man he imitated, and the day after his trial at old Drury, he signed articles to return to Covent Garden for three years. He proved an attraction at the national theatre; and when *Lear* was revived, his performance of the aged king met with universal approbation. As a proof that Booth was an actor of unquestionable talent in *Lear*, he had Charles Kemble as *Edgar*, and Macready as *Edmund*, and still threw both into the shade. At the end of his engagement, finding he was incapable of equalling Kean, he set sail for America.—*Recollections of an Actor.*

Mr. Booth, who some years ago emerged from the lowest class of actors into short notoriety, has visited again the boards of this theatre, apparently in the hope of supplying the place of Mr. Kean, whom he is by many supposed to resemble. If he left his Transatlantic retreat with this expectation, we fear he has been bitterly disappointed, for his engagement was limited to three nights, and its success was not such as to command an extension of its term. His likeness to Kean consists chiefly in defects of person and voice; for while we are obliged to deny him any large participation in the intensity and occasional delicacies of that ill-used person, we fully acquit him of the servile imitation with which he has been charged. Mr. Booth is unquestionably a clever man, and might, notwithstanding the absence of dignified figure and flexibility of countenance, have become a first-rate actor, if circumstances had not contributed to spoil him. There is nothing more decidedly calculated to prevent a young man of talent from becoming a true artist than the excitement produced by premature elevation and hostility, which at once give him an overweening notion of his present acquirements, and render him impatient of just and friendly criticism. We are sorry for Mr. Booth, who might have been a good, but is now only a provoking actor. When you have waited through whole acts for a gleam of sense and feeling in vain, and have wondered at the uncouthness of his manner and the poverty of his style, he will break out like one inspired, and play a scene with masterly intelligence and vigour. The three parts which he acted, *Junius Brutus*, *Richard*, and *Othello*, were generally tame or declamatory; and yet in each there were passages of great merit—the parting with *Titus* in the first, which was at once dignified and pathetic; the tent scene in the second, which was highly picturesque and impassioned; and the chief scene in the third act of the last, in which the work-

ings of suspicion and the returns of love were discriminated with judgment and portrayed with energy—these snatches of excellence, while they raise an actor far above contempt, can never ensure him a high place on the London boards; nor ought they, for surely the first audience in Europe have a right to expect that those who ask for their approbation should take some pains to deserve it.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826.

## John Henry Alexander.

1796-1851.

John Henry Alexander was born at Dunbar in July, 1796, of obscure but respectable parents. His boyhood was distinguished by the same resolute and persevering qualities that characterized his riper years. Early exhibiting great powers of memory, possessing a good voice and a handsome person, he was finally, after many amateur performances, launched upon the stage under the auspices of the celebrated Harry Johnstone, and made his first appearance as a legitimate member of the profession at Ayr. His personal advantages and great industry soon made him a favourite, and after a short but successful season he was engaged for the Queen's Theatre at Glasgow, then under the management of the elder Macready, father of the present eminent tragedian of that name. From thence he proceeded to Newcastle, where he had an opportunity of performing with the celebrated Mrs. Jordan. His reputation attracted at this time the attention of Mr. W. H. Murray, of Edinburgh, with whom he shortly after contracted an engagement. Mr. Alexander was only twenty years of age when he became a member of the theatrical company at Edinburgh. The characters in which he excelled at that time were *Dandie Dinmont* in "Guy Mannering," and *Ratcliffe* in "The Heart of Midlothian." His powerful mind, free from the cares of management, enabled him to perform an extensive range of characters with great ability, but what contributed as much as any other element to his success, was an excellent taste in dress, and invariable correctness in reading. In the year 1822 Mr. Alexander commenced his character as a Glasgow manager in Dunlop Street. During the following seven years he carried on, through every kind of opposition, not only the Glasgow house, but also the provincial theatres at Carlisle and Dumfries,

along with the Adelphi at Edinburgh. In 1829 he became the possessor of the patent for Glasgow, built a magnificent theatre, and continued from that period until within a few months of his death a course of profitable management, which enabled him to leave his family in a position of comparative affluence.—*Peter Paterson*, 1864.

### Miss Maria Foote (Countess of Harrington).

1798-1867.

There is no female on the stage who is capable of filling her proper line of character with so much grace, propriety, and nature. At her first appearance she manifested a desire of stepping into a bolder line of comedy than that which she had before adorned, and played *Letitia Hardy* in the "Belle's Stratagem." She performed the character very well, and gave more of *Miss Hardy* than her warmest admirers ventured to anticipate. She has not, however, animation, humour, or versatility sufficient to hit off in triumphant style the wayward fair, who is first to disgust her lover by the affectation of folly, and then to captivate him in disguise by her wit and voice. In truth she can do neither, for she cannot be awkward or vulgar even if she would, and though she might captivate any man at a single interview, she would hardly succeed in a mask. Yet nothing could be more charming than her *naïveté* in the scene where she ought to play the fool; her movements were grace itself, and her song beginning "Where are you going, my pretty maid?" was given with an arch simplicity entirely her own. The line, "My face is my fortune, sir, she said," which was warbled out with a very pretty consciousness, has, in all the representations of the past, been hailed with applause of which the meaning cannot be mistaken.—*Talfourd*.

We can scarcely believe that the beautiful vision has passed away from our sight for ever. Will she no more cling so tenderly about *Virginus*, the living image of all that is daughterly and gentle? Shall we not see her again bend silently before the accusations of *Guido*, like a fair flower stooping beneath the rough blast, with which contention would be vain? Is comedy entirely to lose the most delicate and graceful of its handmaidens, and tragedy the loveliest of its sufferers? If so,

she takes with her the best of our parting greetings on the journey of life, as her beauty has shone in on the weariness of ours. By retiring she at least gains a duration of youth and loveliness in the minds of those who have seen her, lasting as their memory. In return for those images of pure and innocent beauty with which she has enriched our imaginations, we wish her all the good which should attend one of nature's choicest favourites.—*H. Smith.*

### Tyrone Power.

1798—1841.

The walking gentleman of Drury Lane, Barnard, having been lodged in the King's Bench, on suspicion of debt, two candidates stood forward for his situation in the theatre; and these were Tyrone Power and a young tragic hero, Hamblin. Although the salary for the position was only 3*l.* per week, and the characters trifling, yet Power was rejected and Hamblin accepted. This was in 1818. Sixteen years after this, Tyrone commanded at the Haymarket the highest salary ever given to a comedian, 150*l.* per week.—*W. Donaldson.*

This actor, if not the richest, is to my taste the most agreeable of stage Irishmen. He does not surfeit us with a musical brogue as Johnstone did, but buzzes about the verge of vulgarity and skims the surface of impudence with a light wing and a decent consideration for fastidious nerves.—*Talfourd.*

### Paul Bedford.

1798—1869.

There is a fine rollicking heartiness in the man's style and manner that warms the heart. His voice seems better suited for a bachelor's party than the stage; it seems too convivial, too social, for that dramatic decorousness which forbids a man to be himself; yet the traditions that garnish it make it choice enough; I approve its hints of days when the powdered wig was still to be seen, when stockings and buckles were not below the dignity of man, when broad faces beamed on you a moist salutation of port wine, and the air was melodious with

sturdy English songs, and healthy with sturdy English words.—  
*Albert Smith.*

Mr. Bedford is a sound comedian and a good singer. His face is a mobile mask ; he can fill its lines with unexpressed laughter or smooth it into mirth-provoking gravity. He respects the traditions of Beard and Vernon by limiting the use of his arms whilst singing, but though he imparts no burlesque to his humorous utterances by his arms and shoulders, he exhibits no stiffness. He belongs to an order of actors who always command attention and esteem, who never disappoint by failure if they never surprise by unexpected excellence, and who, by their uniformity, bid fairer for the popular applause than performers with greater genius, on whom expectation builds a structure of idealisms which disappointment often sways and sometimes tumbles.—*New Monthly Magazine.*

Mr. Bedford shows clearly how much natural expression must invariably triumph over acquired taste. Bedford is a good musician and not a bad actor ; he is really possessed of a voice, not however, of the first-rate.—*The Nic-Nac.*

His "I believe you, my boy!" never failed to produce a laugh ; but it was a stock joke, which is a wit's worst subterfuge. Yet to speak of Paul Bedford is to speak only the language of respect and praise. Living through so long a period his experiences of actors and the stage must be more various and more instructive than those of any existing actor : it is to be hoped that he will find leisure to embody them in a volume, and we may safely promise him as many readers for his memoirs as he has had spectators of his impersonations. He made his first appearance in Bickerstaff's opera of "Love in a Village," in November, 1824 ; he has therefore been nearly half a century before the public. The changes the stage has witnessed during this period are great. He has outlived those hearty old days when English wit could command the applause of English understandings, when acting was a primary consideration in the business of a theatre, and when the scenic decoration was designed to illustrate the genius of the player, instead of being illustrated by his genius. He could tell of many triumphs won by genuine if by old-fashioned art ; he could show how the reputation of an actor was almost in every case proportioned to his deserts ; and how, in the teeth of obvious incompetence, the friendly hoarding, the gigantic play-bill, was powerless to draw the actor from the obscurity of



mediocrity. He has descended the hill of life hand-in-hand with the drama, and in his old age may experience a kind of melancholy fellow-feeling with the decrepitude of that art, of which, in his generation, he was among the most vigorous and hearty of the disciples.—*The Modern Drama*, 1862.

## Mrs. Sloman.

1799—1858.

Mrs. Sloman, a daughter of Mr. Dowton, the comedian, who has acted *Belvidera* and *Mrs. Haller* decidedly better than any one since Miss O'Neill. This is exactly her line—the range of parts between the *Imogens* and *Fuliets*, and the *Volumnias* and the *Lady Macbeths*; she has not youth and freshness for the first, nor dignity for the last; and if she attempts either she will utterly fail. But in her own proper sphere she is an effective, and in a great measure a genuine actress. If now and then there were not a little mannerism, a touch of the swelling artificial school which spoils everything, she would completely triumph over the hearts of her spectators. In tones of exquisite tenderness, in gently heaved sighs, and in relieving tears, she almost equals her predecessor, though she can never give similar gratification because she wants the beauty of person, the grace beyond the reach of art, and the triumphant energy which distinguished that most womanly of women. Since Miss O'Neill's departure we have never heard from female lips a line as thrillingly affecting as her appeal to *Faffier*, "Don't, prithee, don't in poverty forsake me!"—or witnessed so admirable a gradation of penitence and love, as her last scene in the "Stranger." If she can but avoid drawling monotony on the one hand and physical violence on the other, she will secure an entire command of all parts of conjugal devotion and feminine sorrow.—*Talfourd*, 1824.

## Miss Smithson (Madame Berlioz.)

1800.

The fate of the English drama in Paris hung now on an actress that for six years at Drury Lane was kept entirely in the background. This was Miss Smithson, who was brought from

Ireland with the hope that she would prove a second Miss O'Neill. Alas! they might as well have hoped for a second Kean. Yet Miss Smithson was superior to the position in which she was placed at Drury Lane. She was neither more nor less than the "walking lady." But when she appeared at Paris she was found to possess qualities that are seldom visible in the walking lady. She had fire, a splendid voice, a tall and noble person; and after Liston's failure, Miss Smithson's "Jane Shore" was a success, and ran twenty-five nights, putting more money in the manager's pocket than Kean, Macready, Miss Foote, or Charles Kemble. "Jane Shore" was followed by "Romeo and Juliet." Miss Smithson's *Juliet* was equally as attractive, for she became quite the rage with the Parisians.—*Donaldson's "Recollections."*

Up to the moment when the effect is to be produced she is tame and feeble; but at that moment she starts into energy of voice and manner with the utmost promptitude and decision, flings into the words the whole soul of an impassioned woman, seems attired in sudden brightness, and absolutely dazzles the imagination by her brilliant rapidity of action and picturesque variety of attitudes. Then her voice, scarcely audible before, becomes at once strong and tremulous with passion, her eyes, lately bent on the ground, flash with indignant fire, and the pretty awkwardness of her carriage gives way to postures which are eloquent and which flash on us as the boldest which enthusiasm can justify. She seems to have two voices—almost two natures, her acting is one long paradox; yet its excellence (as real excellence must do) a thousand times outweighs its deficiencies. Its explanation seems to us to be this: that the actress, endowed with fine capacities for her art, had formed an unfortunate style of recitation, by which they were obscured and beneath which they were frozen; that her feelings and her powers have been roused from their protracted slumber by the excitement of Parisian applause and the calls of the higher station she was required to occupy; but that the influence of habit, though broken, is still so far unsubdued as to prevail yet, except where the immediate exigencies of the situation, and the passion awakened by them, overmaster it, and returns again when the tumultuous emotion subsides.—*II. Smith.*

## Benjamin Webster.

1800.

This gentleman has, in his own graphic way, told his own story. How at the early age of nineteen he had the misfortune to marry a widow with a ready-made family, which was like going into the battle of life with a millstone round his neck. Our hero, anxious for employment, went about everywhere searching for an engagement, but it was ill to find. He could not go to a great distance for want of money, and, alas! he had but little to pawn. He walked to all the neighbouring towns where the shadow of a company was, but returned sadder than he went. Day by day he got deeper into debt. One day a ray of light crossed his dark path. But his own narrative of the circumstance is so graphic, that he must be allowed to tell it in his own language. "I had heard that Mr. Beverley, of the Tottenham Street Theatre—now called the Queen's—the father of that great scenic artist who now wields the brush where dear Clarkson Stanfield once held sway, was about to open the Croydon Theatre for a brief season. I applied to him for walking gentleman. 'Full.' For little business and utility. 'Full.' For harlequin and dancing. 'Didn't do pantomime or ballet; besides, didn't like male dancers; *their* legs didn't draw.' For the orchestra. 'Well,' said he, in his peculiar manner, and with a strong expression which need not be repeated, 'why, just now you were a walking gentleman!' 'So I am, sir; but I have had a musical education, and necessity sometimes compels me to turn it to account.' 'Well, what's your instrument?' 'Violin, tenor violoncello, double bass, and double drums.' 'Well, by Nero!—he played the fiddle, you know—'here, Harry' (calling his son), 'bring the double—no, I mean a violin—out of the orchestra.' Harry came with the instrument, and I was requested to give a taste of my quality. I began Tartini's 'Devil's solo,' and had not gone far when the old gentleman said that would do, and engaged me as his leader at a guinea a week. Had a storm of gold fallen on me it could not have delighted Semele more than me. I felt myself plucked out of the slough of despond. I had others to support, board myself, and to get out of debt. I resolved to walk to Croydon, ten miles every day, to rehearsal, and back to Shoreditch on

twopence a day—one pennyworth of oatmeal and one pennyworth of milk—and I did it for six weeks, Sundays excepted, when I indulged in the luxury of shin of beef and ox-cheek. The gentlemen in the gallery pelted the orchestra with mutton pies. At first indignation was uppermost, but on reflection we made a virtue of necessity, and collecting the fragments of the not very light pastry, ate them under the stage, and, whatever they were made of, considered them ambrosia. At the end of the sixth week I had so pleased Mr. Beverley and his son Harry, that I was asked to give a specimen of my terpsichorean abilities in a sailor's hornpipe. I essayed the task, buoyed up with hope, dashed on the stage, got through the double-shuffle, the toe and heel, though feeling faint; but at last, despite every effort, I broke down through sheer exhaustion, consequent upon a near approach to starvation, and the curtain dropped on me and my hopes, and I burst into an agony of tears. However, this mourning was soon turned into joy, for Mr. Beverley behaved like a father to me, and engaged me as walking gentleman and harlequin for his London theatre, where I made my first appearance as *Henry Morland* in the 'Heir-at-Law,' which, to avoid legal proceedings, he called 'The Lord's Warning Pan.' From the Tottenham Street Theatre I went to the English Opera, now the Lyceum; from there to Drury Lane, thence to the Haymarket; from there to Covent Garden, the Olympic, the Adelphi—and here I am, such as I am."—*Peter Paterson.*

His first appearance on the stage took place at Warwick, whence in 1825 he was transferred to a metropolitan theatre. His readiness in assuming at the briefest notice the part of *Pompey* for the late Mr. Harley, in "Measure for Measure," gave the public their first opportunity of estimating the full scope of his histrionic powers, and firmly established his claim to rank among the good actors of the day. Having assumed the management of the Haymarket in 1837, the period of his lesseeship was marked by a liberal patronage of native dramatic talent, Bulwer Lytton, Knowles, Jerrold, having all been engaged in writing original works for production at his theatre, where at the same time Macready, Wallack, Strickland, Farren, Mathews, Miss Faucit, Mrs. Nesbit, Miss Glover, and Mrs. Sterling appeared. No less a sum than 2000*l.* was annually paid by Mr. Webster for the copyright of British plays; on one occasion, indeed, he offered 500*l.* for a prize comedy.—*Edward Walford.*

[The following actresses belong to this period or thereabouts. I annex to their names the remarks passed on them by various contemporaries, with the dates to which the criticisms belong.]

1821. MRS. WEST.—“This lady is not far from being a delightful actress. She has power to melt us into the sweetest tears, by exhibiting the loveliest and most heroic qualities of women. But she injures the effect of her acting by a monotonous swell of voice, which, when she would be most impressive, borders on the vulgar. Her grief bears too much emphasis. She will strive in vain to storm the heart, but she may touch it irresistibly by quiet gentleness whenever she pleases.”

1821. MISS DANCE.—“Her personal charms are cast in the mould of severe beauty. She is rather ‘more than common tall,’ slender, yet beautifully formed, with dark hair, deeply black eyes, and features scarcely Grecian, but finely rounded off—a cast of face which might be too majestic for her frame, were it not pervaded by a soft expression which gives it a sweet and melancholy charm. She is evidently a lady in the highest sense of the term—intelligent, unaffected, and graceful. Her usual style of speaking is, however, founded in mistake. It too often approaches a kind of doleful recitative, which is not only unpleasing but diminishes the effect of those expressions of emotion which are true and natural. Her attitudes are singularly beautiful; but they do not appear sufficiently inspired by the feeling, and are excellent rather as separate pictures than as silently telling of ‘that within which passeth show.’”

1821. MISS BAKEWELL.—“Her figure is elegant, her face expressive, and her whole demeanour bespeaks an intelligent and cultivated mind, and an acquaintancē with society in its most respectable circles. There was a great propriety in all she did, and occasional touches of real sensibility, especially in the last scene (of ‘The Stranger’); but the part does not enable us to judge of the extent of her energies.”

1821. MISS BLAKE.—“A charming singer and an intelligent actress. Her voice, clear and firm, but not extraordinary in its upper notes, has some lower tones of a depth and richness which rarely belong to a female voice, and which yet are entirely feminine. When she reaches these, she reminds us of

that noble, heart-touching singer, Miss Rennell, who died when she was scarcely nineteen, but whose simply pathetic strains have left many solemn images and pensive thoughts, 'deposited on the silent shore' of our memories. Miss Blake's *Captain Macheath* is the prettiest make-believe imaginable—not the character, which would be intolerable; but a lady's free sketch of it, in which the outline is preserved, but all attempts at likeness in the more revolting parts is gracefully resigned. There is the playfulness without the vice, the brilliancy of wit without the sting; and all the intrigues, darings, and perils of the highwayman turned to 'favour and to prettiness.' Independent of her singing, she has more sense than half the tragic actresses who come out in first-rate characters."

1822. MISS FORDE.—"She is possessed of a fine person, and a voice of more power than sweetness. There are traces of high excellence in her style, but as yet it is immature."

1822. MISS CHESTER.—"It must at once strike all who see her, that she is peculiarly adapted by nature to represent the heroines of comedy. She is in the bloom of youth, yet fully formed, which is indispensable to the realization of our ideas of those commanding, triumphant, brilliant, wayward creatures who rule absolute over drawing-room coteries. Her voice is not so good, and she sometimes strains it by too violent exertions, especially in her performances of *Mrs. Oakley*. Her chief fault, next to the want of due gradation, is a certain exuberance of manner, which she cannot yet afford, as she has not a store of real vivacity to correspond with, and give life and meaning to her action."

1822. MISS LACY.—"She is in person tall and elegantly formed, with lovely and flexible, but not striking features. Her movements are easy; her action singular, unembarrassed, and graceful; and her taste so good that in the most violent paroxysms of passion no tone or look escapes her which may not become the lady and the woman. Her voice in level dialogue is soft and clear, but when elevated it is liable to prove rather harsh." She was afterwards Mrs. Lovell.

1823. MISS LYDIA KELLY.—"She has all the material for an excellent actress—a fine stage figure, an expressive countenance, great animal spirits, and evident love of her profession but she still wants the refinement of tone and grace of movement and action which time and study may give." Miss Kelly was a younger sister of the famous Miss F. H. Kelly.

1823. MRS. OGILVIE.—“She is endowed with personal and intellectual qualities which will enable her to fill the highest parts of the tragic drama with respectability, and even to cast some new lustre over them. Her face has something of a Siddonian cast. Her figure is sufficiently mature, and her voice is mellow and strong. The choice of her appearance in *Queen Katherine* was a noble token of her ambition—braving even the recollection of Mrs. Siddons.”

## John Baldwin Buckstone.

1802.

He was born near London in 1802; he was originally intended for the navy, but his naval taste being checked, he was articled in a solicitor's office; at the age of nineteen, however, he embraced the stage, making his first appearance on the boards at Wokingham, Berks, where his services were required at half-an-hour's notice, owing to the absence of the comedian of a travelling company, to play the part of *Gabriel*, in the “Children of the Wood.” His *début* on this occasion was such as to give great promise of success in what is generally known as low comedy. Mr. Buckstone next engaged himself to a friend who had recently become lessee of the Faversham, Folkestone, and Hastings Theatres, and for three years encountered the chequered fortunes of a country actor's life. During this period he became acquainted with the late Edmund Kean, to whose encouragement he probably owed no small amount of his success. In 1824 Mr. T. Dibdin resigned the management of the Surrey Theatre, and his successor, Mr. Burroughs, engaged the services of Mr. Buckstone, who made his first appearance before a metropolitan audience as *Peter Smirk*, in the “Armistice.” His success soon obtained for him other engagements of a like kind. . . . Mr. Buckstone is always the acknowledged *Tony Lumpkin*, *Bob Acres*, *Sir Andrew Aguecheck*, *Master Slender*, *Touchstone*, *Mawworm*, *Frank Oatland*, *Scrub*, *Sim*, *Marplot*, and indeed he plays near all the low-comedy characters of the English drama.—*E. Walford*.

Mr. Buckstone has talents, Mr. Buckstone has humour, Mr. Buckstone has much waggishness, but Mr. Buckstone has no refinement. A *double entendre* lurks in each eye; his smirk is a hint of an unclean presence. The pit is always on the grin

before him ; but the boxes, whilst they applaud, are troubled lest the wag that sets them in a roar should commit himself. His voice is in perfect keeping with his person : it suggests a distillation ; it seems to lazily flow from a mind charged with fat thoughts and unctuous conceits. He has the true low-comedy air in his walk and gesture ; his face looks dry and red with long roasting before the footlights. He is the son of Mirth and Vulgarity. His mind is a machine which manufactures afresh the stuff it is fed on ; what is wholesome and plain is reproduced in a new form, with a different colouring and an original aroma. The downright speaking of the old dramatists can never offend or shock when spoken by refined lips ; but to such downright speaking Mr. Buckstone takes care to impart a meaning of his own, and makes plain speech a sort of intellectual perspective for the satyr who leers with dewy eyes upon the spectator, and whilst he forces him to laugh, compels him to despise the occasion of his merriment.—*The Modern Drama*, 1862.

### Mrs. Wood.

1802-1864.

Miss Paton was, we believe, one of those extraordinary children,<sup>1</sup> who surprise as prodigies but who rarely fulfil the promise of infancy. She has, however, realized the best hopes

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst other "extraordinary musical children" of that time, Clara Fisher and Master Burke were perhaps the most celebrated. A writer, speaking of Miss Fisher, says : "She evidently understands and relishes her author, enters into her part with her whole soul, and displays in every scene not only acuteness of intellect, but a temperament in unison with the profession of her choice. When we look at her we can scarcely believe that she is not of the proper age and size for the characters she personates, but almost fancy that the other actors and the stage itself are out of proportion. She rather makes them look gigantic than appears herself to be a pigmy. Her best parts are *Little Pickle* and the *Country Girl*, in 'The Actress of All Work ;' and in both of these there is a quick intelligence, a bounding hilarity of voice and manner, and a prodigality of animal spirits which remind us of Mrs. Jordan more than anything we have seen since the death of that most delightful woman. It is impossible to look on this wonderful little being without something of a painful interest, considering the casualties always incident on the early development of genius." Master Burke was a violin player of great brilliancy and precision. "His acting," says a writer, "was extraordinary ; for though a child may be taught to mouth out *Young Norval* or *Cato's* soliloquy with effect, it requires an extraordinary aptitude and quickness to enable him to play such



of her early admirers ; and after singing with *éclat*, for some time past at concerts, has appeared on the stage, which is a fitter sphere for the display of her powers, because she possesses considerable merits as an actress. In person she is rather tall, her face is not inexpressive, and her figure is decidedly graceful. Her voice is not of any extraordinary quality or compass, but its tones are mellow and full, and she has acquired entire command of her organ. She has evidently been very well instructed, and has profited to the utmost by the advantages offered by her master. Her shake is singularly perfect, and in the small turns and graces of her art she is, perhaps, without a superior. By playing the delightful parts of *Rosina* in "The Barber of Seville," and *Susanna* in "Figaro," she has brought her pretensions fairly to the test, and has shown that as a singer she can enter fully into the spirit of Rossini and Mozart, and that she is able to relish and to embody the vivacity and grace of elegant comedy.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1822.

Miss Paton was born in Edinburgh, 1802. Infinitely more fortunate than a large majority of our English singers, this lady enjoyed the advantage of careful instruction even in her infancy. Her father, who was one of the masters in the high school in the Scottish capital, appears to have possessed in an eminent degree the faculty of discerning the natural bent of his daughter's taste. He determined on the serious cultivation of her abilities, and so successful was Miss Paton's application, that it has been said she composed several songs, which were published, when she was only five years of age. After such promise, her musical studies were naturally persevered in, and when she had attained her eighth year several public concerts were given in her name, which were attended by numerous audiences, and her performances on the piano and harp were also as much approved of as were her vocal exertions. Shortly after this time Miss Paton appeared at the Nobility's Concerts in London, and met with so much encouragement that she subsequently had an annual concert of her own ; the last of which was, we believe, strongly supported by several of the

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a part as the *Irish Tutor*. This Master Burke did in a highly amusing style, to which a rich native brogue contributed not a little. Children are imitative beings, and almost by nature mimics ; but the ease, the vivacity, and the correctness of Master Burke betoken a dramatic instinct which can scarcely be mistaken."

Scottish nobility, also by Count Platoff. Flattering, however, as were her prospects as a singer, her frequent appearance in public necessarily prevented her from pursuing such other studies as her parents were anxious she should follow; her health also was somewhat impaired. She accordingly, at the recommendation of her father, retired from public performances for the space of six years, the greater part of which time was spent in the completion of her education and the further cultivation of her musical abilities. In the latter part of 1821 or the commencement of 1822, she again became known to the public by her re-appearance at various concerts. During the season of the Haymarket Theatre for 1822, she made her first appearance as a theatrical singer, in the character of *Susanna*, in the "Marriage of Figaro." She afterwards played *Rosina* in the "Barber of Seville," and *Polly* in the "Beggars' Opera," with deserved applause. She then entered into an engagement with the managers of Covent Garden Theatre for, we believe, four years, and made her *début* at that theatre in the character of *Polly*. Some doubts had been entertained as to the power of her voice for a large theatre, but the experiment removed all fears on that account, and she not only concluded the character triumphantly, but repeated it with applause.—*Dictionary of Musicians*, 1824.

### Miss M. Tree (Mrs. Bradshaw).

1802—1862.

Miss Maria Tree's excellence was of that gentle and unobtrusive kind which affords small scope for true criticism, but which, because there is very little really to be said about it, tempts the more to extravagant and unmeaning praise. It was the fashion to talk of her as a Shakspearian actress, and to describe her *Viola*, her *Fulia*, her *Ophelia*, and her *Rosalind*, as realizing the poet's fancies. The truth was, that she looked interesting, spoke the verse in an unaffected tone, and did not spoil any idea which the spectator had cherished; but in these characters her merit, except so far as it lay in her figure and voice, was chiefly negative. She had not vivacity, passion, or humour to do full justice to the best of Mrs. Jordan's parts, but she had a natural elegance of manner which that most cordial actress wanted, and a vein of feeling true, though not

intense, which made her charming in parts like *Clari*, where a more powerful actress would have been disagreeably good. As an English singer she ranked next in popularity to Miss Stephens, and in some few pieces, as "Bid me discourse," and "Home, sweet home," confessedly excelled her.—*Leigh Hunt*.

We are most happy to record the re-appearance of Miss M. Tree, after the long and severe illness which she has endured, and which we were afraid would incapacitate her for public exertion. She came forward first in the character of *Viola* in "Twelfth Night," and never was that delicious part more deliciously acted. The very delicacy of her appearance, which seemed to render the expression of deep feeling too much for her frame, gave an additional interest and reality to her personification of the love-stricken maiden of Shakspeare. She gave to the part all that ethereal colouring which the poet's "sweet and cunning hand" has so tenderly laid on it, and which is so rarely felt amidst the glare of the stage. Her *Viola* was the true ideal of the poet's thought, as that thought may be felt in the choicest solitude. Never were Shakspeare's words more finely given than the speech to *Olivia*, beginning "Make me a willow cabin at thy gate," was recited by her; Mrs. Jordan might have imparted to it more depth of joyous fervour, but scarcely so much delicacy and crispness. Her mirth too is the most graceful and maidenly which we can imagine. Her rich cordial voice broke on us like the revival of an old spell in her songs, which she gave with all her wonted feeling and precision, until she came to the last, when her emotions became too strong for her frame, and an apology was made for its omission. She has since warbled *Diana Vernon*, in which there is no room for acting, charmingly, and both sung and acted enchantingly *Rosina*, in "The Barber of Seville." There never was a more perfect representation of feminine vivacity—not amounting to the brilliant spirits of a leader of fashion, a *Millamant*, or *Lady Townly*,—but flowing from the light-heartedness of an intelligent and gentle girl.—*Talfourd*, 1821.

Besides possessing great merits as an actress, she must be considered as being in the very first rank of our female vocalists. Her voice is a *mezzo soprano*, the tones of which, especially the lower ones, are peculiarly rich and attractive. Her powers of execution are considerable, though always considered within the bounds of good taste, and indeed we know of no public

singer who is so justly gaining ground in the public estimation.—*Dictionary of Musicians*, 1824.

## Charles James Mathews.

1803.

His various representations certainly were as original and skilful as those of his father himself, and he possessed the same extempore power of varying them. Perhaps had he adopted his present profession at that early age,<sup>1</sup> he might have followed successfully in his father's track, but he was too long allowed to contemplate the excellence which he despaired of attaining, and of which he feared to be thought a servile copier. He continued to resist every temptation to try his fortune on the stage, although he had several offers, and was more than once applied to, to become an actor at the French theatre. After years of persuasion, of praise, and encouragement to make the trial, overruling circumstances at once determined the point, and Charles appeared upon the Olympic stage.—*Mrs. C. Mathews*.

Mr. Charles Mathews, who was received on his first appearance upon the stage with a burst of affectionate welcome that said more for his father's fame than a monument in Westminster Abbey can do, has been securely establishing himself in the good opinion of all, and creating hopes as strong as the wishes that accompany them are cordial. He requires, we think, nothing but experience. There are symptoms of his noviciate about his acting it is true ; but then he evidently possesses that which cannot be taught, and has only to learn how best to give effect to it. He has a quick, Mathews-like apprehensiveness of the whimsicalities of character, much variety and plasticity of expression, rich natural humour, easy manners, and seeming liveliness of disposition. He has qualities which when matured and cultivated will render the whole walk of eccentric comedy his own domain, and he has accomplishments also that

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<sup>1</sup> He was destined by his parents for the Church; but when he was old enough to comprehend his own sympathies he chose the profession of architect. His first appearance as a regular actor (he had before played in amateur performances) was in 1835, when he appeared as *George Rattleton*, in "The Humpbacked Lover."—ED.

may enable him to compass the class of "genteeler" characters, as well as those of broad humour.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1836.

Charles Mathews has more graceful ease, more untiring vivacity, more general comprehension than the very finest of the Parisians. For ninety-five nights he has held a hushed theatre in the most complete subjection to his magic art, and was as fresh and forcible on the last night of the course as at its beginning. Yet never once does he raise his voice above drawing-room pitch: no reliance has he on silver shoe-buckles or slashed doublets; he wears the same coat and other habiliments in which he breakfasts at home or dines with a friend. Never once does he point an epigram with a grimace, or even emphasize a sentiment with a shrug of his shoulders. The marvel is how the effect is created, for there is no outward sign of effort or intention. That the effect is there is manifest from pit to gallery; and yet there stands a quiet, placid, calm-eyed, pleasant-mannered, meek-voiced, bald-headed, gentlemanly stockbroker, with respectable brass-buttoned blue coat and grey trousers, such as is to be seen on any day of the week pursuing his way from St. John's Wood or Brompton,<sup>1</sup> and at first sight as unfit for theatrical representation as the contents of his ledger for the material of an epic poem.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1852.

Without one half of the estimable qualities which Charles possesses, his talents, various, brilliant, and amusing as they are, always render him a guest too agreeable to every society to be resigned without real regret, as he is found to enliven and be the charm of every circle in which he moves; but when one knows, as I do, that those talents, delightful as they are, constitute his least merit—that to those he unites the kindest heart, the most ingenuous nature, the best principles, and unvarying good temper, and perhaps what endears him still more to me, a delicacy of sentiment almost feminine, it is impossible not to feel sad and sorrowful at giving him up even to a mother whose happiness he forms.—*Lady Blessington's* to *Mrs. Mathews*, 1823.

<sup>1</sup> The character of *Mr. Affable Hawk*.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Power, Countess of Blessington, was born in the county of Waterford in 1789. She was celebrated for her writings at a period when the rhymes of Miss Landon were preferred to the poetry of Keats; but of these writings hardly her "Conversations with Lord Byron" survive. Flattering notices of her novels may be met with in the pages of the old

A merrier man, within the limits of becoming mirth, it would be difficult to find. He was an admirable mimic, had a marvellous facility in catching peculiarities of manners. . . . But with all his comic talents, love of fun and frolic, ludicrous fancies and overflowing gaiety of heart, he never ceased to be a gentleman, and to act and feel like a man well-bred, well-disposed, and well-principled.—*Dr. Madden, 1855.*

### Mrs. Warner.

1804-1854.

One of the most distinguished and respected of our actresses, who has for years maintained her family by her exertions, was the other day subjected to the distress of appearing, through her husband, in the Insolvent Debtors' Court. It appeared that for some time she had been afflicted by the growth of a most painful disease, in spite of which, while strength remained, she laboured actively in her profession. Compelled at last to desist, the pains of poverty might not have been felt less sharply than the pains of sickness, had not friends been at hand to deprive them of their sting. The proceedings in the Debtors' Court disclosed only truths that come home to us all. They told us that an intellectual and high-spirited woman had supported herself and her children by laborious exertion in the highest department of dramatic art—that by the rapid growth of a terrible disease she had been checked in her career—and that this deprived her of the means of fulfilling the moderate and reasonable engagements formed in days of health. All that it told us more than that, was of the human sympathies awakened by the case. We cannot say of such a reverse that it suggests charity—using the word in its cold modern sense—but it arouses sympathies, and it enables those who stand about to claim a privilege of ministering by kind offices to a most sacred grief. Kind offices, thus done in secret, have, through the investigation in the Insolvent Court, been forced into publicity. We should not speak of them if we had not been made to see that there was one gentle hand

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reviews, but they seem to have been written rather as tributes due to the beautiful woman, the genial hostess, and the cordial friend, than to the author and the wit. She died in 1849.—ED.

among those ready to smooth the pillow of the sinking actress, which Englishmen are always proud to recognise, and never yet have found stretched out for any evil work. Not only have fellow artists gathered around Mrs. Warner, but some others, who, as the world knows, are never absent when a kind word is to be said or a kindly act done, and by accident the Queen's name slipped into the narrative. Among other indications of the great respect in which the sick lady is held, it appeared that her Majesty had not been content with simply subscribing towards the support required by Mrs. Warner's family, now that its prop fails, but that, having learnt the importance of carriage exercise to the patient, with a woman's delicacy, at once found the kindest way to render service by herself hiring a carriage, which she has caused, and causes still to be placed daily at Mrs. Warner's disposal. Her Majesty makes few state visits to the theatres: chance has disclosed, however, how the actor's art may be more surely honoured by a courtesy more womanly, and quite as royal.—*Henry Morley*, 1853.

## Ellen Tree (Mrs. Charles Kean).

1805.

Mrs. Charles Kean, better known by her maiden name of Ellen Tree, is a native of the south of Ireland, and was born in December, 1805. She first appeared in public at Covent Garden Theatre as *Olivia*, in "Twelfth Night," performed for the benefit of her sister. . . . Miss Ellen Tree next acted in Edinburgh and Bath, obtaining subsequently an engagement at Drury Lane Theatre, her first part being *Violante*, in "The Wonder." In 1829 she transferred her services to Covent Garden, and appeared in her first tragic part, in Miss Kemble's play of "Francis I." Her success induced her, on the occasion of her benefit, to assume the part of *Romeo* to the *Fuliet* of Miss Kemble. . . . In 1842 she married Mr. C. Kean.—*E. Walford*.

She has not the vocal power of Miss M. Tree, nor that peculiar crispness of tone and delicacy of style which enabled her almost to hint how the women of Shakspeare should be played, but she is much handsomer, and is better adapted both by figure and manner to represent the heroines of comedy. It has been her misfortune to appear at the commencement of

the season when the company was incomplete, and when there was occasion for her services in a greater range of parts than she is as yet prepared to fill. She has played successively *Violante*, *Letitia Hardy*, *Rosalie Somers*, *Albina Mandeville*, *Lady Teazle*, and *Fane Shore*, risking fearful odds in every trial, and, of course, with unequal success, but exhibiting in all good sense, feeling, and taste. Of these we think her *Albina Mandeville*—which is an excellent picture of the hoyden softened by the lady—the best, and her *Lady Teazle* considerably the worst. Her *Fane Shore*, graceful, unpresuming, and feeble, gave no reason to believe that tragedy will ever be her *forte*, but afforded assurance that she will beautifully express the milder sorrows of the sentimental drama.—*Talfourd*, 1826.

### Samuel Phelps.

1806.

Such a piece of acting as Mr. Phelps' presentment of James<sup>1</sup> is rarely seen on the stage. His command of the Scotch dialect is wonderful in an Englishman: his walk, his look, his attitude, are as palpable indications of character as the language he employs. There is not a turn of his mouth or a leer of his eye that is not in harmony with the general design. His pride, terror, abasement, doubt, triumph, and final despair, are all given with a marvellous versatility, which yet never trenches on the identity of the actor's creation; but touches are here and there added, some to soften, some to darken, till the whole is like a Dutch picture, laboriously minute in all its details, and perfect as a finished whole. As an exhibition of how one great performer can vivify a whole play, in spite of all drawbacks, we pronounce the acting of Mr. Phelps in some respects without a parallel on the modern stage. In the good old comedy of the "Man of the World" he is no less remarkable in his delineation of *Sir Pertinax Maccycophant*. His power over the Scotch accent is the same, and it is only a less powerful performance from the character itself being less diversified and the tragic element being altogether omitted.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1852.

Mr. Phelps has of late years been the personator of about

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<sup>1</sup> James VI.



thirty of the characters of Shakspeare. Great men or small, heroes or cowards, sages or simpletons, sensual or spiritual men, he has taken all as characters that Shakspeare painted, studied them minutely, and embodied each in what he thinks to be a true Shakspearian form. *Bottom the Weaver, Brutus, Falstaff, Macbeth, Christopher Sly*, are characters assumed by the same man, not to display some special power in the actor, but the range of power in the poet to whose illustration he devotes himself. Good tragedian as he is, I suppose that it is in a sort of comedy, vaguely to be defined as dry and intellectual, but in his hands always most diverting, that Mr. Phelps finds the bent of his genius as an actor to be the most favoured. Thus in *Malvolio* he would appear to have a part pretty exactly suited to his humour, none the less so because there is perhaps no character in which he is himself lost sight of so completely—substance vanishes, and shadow lives. Other Malvolios, seen by the playgoers of this generation, have been more fantastical, and caused more laughter—although this one (of Phelps) causes much—but the impression made by them has been less deep. Few who have seen, or may see, at Sadler's Wells the Spanish-looking steward of *Countess Olivia*, and laughed at the rise and fall of his *château en Espagne*, will forget him speedily. Like a quaint portrait, in which there are master-strokes, his figure may dwell in the mind for years.—*H. Morley.*

The leading characteristics of Mr. Phelps's acting are a careful regard to the antiquarian requirements of the part, a scrupulous adherence to the meaning of the author, and a fine elocution. He is hardly less distinguished as a comedian than as a tragedian, and his rendering of the part of *Bottom*, in the "Midsummer's Night's Dream," is entitled to high encomium.—*E. Walford.*

## Thomas Rice.

1808-1860.

A few years ago Thomas D. Rice, now the famous negro comedian, was an actor in a western American theatre, and though he did some things cleverly, he was particularly remarkable for nothing but being the best-dressed man in the company. An original piece was got up in which Rice was persuaded to do the character of a negro, much against his will.

He consented only under the stipulation that he should have permission to introduce a negro song of his own. Rice was fond of riding, and frequently visited a stable in town where there was a very droll negro ostler, who used to dance grotesquely and sing old fragments of a song about one Jim Crow. Very little difficulty was found in transforming the ostler into a tutor, and in half an hour Rice was master of the symphony, melody, and all the steps, words, and drollery of the famous Jim Crow. The evening for the *début* of the new play came on, and never did Kemble or Talma study more intensely over the effect of costume than did Rice in dressing for his negro part on this occasion. He had easily contrived to throw together a few verses with witty local allusions, and to heighten the extravagance of the dance to its greatest extent of grotesque absurdity. The play commenced, and went on, dragging heavily and lamely, Rice himself failing to stir up the drowsy audience with his clumsily-written negro part, until the third act, when the song came in; bitter condemnation was lowering ominously over the piece, and the actors had already pronounced it a dead failure, when the hitherto silent and gloomy green-room was startled by a tumultuous round of cheers breaking out suddenly "in front." "What can that be?" said the manager, pricking up his ears. Another verse of the song was sung, with the extravagant dancing accompaniment, and the house shook with still more violent applause. "What *is* that?" said the manager: "who's on the stage?" "Rice is singing a negro song," was the reply. "Oh, that's it, is it?" said the manager, who was a stickler for the "legitimate," and concluded that an audience which could applaud such a thing would be just as likely to hiss it the next moment. But the new song continued to call down expressions of pleasure that could not by any means be mistaken, and at its conclusion the manager bounced out of the green-room and down to L. S., to listen to the loudest encore he ever heard in his theatre. The play was announced again, but after two or three representations it was discovered that the song was all the audience wanted, and so *Jim Crow* emerged triumphant from the ashes of a damned play to delight Europe and America.—*Theatrical Anecdotes.*

## Walter Lacy.

1809.

I commenced my country work in the chill capital of Scotland, as a tyro under the mighty Murray, at the old Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. My first performance was as the *Count Montalban* in "The Honeymoon." I next entered upon such dull "walking-gentleman" work as *Captain Thornton*, and the *Squire* in the "Rent Day," enlivening my labour by such exciting sport as offering my hand to the principal *danseuse*, who declined me with thanks, being already engaged to a provincial low comedian, who, in after times, played *Sir Harry* to my *Lord Duke*, in London—a circumstance that strongly recalled my passion for his pretty-footed fairy wife. Hard work, at a guinea a week, under Alexander in Glasgow, left me no time for sighing, except over the appalling study averaging 500 lines a day, and 1000 for Sundays, when my daily oatmeal was varied by a chop or a small steak. I was to open in *Horatio*, and *Captain Manly* in "Honest Thieves;" but Alexander said, "You see, Mr. Lacy, the man Phelps has not arrived from Dublin, and if you will study *Laertes*, you'll find him better than *Hamlet* at half-price." Mr. Vandenhoff instructed me in the fencing. My salary was advanced on the following season, half-a-crown. For this I was supposed to sing tenor; but the truth was, Alexander sang at the wing, and I made faces on the stage. I remember on the morning of rehearsal, when the cue was given for the duet, "Though you leave me now in sorrow," the London "star" who played *Diana Vernon*, exclaimed, looking at me, "Are you not going to rehearse, sir?" to which Alexander replied with a grin, "You'll find him in his place at night, ma'am." I was heartily glad, when, on the recommendation of Mr. Power, who praised my *Tom Shuffleton*, I came away to cheerful Chester, *viâ* Liverpool, and studied the part of *Sir Thomas Clifford*, reclining on a green bank, on the Racecourse, betting half-crowns with a companion on the strength of thirty shillings a week salary. I played three years in Liverpool and Manchester, and generally in four light pieces; in the latter city on the Saturdays of the Liverpool seasons. I sometimes remained behind to play *George Barnwell*, and *Lord Hastings* in "Jane Shore" the same night; or *Blue Beard*, mounted on the great elephant *Rajah* from the Zoological Gardens. The

part that placed me in a position as a light comedian was *Cheveril* in "The Steward," altered from Holcroft's "Deserted Daughters." My chief work in London was at the Princess's, where, in Mr. Maddox's time, I often played twenty-four parts a week, such as the *Gamin* in "The Angel of the Attic," *Charles Paragon* in "The Little Devil," *Alfred Highflyer*, and *Bounce* in the "Ojibbeway Indians." On one occasion a laughable incident occurred. A party of Ojibbeways in the pit-box became suddenly so excited at witnessing my scalping Oxberry, as the "ring-tailed roarer of the backwoods," that uttering a war-whoop, they prepared to make a rush for the stage, but seeing me take the low comedian's wig off only, they all burst into peal after peal of laughter. With Charles Kean, I started a team of three—*i.e.*, *Rouble* (original) in the "Prima Donna," *Chatcau Renaud* in the "Corsican Brothers," and *Alfred Highflyer* in a "Roland for an Oliver," and ran them three months. These were brilliantly contrasted characters, affording splendid opportunity for an artist to establish himself. Of such an opportunity the severity of my early training, and the various experience of my career, enabled me to take full advantage. The author was to have ridden the middle horse, but owing to a difference with the management, my name was put in the cast at three days' notice. Fortunately I remembered being in a theatre in Paris in Louis Philippe's time (where I observed Dion Boucicault in a side box), when a man entered the parterre with hair and beard black as night, the hair cut close to the skull. I at once said to myself, "If ever I play a Frenchman, *that* shall be the head." It was odd that author, actor, and model should come together! I ordered the wig; wrote to Angelo, who, with prompt kindness came up from Brighton to his chambers in Curzon Street, where, after we had discussed a brief luncheon, we took off our coats, and in two hours I was able to master the combat with rapiers. After the first act of the "Prima Donna," Charles Kean came to my dressing-room to congratulate me on my "make-up" and acting in *Rouble*; and at the conclusion of the "Corsican Brothers" I was cheered by the whole house. The manager and manageress were delighted, and Mr. Bayle Bernard came on the stage with the late Douglas Jerrold to compliment me on the "originality and finish of my acting." Next morning, Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris called me to their carriage in the middle of Regent Street, and heartily congratulated me,

Charles Mathews saying, "If that isn't a Frenchman, I don't know what is." My make-up hit the house, and was the keynote of the new rendering of the part. I returned to the Princess's Theatre after this to play *Chateau Renaud*, when Mr. Vining produced "The Corsican Brothers" at the command of the Prince of Wales, and about the same time I played, with Charles Mathews and Sothorn, in a morning performance at the Haymarket before the Prince and Princess of Wales, my old part of *Alfred Highflyer*. I engaged for two years at the St. James's Theatre, acting *Charles Surface* eighty nights; after which I played in a piece of Mr. Boucicault's, "After Dark," for a couple of hundred nights, as *Bellingham*, a man about town, and two special engagements for *Mercutio* at the Lyceum. My last engagement was at the Globe Theatre, playing *Pepinelli* in "Marco Spada," and *Citizen Sangfroid* in "Delicate Ground." I have now no immediate prospect beyond my pupils and classes at the Royal Academy of Music, where I have been for some years Professor of Elocution.—  
Walter Lacy.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Kemble's *Hamlet* was fine in conception, but inferior in execution to his brother's. But his *Mercutio*! In that he spoke, walked, looked, fought, and died like a gentleman, as Walter Lacy does, his worthy successor, but not imitator in this part.—*Dr. Doran*.

Mr. Walter Lacy has great breadth and mellowness of manner, a strong relish and deep feeling for character.—*Douglas Ferroll*.

Mr. Walter Lacy's *Don Salluste* is as perfect a piece of stage representation of the cold-blooded, self-possessed demon of the scene, as the imagination of the spectators, wrought up to the highest pitch by the vivid portraiture of Victor Hugo, can conceive. The rigid muscle, the fixed eye, the calm, hollow voice, the imperturbable face, and the withering sneer, embodied all the salient points of the fiend who plots a scene of vengeance distinguished amongst dramatic scenes for its heartless atrocity. Mr. Lacy never for a moment loses sight of his object; his soul is in it—you see it in the turn of his eye, the curl of his lip, the movement of his hands, and in that

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<sup>1</sup> From a characteristic letter to the Editor. The eminent actor enhances the value of his communication by sanctioning its appearance in print.—  
ED.

pitiless voice which runs to the heart like a bolt of ice.—  
*R. Bell.*

Our most accomplished living representative of elegant comedy.—*Desmond Ryan.*

The *Touchstone* of Mr. Lacy is a very good performance, quaint, sagacious, and fantastic, without being at all overstrained. We have seen Touchstones who were much coarser, but very few who were so natural.—*Bayle Bernard.*

### Miss Fanny Kemble (Mrs. Butler).

1811.

In the announcement that on the opening night (of Covent Garden Theatre, 1829) Miss Fanny Kemble would present herself as *Juliet*, that her mother would reappear in the part of *Lady Capulet*, and that her father would embody for the first time that delightful creation *Mercutio*, there was abundant interest to ensure a full, respectable, and excited audience. The first act did not close till all fears of Miss Kemble's success had been dispelled; the looks of every spectator conveyed that he was electrified by the influence of new-tried genius, and was collecting emotions in silence, as he watched its development, to swell its triumph with fresh acclamations. For our own part, the illusion that she was Shakspeare's own Juliet came so speedily upon us as to suspend the power of specific criticism. We compared her with all the great actresses we had seen, and it is singular that Mrs. Jordan was the one she brought back to our memory. Her head is nobly formed and admirably placed on her shoulders, her brow is expansive and shaded by very dark hair, her eyes are full of a gifted soul, and her features are significant of intellect to a very extraordinary degree. Though scarcely reaching the middle height, she is finely proportioned, and she moves with such dignity and decision that it is only on recollection that we discover she is not tall. In boldness and dignity she unquestionably approaches more nearly to Mrs. Siddons than any actress of our time excepting Pasta.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1829.

Emerging suddenly, not from the gloom but the shade, this gifted young creature came forth at a time at once trying and propitious, and gratulating acclaim arose when first "her fulgent head, star-bright, appeared." She showed on her first night that she was worthy of her lineage, and the fine features of her

intellectual countenance silently spoke her relationship to the Siddons. She established herself at once by the unanimous consent of the best judges, as well as by the award of the public, in the highest order. — *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1832.

Has Miss Kemble, or has she not, in tragedy, *genius*? Her attitudes, her whole personal demeanour, are beautiful. They are uniformly appropriate to the character and the situation, and in exquisite appropriateness lies beauty. But not only are Miss Kemble's attitudes—I use that term to express her entire action—her appearance, her apparition, beautiful, they are also classical—that is to say, the spirit of art breathes in and over the spirit of nature; and thus she often stands before our eyes with all the glowing warmth of a living woman, inspired by some strong passion of love or hate, idealized into a speaking statue, in which the “divine rage” is tempered and subdued down to the equable and permanent level of legitimate emotion. Miss Kemble is a girl of genius, and well entitled to stand—not assuredly on the pedestal side by side with the SIDDONS, with their heads at the same altitude, and shining in the same lustrous line of Immortals—but on a humbler seat along with the inspired, from which no living actress may displace her, but which she herself will leave ere long, rising surely and not slowly from one place of honour to another, till in the consummation of her skill and in the maturity of her powers she shall place herself at last—listen all ye men to me, a PROPHET—I will not dare to say how near or how far below the SIDDONS, for SHE—be it known to all men—is unapproachable in her sphere; but in the same constellation, consisting of not many stars, but those how bright! of which Sarah will ever be the central light.—*Professor Wilson's “Nocies Ambrosianæ,”* No. 51.

June 17th, 1830.—Went last night to theatre, and saw Miss Fanny Kemble's *Isabella*, which was a most creditable performance. It has much of the genius of Mrs. Siddons, her aunt. She wants her beautiful countenance, her fine form, and her matchless dignity of step and manner. On the other hand, Miss Kemble has very expressive though not regular features, and, what is worth it all, great energy mingled with and chastened by correct taste.—*Sir W. Scott*.

Fanny K.'s acting clever, but not touching, at least to me. Was unmoved enough during the pathetic parts to look around the house, and saw but few (indeed, *no*) symptoms of weeping.

One lady was using a handkerchief most plentifully, but I found it was for a cold in the head.—*T. Moore.*

## Charles Kean.

1811—1868.

His zeal for his profession, amounting almost to enthusiasm, has led him to prove that the theatre can be made not a mere vehicle for frivolous amusement, or what is worse, dissipation; but that it may be created into a gigantic instrument of education for the instruction of the young, and edification as well as instruction of those of maturer age.—*Speech of the Duke of Newcastle.*

We have to look to Mr. Kean as one who has laboured in a noble and holy cause, in endeavouring to dissociate the noble pursuits of the drama from elements that could be thought to partake of moral and social contamination.—*W. E. Gladstone.*

Mr. Charles Kean when once playing *Richard* at New Orleans, observed, as he was seated on the throne, and the curtain was rising, that his noble peers wore their hats or caps in his presence. With his truncheon to his lips he contrived a stage whisper, which said, "Take off your hats; you are in the presence of your king." "And what of that?" roared high-reaching Buckingham, looking round at the audience, and smacking his own cap tighter on his circumspect head; "what of that? I guess we know nothing of kings in this country." The citizens of New Orleans were in raptures, and the king sat corrected.—*Dr. Doran.*

Here is a gentleman who has thriven far beyond his deserts, who by a series of lucky accidents and skilful manœuvres has risen to a most prominent position, and whom the world may generally, therefore, be disposed to accept as a type of actors of the higher order. Not content with the fame and fortune which have not always fallen to the lot even of unquestionable histrionic genius, he thrusts himself on the public through the agency of one of his own officials, and by his mouth proclaims himself and his wife as the most gifted beings who have ever adorned the British stage. . . . But he has overshot the mark. He has written his own condemnation. The dexterous manager and the conceited egotist will henceforth eclipse the clever actor. . . . A nature so self-engrossed, and an intellect so



narrow as are here represented, could never expand to the proportions of an *Othello* or a *Macbeth*, or grasp the wide domain of poetic beauty which is enclosed in a "Midsummer Night's Dream" or the "Tempest."—*Fraser's Magazine*, 1859.

Mr. Kean has great merits, quick appreciation, sound intelligence, and occasionally a burst of something which, if it is not genius, is describable by no other word. But he is certainly mistaken in relying so much on the resources of the *costumier* and the painter.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1852.

His claim to originality is not founded on the gorgeousness of the spectacle which he has placed before the footlights ; . . . he claims the praise of historical accuracy. It will be remembered how, in the playbill of his "Macbeth"—a curiosity in its way—he cited the authority of Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Strabo, Xiphilin, Snorre, Du Cange, and the Eyrbyggia Saga (not bad for a playbill, the Eyrbyggia Saga !) This magnifying of historical truth, this drifting from the open and trackless sea of fiction to the *terra firma* and unalterable landmarks of fact—a strong tendency to realism, is the chief characteristic of Mr. Kean's management. And it is observable not merely in his mode of placing a drama upon the stage, but in his own style of acting.—*Ibid.*, 1856.

## Albert Smith.

1816–1860.

Albert Smith's *Ascent of Mont Blanc* is the best specimen of a class of entertainments that are now very popular—perhaps the most popular of all, and which when further and duly developed promise to rival the present theatres. Mr. Albert Smith goes to Mont Blanc, returns, gets Mr. Beverley to paint the scenes through which he travelled, and enlivens those scenes by the description and impersonation of what he saw and heard. We have no doubt that Mr. Smith's entertainment is far more amusing, far more intellectual, and ten thousand times more artistic than anything of the kind which England could furnish in the thirteenth or fourteenth century ; and he will not resent the comparison if we say that he reminds us of the holy palmers and pilgrims who, in those crusading centuries, returned from Palestine, and with the aid of rude pictures—"the City of Jerusalem, with towers and pinnacles—Old Tobye's House—a

Fyrment with a fyry cloud and a double cloud"—attempted in miracle plays and mysteries to convey an idea of the scenes they themselves had witnessed in the Holy Land.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1856.

A man of considerable comic talent, a humorist, an excellent mimic, quick of perception and comprehension, apt to see things in a ludicrous light, sprightly and animated in conversation, as a writer possessing much facility in composition; but he was known also as a kind-hearted person, an excellent son and brother, possessing sterling qualities seldom found in those who pass in society for humorists and jest-makers.—*Lady Blessington*.

Whether in society or on the summit of Mont Blanc, in a monster balloon, the columns of *Punch*, or in the company of the "Marchioness of Brinvilliers," "Christopher Tadpole," or of "A Gent About Town,"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Albert Smith is equally amusing. He is the son of a general medical practitioner at Chertsey, and was intended for the medical profession. He studied medicine in London and in Paris, and abandoned his profession about 1838 for that of literature. He was one of the original contributors to *Punch*, and for some time one of its principal managers. Easier circumstances, and less necessity to struggle with the world in very early life, might perhaps have given his talents a better chance to ripen and turn to a good account, and have afforded them a higher direction.—*Dr. Madden*.

Mr. Smith has great ability, a good ready sense of fun, abundant power as a mimic, willingness to spare no personal exertion on the perfecting of his entertainment, and a great deal of the most serviceable tact. He tells his stories always with good taste, obtruding none of his jokes, good or bad, but leaving all to find their friends out for themselves. He breaks off every song and every story a full minute before there is any possibility of any one beginning to think that it is tedious. And he continues to fill two hours and a-half with an entertainment during which he is incessantly before his audience, sometimes grave, but chiefly provoking mirth, without leaving at the end the recollection of one ill-humoured word, or of a syllable that could be construed into undue egotism or impertinence.—*H. Morley*.

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Smith's imitation of Dickens in his novels was painful enough. The great novelist hardly relished the admiration of his disciple—at least,

## Henry Russell.

1816.

It is not as a singer that Russell will be spoken of by posterity. It is as a song-writer that his great reputation has been achieved ; and, as conspicuous among the greatest song-writers of Great Britain, he will be remembered and written of. Of Russell can be said what cannot be said of any other English composer, Dibdin not excepted : that of his innumerable compositions—several hundreds, I believe—a fuller measure than half keeps a permanent hold upon the memories of Englishmen. Many of his melodies, undisguised by awkward modifications, are being sung on all sides under other names. But there are certain strong and impressive songs of his which even the music-hall composer has not been able to summon impudence enough to touch, and which stand forth conspicuously among the most glorious and inspiring melodies ever penned. Take “Cheer Boys, Cheer !” “A Life on the Ocean Wave !” “There’s a Good Time Coming, Boys !” “Britannia, the Pride of the Ocean,” “The Ivy Green,” “Woodman, Spare that Tree,”—take, in short, the most popular songs you know—ten to one if the best of them are not Russell’s. How much English music is indebted to Russell will be told by some future historian of the art ; he will see that he took the very highest view of song-writing, that he properly estimated its capacities as a vehicle, whilst he illustrated those capacities by his genius, when he produced compositions which at once sweeten whilst they inspire—which ennoble whilst they impel—which suggest the highest ends whilst they urge their achievement. By music Russell accelerated and perhaps confirmed the strong repugnance to slavery in the United States—by music he helped forward the great movement of emigration from this country—by music he preached hope, patience, endurance, to the toiling classes—to those who had been addressed hitherto too largely

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so expressed. When Henry Russell was in the height of his popularity, a person named Henry Smith went about the country, giving out that he was the composer of “Cheer, Boys, Cheer,” “I’m Afloat,” &c. Mr. Russell was complaining of this to Mr. Dickens one night at the Lyceum Theatre, when Dickens exclaimed, “Never mind, Russell ; every man has his Smith.”

from the Senate, the Justice seat, and the House of Correction. We are now in an epoch of sentimental music ; we may choose between maudlin tunes set to nerveless verse and the vulgar catches of the music tavern. This epoch will pass, like everything else passes that is uncommonly bad, though the taint may linger a little after. The traditional English love of what is true and healthy in art will reassert itself, and foremost among those to whom a sweet and wholesome taste will turn as the most honest and most melodious of expositors by song of the national character, will be Henry Russell.—*Dramatic Memoirs.*

Mr. Russell is one of the comparatively small number of musicians who have looked upon their art as the twin-sister of poetry, and have cultivated it accordingly. This tendency appears to have guided him in the direction of his studies, and led to all the productions of his genius. His earliest instructions were received from a sound English musician, Mr. P. King, the celebrated glee-composer, and his subsequent studies were pursued in Italy. It was in the vocal school of Italy that he acquired the gift, so general among the singers of that nation, and so rare among ours, of that clear and emphatic elocution which contributes so much to the impressive effect of his performance. . . . The main source of his success is to be found in his songs. He has a manly intellect as well as a poetical spirit, and despises the namby-pamby verses which serve as food for the musicians of the day. . . . His powers as a singer are akin to his qualities as a composer. They are founded on a masculine intellect and a pure taste. He is gifted by nature with a fine voice—rich, mellow, and sufficiently flexible for every purpose of execution. But he never makes a display of its strength or its sweetness. He uses it as the organ with which he discourses “eloquent music,” as the means whereby he heightens the expression of beautiful and affecting poetry. This is the secret of Russell’s great success as a singer. He sings to the mind and to the heart, as well as to the ear of his audience.—*Hogarth.*

His songs will live for ever.<sup>1</sup>—*Ferrol’s Shilling Magazine.*

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<sup>1</sup> It is due to an amiable man and a graceful poet to say that the words of some of the most popular of Mr. Russell’s songs are the compositions of Dr. Charles Mackay.—ED.

## Mrs. Stirling.

1816.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Stirling, the most charming and finished comedian of our time, was born in 1816, in Queen Street, May Fair, the daughter of a Captain Hehl. She was sent at an early age to a convent in France, from which however she would derive but an imperfect education, as she was young when she was withdrawn. Having determined upon the stage as a profession she applied for occupation to the manager of a small East-end theatre (probably the Coburg), and here she made her first appearance in public under the pseudonym of "Miss Fanny Clifton." Her next appearance was at the Pavilion as *Zephyrina* in "The Lady and the Devil," where she met Mr. Edward Stirling, whom she married. In company with her husband Mrs. Stirling made a long provincial tour, was everywhere welcomed for her refined conceptions and cordial graces, and established her reputation as a worthy disciple of a famous old school of acting, of whose excellence we may guess the strength from her own impersonations. From the provinces she brought to London a well-earned and valuable reputation; and to London she seems from that date more or less to have restricted her genius. Mrs. Stirling has performed in a very great number of modern pieces, most of which are forgotten, but to nearly all of which she imparted success during their production by her acting. But her great excellence undoubtedly lies in old comedy. Since the days of Miss Pope it may be questioned whether *Mrs. Candour* has ever found a more admirable representative than Mrs. Stirling. Particular commendation has been passed on her delivery of the sentence "She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of the dropsy, and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner," which she would render mercilessly effective by pausing at the word dropsy, and then proceeding with the remainder of the sentence as if it were rather unimportant, by which its full significance is developed.—*Dramatic Memoirs*.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxberry, who also gives 1833 as the date of her first appearance at the Coburg. Mr. West, probably a better authority, says her first appearance was in the ballet at the Surrey in 1827.—ED.

No living actress can approach her in comedy. Unless we except a somewhat inelegant walk, she combines every qualification to produce a matchless embodiment of the piquant, the high-bred, the witty heroines of the old drama. Her voice is soft and pleasing, capable at once of sweetness and acerbity; her face is essentially womanly, tender, gentle, refined; her vigorous understanding knows how to give point to the wit of her author, pathos to his melancholy, emphasis to his satire, and illumination to his obscurity.—*The Modern Drama*, 1862.

## Charlotte Saunders Cushman.

1818.

Charlotte Saunders Cushman, the eldest of the five children of the late Mr. Cushman, of Massachusetts (a gentleman descended from one of the Pilgrim Fathers), was born at Boston, United States, about the year 1818. She first came out as a public singer, in the character of the *Countess* in "The Marriage of Figaro," at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, in April 1835. Having earned the highest popularity in her native country, she came to England in 1845, between which year and her return to America in 1849 she gained an equal share of professional laurels at the Princess's and Haymarket Theatres. Since that date she has rarely acted, but divides her residence between London and Rome, having secured an ample independence.—*E. Walford*.

Miss Cushman's melodramatic *Meg Merrilies* has quite as indisputably the attributes of genius about it as any piece of poetry or tragedy could have. Such is her power over the intention and feeling of the part that the mere words of it become a secondary matter. It is the figure, the gait, the look, the gesture, the tone, by which she puts beauty and passion into language the most indifferent. When these mere artifices are continued through a series of scenes, a certain strain becomes apparent, and the effect is not wholly agreeable. Nevertheless, it is something to see what the unassisted resources of acting may achieve with the mere idea of a fine part, stripped of fine language, unclothed, as it were, in words. The human tenderness blending with that Eastern picturesqueness of gesture, the refined sentiment breaking out from

beneath that heavy feebleness and clumsiness of rude old age, are wonderfully startling.—*Henry Morley*.

## Helen Faucit<sup>1</sup> (Mrs. Theodore Martin).

1820.

Then, suddenly—oh heavens! what a revelation of beauty!—forth stepped, walking in brightness, the most faultless of Grecian marbles, Miss Helen Faucit, as *Antigone*. What perfection of Athenian sculpture!—the noble figure, the lovely arms, the fluent drapery! What an unveiling of the ideal statuesque! Is it Hebe? Is it Aurora? Is it a goddess that moves before us? Perfect she is in form; perfect in attitude:

“ Beautiful exceedingly,  
Like a ladye from a far countrie!”

It flattered one's patriotic feelings to see this noble young countrywoman realizing so exquisitely, and restoring to our imagination the noblest of Grecian girls!—*De Quincey*, 1845.

In the sleep-walking scene (in “*Macbeth*”) she crowned the performances of the night. To witness it is worth a thousand homilies against murder. There was in it such a frightful reality of horror, such terrible revelations of remorse, such unrepenting struggles to wash away, not the blood from the hands,

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<sup>1</sup> This lady is frequently confounded by theatrical biographers with a sister many years her senior, who was known to the stage as “*Miss Faucit*.” *Miss Faucit* appeared at Drury Lane about the year 1830, and occupied a leading position at Drury Lane Theatre for several years as the representative of those romantic dramas then in vogue, and in which *Miss Ellen Tree*, then in America, had earned a high reputation. *Miss Faucit's* first appearance at Drury Lane was as *Ophelia*, a character never acted by her younger sister, *Helen*, in London. *Talfourd*, writing of *Miss Faucit's* performance of this character, says: “She has considerable fascination of person, a charming voice for level speaking, and a manner full of grace and sweetness; and in picturing the musical distraction of the love-lorn girl (*Ophelia*) displayed a fine conception of Shakspearian pathos and delicacy.” *Miss Faucit* acted at Covent Garden during *Madame Vestris's* management of that theatre. She was well known and greatly admired in the leading characters of tragedy and comedy at the Theatres Royal in Dublin, Edinburgh, Manchester, &c. At Liverpool she married *Mr. W. H. Bland*, went with him to America in 1845, and died at Boston in 1847.—*ED.*

but the blood from the soul, as made me shudder from head to foot, and my very hair to stand up on my head. Heavens! how the deadly agonies of crime are portrayed by the smarting and parched mouth that told of the burning tortures within! And the expression of her eyes—it was fearful; and when you looked upon those corpse-like hands, now telling their unconscious tale of crime, and thought of their previous energy in urging on its preparation, you could not help looking fearfully for a moment into your own heart, and thanking God that you were free from the remorse of murder. This scene is, indeed, beyond criticism, and above it.—*William Carleton*, 1846.

Some few weeks ago we beheld the same young performer, who, the very evening before, had shaken us with the passionate indignation, melted and thrilled us with the awfully beautiful despair of *Constance of Bretagne*, in that stately historic play, infuse into the part of *Rosalind* all the tender though lively grace which the poet has made its principal attribute and most exquisite attraction—breathing the soul of elegance, wit, and feeling through that noble forest pastoral. Reflecting upon this we said to ourselves, Truly there is something in female genius and female energy—something worthy of Shakspeare—worthy to be cherished with the holiest of all sacred feelings, that of affectionate veneration. . . . Hers is the singular fortune to have added to her true Shakspearian honours the glory of reviving to our very senses the noblest dramatic heroines of ancient Greece—not the corrupt antique of the French, nor the mock antique of any other modern school—but the genuine creations of a Sophocles and an Euripides. Yet well might she do so. The noblest womanhood is essentially the same in every age. It revealed itself to the soul of Sophocles as to that of Shakspeare. And verily, the men and women of old Greece, to whose “nature” *her* dramatists “held up the mirror,” were not framed of marble—as a certain sort of critics among us seem to suppose—but of sensitive, imaginative, and impassioned, as well as intellectual and heroic flesh and blood. The Grecian fire inspired the Grecian grace! An Antigone is elder sister to an Imogen.—*George Fletcher*, “*Studies of Shakspeare*.”

Like all true artists, this lady manifestly works from within outwards. Whatever character she assumes has a truth and unity which could be produced in no other way. Consider her, for example, in “*As You Like It*.” It is clear that she has



entered into the soul of Rosalind, nor realized that alone, but all the life of the woman, and her surroundings as well. Rosalind's words, therefore, sparkle upon her lips as if they were the offspring of the moment, or deepen into tenderness as if her very Orlando were thrilling her heart with tones that are but faint echoes of her own emotion. All she says and does seems to grow out of the situation, as if it were seen and heard for the first time. She takes us into Arden with her, and makes us feel, with the other free foresters of this glorious woodland, what a charm of sunshine and grace that clear, buoyant spirit diffused among its melancholy boughs. . . . Her characters seem to be to her living things, ever fresh, ever full of interest, and on which her imagination is ever at work. They must mingle with her life, even as the thick-coming *fancies* of the poet mingle with his. As, therefore, her rare womanly nature deepens and expands, so do they take a deeper tone, and become interfused with a more accomplished grace. All the difficulties of her art having also been overcome, she moves free and unfettered, giving effect to what she designs with the assured certainty of powers obedient to her will. We know that art the most exquisite must go to produce such results, just as it has done to produce the colours of Correggio or the expression of Raphael; but it is not of the art we think while she is before us, but of the perfect picture of an ideal woman.—*The Art Journal*, January, 1867.

Miss Helen Faucit's impersonations are nature itself; but they are nature as it appears to the poet's eye—nature in its finest and most beautiful aspect. She possesses in an eminent degree the physical requisites for her art—a person graceful and dignified—a voice supremely fascinating in its “most silver flow,” yet equal to the expression of the most commanding passion—a face gifted peculiarly with that “best part of beauty, which a picture cannot express, no, nor the first sight of the life”—a face wonderful indeed in the magic and variety of its expression. Along with these she possesses a complete command of all the resources which intelligence gathers from experience, and an obvious familiarity with the treasures of art, which has strengthened and exalted strong natural perceptions of the graceful and beautiful in form and motion. But greater than all these is the spirit by which they are vivified and swayed; the lofty impulses, the commanding powers of thought and feeling, the inspired energy, the pure taste, the exquisite ladyhood

of nature, which are conspicuous in all Miss Faucit's personations. *Fulvia*, *Rosalind*, the *Lady Constance*, *Portia*, *Lady Macbeth*, "divine *Imogen*," *Beatrice*, all crowd upon our fancy; and after them *Pauline*, a character made more by Miss Faucit than by the author; *Fulvia*, *Belvidera*, *Nina Sforza*, and the *Lady Mabel*, that exquisite portraiture of all that could fascinate in womanly grace or move in womanly suffering. To have seen Miss Faucit in these characters is to have seen a whole world of poetry revealed, of which the most enthusiastic and intelligent study of their authors could have helped us to no idea. Where the author has furnished but a barren outline she pours into it the strength and radiance of her own spirit, and a noble picture glows before us. Nor is this true only in the case of inferior parts. In dealing with Shakspeare this great actress rises to the full measure of her strength. Her performances are revelations of the great master-poet's subtlest powers. When we have once seen them, there is a light evermore upon his page which, but for the magic of this great commentator, would never have been there for us. . . . It is, we know, a bold thing to say, yet believing, we must say it, that the genius is akin to Shakspeare's that can so thoroughly realize his conceptions as Miss Helen Faucit does, clothing with very life the creatures of his imagination, and not one or two of these alone, but many—all various, and for the most part opposite in kind.—*Dublin University Magazine*, 1846.

If powers of the very highest order united to fascinating beauty, and the most lofty conceptions of the dignity and moral objects of her art, could have arrested the degradation of the stage, Miss Helen Faucit would have done so. But this highly-gifted actress arose in the decline of the drama, and even her genius was unequal to the task of supporting it in the days of corrupted taste. She is a combination of Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neill; with the majestic air and lofty thoughts of the former, and as great pathetic power, not less winning grace, but far greater variety than the latter. Flexibility of power is her great characteristic, versatility her distinguishing feature. Like Garrick, she excels equally in tragedy or elegant comedy: it is hard to say whether her *Rosalind* is the more charming or her *Lady Teazle* the more fascinating, her *Belvidera* the more moving or her *Fulvia* the more heart-rending. Dark raven locks, a fine figure, and singularly expressive countenance, bestow on her all the advantages which, in addition to the highest

mental gifts, beauty never ceases to confer on woman ; and a disposition marked by deep feeling, alternately lively and serious, sportive and mournful, playful and contemplative, gives her that command of the expression of different emotions and that versatility of power which constitute her great and unequalled charm. She has the highest conception of the dignity and moral capabilities of her art, and by the uniform chasteness and delicacy of her performances does the utmost to uphold it in its native purity ; but it is all in vain. Her lot was cast in the days of the decline of taste, and notwithstanding her great genius and celebrity, she is unable to arrest it. She has risen to the very highest rank in her profession, but that profession in Great Britain is on the verge of extinction.—*Sir A. Alison.*

Beloved, whose life is with mine own entwined—  
 In whom, while yet thou wert my dream, I viewed,  
 Warm with the life of breathing womanhood,  
 What Shakspeare's visionary eye divined :  
 Pure Imogen, high-hearted Rosalind,  
 Kindling with sunshine all the dusk green wood ;  
 Or changing with the poet's changing mood,  
 Juliet, and Constance of the queenly mind ;  
 I give this book to thee, whose daily life  
 With that full pulse of noblest feeling glows,  
 Which lent its spell to thy so potent art ;  
 To thee whose every act, my own true wife,  
 The grace serene and heavenward spirit shows  
 That rooted Beatrice in Dante's heart.<sup>1</sup>—*Theodore Martin.*

*Milverton* : " If there is anything in the world that I think I know well it is *Macbeth* ; I knew it when I was six years old, for my mother used to spend hour after hour, and day after day, in teaching it to me, and making me play it with her ; but when I came to see a great actress in *Lady Macbeth's* part—Helen Faucit—new lights burst in upon me, and I saw what a delicate and refined fiend *Lady Macbeth* could be."<sup>2</sup>—*Ellesmere* :

<sup>1</sup> Dedication to Mr. Martin's graceful translation of the *Vita Nuova* of Dante.

<sup>2</sup> The editor agrees with *Milverton*. Miss Faucit's acting needs no such foil as the grotesque gambollings of many of our modern performers would supply, to impart the sharp and perfect development it possesses. Her acting is great, and it is great in the sense that prohibits discrimination, because it is a superb embodiment of many remarkable conditions. They

“Yes, I know, Milverton, that is a theory of yours that *Lady Macbeth* is her best part; but I differ from you, and think that *Rosalind* is her greatest triumph. Now I will tell you what I think is one of that lady’s greatest merits as an actress. It is that she is not always quite the same. Of course her main conception of the part does not much vary; but there will be particular touches—new felicities—evolved in each representation. She gives me the notion of one to whom her part is always fresh, because, like the characters of all persons who are good for anything, it is, in fact, an inexhaustible subject of study.”—*Sir Arthur*: “Well, now, I like her best in the ‘Lady of Lyons.’ She it was who made the *Pauline*.”—“*Realmah*,” by *Arthur Helps*.

## Frederick Robson.

1821–1864.

In his bursts of passion, in his vehement soliloquies, in the soul-harrowing force of his simulated invective, he is said to resemble Edmund Kean; but how are you to judge of an actor who in his comic moments certainly approaches the image we have formed to ourselves of Munden, and Dowton, and Banister, and Suett? To say that he is a genius and the prince of eccentrics is perhaps the only way to cut the Gordian knot of criticism in his instance. Let me add, in conclusion, that Robson off the stage is one of the mildest, modestest, most unassuming of men. I remember a dozen years since, and when I was personally unacquainted with him, writing in some London newspaper an eulogistic criticism on some of his per-

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are, indeed, as inseparable as the hues of the kaleidoscope, of which it is the combination that produces the brilliant effect. There are few performances more celebrated than her *Rosalind*; and there have been few performances since the days of Siddons more remarkable than her *Lady Macbeth*. From her performance of *Lady Macbeth* the writer carried away an impression that is never likely to be subdued, though another Siddons should arise. The regality of her air, ever topping the vicissitudes of her emotion; her suggestion of passion, more impressive than its full expression; the abandonment of her actions to her words; her queenly, though baleful gaze; her domination over the conscience of her guilty partner; the fiery decisiveness of her adjurations—lent to the play such a significance as was given to *Hermione* in the eyes of *Leontes*, when the wondrous shape, “masterly done, with the very life warm on her lips,” took being, and moved.—ED.

formances. I learned from friends that he had read the article, and had expressed himself as deeply grateful to me for it. I just knew him by sight; but for months afterwards, if I met him in the street, he used to blush crimson, and made as sudden a retreat around the nearest corner as possible. He said afterwards that he hadn't the courage to thank me. I brought him to bay at last, and came to know him very well, and then I discovered how the nervousness, the bashfulness, the *mauvaise honte*, which made him so shy and retiring in private, stood him in wonderful stead on the stage. The nervous man became the fretful and capricious tyrant of mock tragedy; the bashful man warmed at the footlights with passion and power. The manner which was in society a drawback and a defect became in the pursuit of his art a charm and an excellence.—*G. A. Sala.*

His career as an actor has been very short but very remarkable. He was born at Margate, in 1821, and at one time threatened to become one of those unnatural productions—an infant prodigy. When very young he had several opportunities of seeing Edmund Kean, before that great actor took his farewell benefit in 1830. He caught the most striking mannerisms of the tragedian, and succeeded in reproducing them with far more than the average skill of a precocious child with dramatic instincts.<sup>1</sup> . . . . When Mr. Alfred Wigan gave up the Olympic<sup>2</sup> in 1857, the house was taken by Mr. Robson, Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> I may fill the hiatus by saying that he was apprenticed to a copper-plate engraver, whom he deserted for the stage. Having made his appearance as an amateur performer in London, he became a strolling actor, appearing at Whitstable, Uxbridge, Glasgow, and other places, finally returning to London, where he acted for five years in a minor theatre. He then went an Irish tour, and in 1853 was engaged by Farren at the Olympic. His real name was Thomas Robson Brownhill.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "The Olympic Theatre was built in 1805-6 by old Astley, the stage being made of the timbers of the *Ville de Paris*, a French man-of-war captured some years before. In 1811 Elliston bought the theatre, then a pavilion, for 3150*l.* and an annuity of 100*l.* to Astley, which he lived but two years to enjoy. Elliston's success was equal to that enjoyed by Madame Vestris whilst he himself acted there; but when he was absent the attraction failed. Capt. Barlow, Oxberry, and many others became lessees for a short period; but no speculator succeeded, and the house was purchased by Mr. Scott, the present proprietor, for 4600*l.*, subject to 100*l.* per annum ground rent. Opening it with his own company, and not proving profitable, he let it to a variety of persons, none of whom found it answer their purposes, until Madame Vestris took it in 1830, at a

Emden, and Mr. Bentinck, and for several years the new management prospered. Mr. Robson was the chief attraction, and he created a number of parts, such as *Daddy Hardacre*, *Pawkins* in "Retained for the Defence," and the old man in the "Porter's Knot," which will probably die with him. The terrible force of the first, the rich overflowing humour of the second, and the homely pathos of the third impersonation will long be remembered. His *Wormwood* in the "Lottery Ticket" and "Boots at the Swan" were equally good. In everything Mr. Robson did, with very few exceptions, there was evidence of a deep study of life and an instinctive knowledge of human nature. Mr. Robson always thought for himself, and copied no traditional stage models. He was not like Liston or Munden, nor any of the great actors of a past time. He stood alone on a peculiar piece of ground—half-way between tragedy and comedy. No actor who ever trod the boards has given rise to more discussion as to his half-hidden capabilities. Many think that, in spite of his small though neat figure, he could have scaled the highest heights of tragedy; others think that he was a mere farce actor, and little more. Our own impression is that he wanted nothing but confidence to do anything which fire, impulse, and true genius can do.—*Quoted in Hotten's "Memoir."*

With Robson every tone is true, every look is nature. It is in the jumble and juxtaposition of details that his burlesque consists—in suddenly passing from the extreme of anger or fear to the extreme of humorous ease—in suddenly relapsing into humorous slang in mid-volley of the most passionate speech, and all with the most marvellous flexibility of voice and feature. Presto! faster than we can follow him he has changed from grave to gay, from lively to severe. The *Yellow Dwarf* was probably his greatest effort, although *Prince Richcraft* is not far behind. It has a mad scene which is equal to anything he ever personated.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1856.

No one can have witnessed the performance of Mr. F. Robson at the Olympic Theatre without being struck with the narrow

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rent of 100*l.* per annum, and raised the establishment to the first rank as a place of fashionable amusement. The receipts *now* are seldom less than 100*l.* per night. On one occasion in the winter of 1824 the curtain went up there to *nineteen* shillings, and fell at midnight to 3*l.* 10*s.*"—*Records of a Stage Veteran*. This theatre was destroyed by fire in 1849, and rebuilt in the following year.

ness of the bounds between sport and earnest. His farce has a pathetic depth, a grave earnestness, that touch at one and the same moment the sources of tears and of laughter. He is partly Liston and partly Kean. With less than a cubit added to his stature, Mr. Robson would be the first Shakspearian actor of the day. It is unfortunate both for himself and the spectators that his physical qualifications are not in better accordance with his dramatic genius. He lacks presence only to make Kean in *Shylock*, or Macready in *Virginus* and *Lear*.—*Quarterly Review*, 1854.

Mr. Robson's great quality is the downright earnestness by which he makes others feel what he very evidently feels himself. He has defects of voice and person of the gravest kind, but some part of that which made "Pritchard genteel, and Garrick six feet high," has descended to him. The sort of character in which he is likely to excel may always lie within the narrowest range; but by the strength and intensity he puts into it, he will never fail to attract an audience. He wants finish, refinement, relief—fifty things which will come with experience and study, if he has a proper regard for his calling and for himself; but already, with none of these things, he is a genuine actor, and every one feels it.—*H. Morley*, "*Journal of a Playgoer*," 1853.

## Dion Boucicault.

1822.

Dion Boucicault, youngest son of the late S. S. Boucicault, of Dublin, was born in that city December 26th, 1822, and was educated under his guardian, Dr. Lardner, and at the London University. He commenced his career as a dramatic author in March, 1841, with the production of that popular play, "London Assurance," at Covent Garden Theatre. Mr. Boucicault is the author of about 140 theatrical pieces.—*E. Walford*.

Mr. Boucicault has had a long career, and is perhaps a specimen often given of the well-trained professional dramatist, perfectly skilled in foreign as well as home traditions, and a master of all known stage devices and effects. All through his career he had his finger on the very pulse of the pit, and has nicely followed every change in its beatings. His earliest pieces reflect the tone of the good old school of character, and his comedy of "London Assurance," with its extraordinary vivacity,

its unflinching character, its *Dazzle*, and *Lady Gay Spanker*, which, in the cant phrase, act themselves, will never be dropped out of the list of acting plays. Yet a single fact in connexion with this play should have warned existing actors of the hopeless incapacity into which they have drifted. Not long since a performance of "London Assurance" was given, into which was combined, for some charitable benefit, the strength and flower of every company in London. The list of names represented all the acknowledged chiefs in the respective walks. Yet the failure was disastrous—more disastrous from the mere pretension. The actors seemed not at home in such old-fashioned parts: their line was the imitation of extreme eccentricities; they had lost the famous old art of getting within the mere rind of a character, possessing themselves by study of the key-note, the leading principle, which would, without effort, supply the true illustrative accompaniments of voice, gesture, and oddity. Practising himself, and improving his cunning by skilful French adaptations of powerful pieces, made, like "Janet's Pride," with wonderful skill, Mr. Boucicault turned to domestic melodrama, and produced the charming "Colleen Bawn," one of the few legitimate successes of the last twenty years. There is a tone and flavour about this piece infinitely characteristic, touching, and national; and though dealing with "low" life, and the humour of "low" life, the feeling that remains is one of perfect refinement. Much is, of course, owing to Gerald Griffin, on whose story the play is founded, but the whole is really treated in an original manner. Here, too, is introduced, and with the most perfect legitimacy, that remarkable "sensation scene," as it was called, of the water-cave,—brought in without violence, following naturally in the situation *which required it*, and therefore increasing the attraction of the play. After some more attempts of this *genre*, the author changed his hand, and began producing that class of pieces to which "The Streets of London," "Lost at Sea," "After Dark," and "The Long Strike" belong. These seem to have for model the old Porte St. Martin pieces, but without the romance and passion which gave life to so many of those really admirable productions. The taste of the town now requiring great scenic *tours de force*, and the theatres competing with each other in the attraction of objects from outside which seemed to defy reproduction on the stage, it was necessary that the writer should, like Mr. Crummles' dramatist, construct his



piece in the interest of "the pump and washing-tubs," or kindred objects. Hence the panorama of fires, underground railways, music halls, steamboat piers, dry arches, and such things. The characters are meant to be "London characters," or rather figures, and the plots of the kind which Miss Braddon has made so popular. Lost and found wills, forgers, scheming Jews, bigamy, suicides, crafty scheming men who stick at nothing—in short, *mechanical* figures and incidents are the elements. It must be conceded that the pieces are done as skilfully as possible, and are really interesting.—*Percy Fitzgerald.*

Charles Fechter.<sup>1</sup>

1823.

I think his *Hamlet* one of the very best, and his *Othello* one of the very worst, I have ever seen; and I have seen all the good actors and many of the bad actors, from Kean<sup>2</sup> downwards. On leaving the theatre after "Hamlet," I felt once more what a great play it was, with all its faults, and they are gross and numerous.<sup>3</sup> On leaving the theatre after *Othello*, I felt as

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<sup>1</sup> Though a foreigner, Mr. Fechter is so far naturalized as to demand a place among English actors.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Which Kean?—ED.

<sup>3</sup> This was the sort of criticism which eighty or a hundred years before had probably inclined Garrick to cut up this play, "with its gross and numerous faults," and present it to his audiences in a mutilated shape. Garrick's version of "Hamlet" was found by Boaden in John Kemble's library. He says: "Garrick cut out the voyage to England, and the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who had made love to the employment, and marshalled his way to knavery." Nor was this all. For he cut out "the funeral of *Ophelia*, with all the wisdom of the prince and the jocularly of the grave-diggers." The concluding scenes were thus condensed: "*Hamlet* is made to burst in upon the King and Court, when *Laertes* reproaches him with his father's and sister's death. The exasperation of both is at its height, when the *King* interposes and declares that his wrath at *Hamlet's* rebellious spirit in not departing for England shall fall heavy. 'Then feel you mine!' says *Hamlet*, and stabs him." Whenever Garrick altered the situations, he substituted his own or somebody else's language for Shakspeare's. British prejudice, however, inclined to the "real thing." Garrick, though disappointed, was proud of his alterations of the play, and wrote to Sir William Corney, in 1773, that though his producing "Hamlet" with alterations was the most imprudent thing he ever did, yet "he had sworn that he would not leave the stage until he had rescued that noble play from all the rubbish of the fifth act."—ED.

if my old admiration for this supreme masterpiece of the art had been an exaggeration ; all the faults of the play stood out so glaringly—all its beauties were so dimmed and distorted by the acting of every one concerned. It was necessary to recur to Shakspeare's pages to recover the old feeling. Reflecting on the contrast offered by these two performances, it seemed to me that a good lesson on the philosophy of acting was to be read there. Two cardinal points were illustrated by it : first, the very general confusion which exists in men's minds respecting naturalism and idealism in art ; secondly, the essential limitation of an actor's sphere as determined by his personality. Both in *Hamlet* and *Othello* Fechter attempts to be natural, and keeps as far away as possible from the conventional declamatory style which is by many mistaken for idealism only because it is unlike reality. His physique enabled him to represent *Hamlet*, and his naturalism was artistic. His physique wholly incapacitated him from representing *Othello* ; and his naturalism, being mainly determined by his personality, became utter feebleness. I do not mean that the whole cause of his failure rests with his physical incapacity, for his intellectual conception of the part is as false as it is feeble ; but he might have had a wrong conception of the part, and yet have been ten times more effective had nature endowed him with a physique of more weight and intensity.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1861.

The proof that it really is what is excellent, and not what is adventitious, which creates the triumph of Fechter in *Hamlet*, is seen in the supreme ineffectiveness of *Othello*. In "King Blas" and "The Corsican Brothers" he was recognised as an excellent actor—not by any means a great actor, very far from that, but one who, in the present condition of the stage, was considered a decided acquisition. He then played *Hamlet*, and gave a new and charming representation to a part in which no actor has been known to fail : and the uncritical concluded that he was a great actor. But when he came to a part like *Othello*, which calls upon the greatest capabilities of an actor, the public then remembered he was a foreigner, and discovered that he was not a tragedian.<sup>1</sup>—*Cornhill Magazine*, 1863.

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<sup>1</sup> Writing of one of M. Fechter's performances, Mrs. Fanny Kemble says : "The representation of 'The Duke's Motto,' with all its resources of scenic effect, is a striking and interesting theatrical entertainment, with

In melodrama Mr. Fechter acts effectively and without extravagance. He suits action to word with a nicety not usual upon the English stage, and without obtrusion of his art where he is most superficial.—*H. Morley.*

He was educated to some extent as a sculptor, but his inclinations were towards the stage. He made his *début* at the Salle Molière in “*Le Mari de la Veuve*,” spent some weeks at the Conservatory, and enrolled himself in a troupe about to make the round of Italy. On his return he applied himself to sculpture, which has continued to be the occupation of his leisure. He appeared at Berlin in 1846. His first success on the French stage was as *Duval* in “*La Dame aux Camélias*.”—*E Walford.*

## J. L. Toole.

1831.

Should an author give him a line admitting of a *double entendre*, how delicately he handles it! He shows us that an honest, hearty laugh can be obtained by genuine humour, and he never risks the chance of offending the majority of his audience by pandering to the taste of the “unskilful” few. He shows us that ribaldry is not wit, and coarseness no necessary adjunct to the “low” comedian. Though somewhat different in style from Robson, he is equally an artiste. To say that Toole is as thorough a droll as the late Mr. Wright was would be untrue. That Toole is to some extent a disciple of Wright’s school cannot be denied, but look what he made of one scene in “*The Willow Copse*.” Originally the vehicle for humour of the broadest kind, it was converted by this actor into an artistic bit of genuine feeling, which the situation perfectly warranted, and which was quite in keeping with the character. In Wright’s parts generally (that of “*Domestic Economy*,” for example) he labours under the disadvantage of comparison with the more humorous actor who was the original; still, although there is the temptation to imitate, he often manages by careful study to invest such characters with a natural drollery of his own, though they may not be so highly

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hardly an admixture of that which is truly dramatic.” This discrimination might be (as doubtless it was intended) happily applied to the chief actor in that melodrama.—*ED.*

coloured ; as a rule, however, he is generally more effective in those parts he has himself created, or those in which the *vis comica* is mixed with a dash of true feeling, as *Caleb Plummer*, and, more recently, *Michonnet*, in "Adrienne Lecouvreur," in both of which he "made up," as the technical phrase runs, so artistically—which is essential to the actor's success. Characters opposed to the broader school of acting, and at variance with buffoonery, are those most calculated to enhance his reputation ; in these he is always seen with greater pleasure, as being worthier of his talents. Of all his farce parts, surely the fussy old gentleman in "The Census" is one of the best. Let us not forget the admirable bit of fooling, as *Mr. Dovebody*, in that very worst of bad farces yclept "A Shilling Day at the Great Exhibition ;" nor should we pass over without a word of commendation his very artistic performance in "The Dead Heart," as *Brutus Toupct*, "the terror of Kings ;" nor *Podgers*, in the clever sketch by Mr. Hollingshead entitled "The Birthplace of Podgers," which exactly suited the actor's peculiar humour, and in which he was so successful in "creating a part ;" nor *Tom Dibbles*, in "Good for Nothing," the character in which he made his first appearance at the New Adelphi, on the occasion of that theatre opening as "The New Adelphi ;" nor—but why enumerate further, to show "at a glance" what he can do, unless we refer to those numerous burlesques in which he has exhibited so much originality? But, after all, the true test of the ability of a comedian (not necessarily very "low") is to see him in Shakspeare, and, if he comes well out of that ordeal, he is at once raised to a far higher standard of excellence. It may be noted that Mr. Wright did not attempt Shakspeare ; Robson might have done so, but if he has, it has not been since he has attained his present position. Buckstone (and it is much to be regretted) is now either *Maddison Morton* or a Yankee in a three-act farce. Toole has appeared as the *First Grave-digger*, which he performed during Charles Dillon's management at the Lyceum, and which at once stamped him as a "legitimate" actor. He had previously played this part, as well as that of *Touchstone*, in his first engagement at Dublin. It is universally admitted that Compton is our first Shakspearian clown, and (not overlooking the respective merits of Messrs. Lewis Ball and H. Widdicombe) to Toole, possibly, might be awarded the second place, if the opportunity offered. This is the highest praise that can possibly be given to this popular

actor, who is so deservedly esteemed by his professional and private friends, and who is ever foremost in the cause of charity by "admirable fooling," artistically conceived and kindly directed. It may be added that he is still a young man, being born in 1831, within the limits of the famed St. Mary-Axe, and he is the younger son of the once celebrated toastmaster. Although it is perhaps unnecessary to chronicle, in this place, early events in our friend's career, it may be mentioned that he was formerly a member of the City Histrionic Club, when his talent was particularly apparent in that famous impersonation of the lamented John Emery, *Robert Tyke*, in the "School of Reform." Among the literary celebrities who witnessed his performances at the time he was associated with the above-mentioned club was Charles Dickens, and it was in no small degree attributable to that author's advice and encouragement that Toole became an actor, having previously occupied a position, for a brief period, in a wine-merchant's counting-house in the City, but it is needless to say that he did not find himself adapted for such a post. His entertainment entitled "Toole at Home : a Touch at the Times," a vehicle for many clever sketches and imitations, was given by him at the Southwark, Hackney, Walworth, and Beaumont Institutions; and it was at the Haymarket Theatre, on the 22nd of July, 1852, or rather on the 23rd of that month, that he made his first essay as an actor, the occasion being the benefit of the stage-manager, Mr. Frederick Webster, when it was usual to give an evening's entertainment of extraordinary length, and the audience might have fairly complained of the quantity of dishes, though they had no reason to find fault with the quality of the feast. For instance—first came the "Merchant of Venice," in four acts; then a concert; and next the comedy, in three acts, of "Mind your Own Business," with the entire strength of the Haymarket Company; followed by "Keeley Worried by Buckstone;" and at nearer one o'clock than twelve, Toole, as *Simmons*, in "The Spitalfields Weaver," must have made his first acquaintance with the London stage as a regular actor. It was the last piece played, and consequently hardly fair to the young *débutant*; but let us remark, in conclusion, "Better (*Toole*) late than never."—*Anon.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For this notice I am indebted to the courtesy of a correspondent.—ED.

## APPENDIX.

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[THE Editor has reserved for this Appendix notices on various actors about whom sufficient information could not be collected to justify their insertion in the body of the work. He has also inserted here a number of theatrical anecdotes, collected during the progress of the work, together with various particulars relating to actors, which came to hand too late for their insertion in the proper place.]

### Samuel Reddish.

Reddish, who died at York in 1785, married Mrs. Canning, the mother of the statesman and orator, George Canning. Geneste hints a doubt of the marriage by affirming that "Mrs. Canning had at one time such a friendship for Mr. Reddish, that she assumed his name." But Robert Bell, in his life of George Canning, declares that her marriage "rests on an authority which properly closes all discussion on the subject." Reddish appears to have been an indifferent actor. He is described as possessing

" A figure clumsy, and a vulgar face,  
Devoid of spirit as of pleasing grace ;  
Action unmeaning, often misapplied,  
Blessed with no perfect attribute of pride."

In the Life of Henderson it is said that Reddish, on his way to the theatre, had the step of an idiot, his eye wandering, and whole countenance vacant. He was congratulated on his being able to play, and he answered, "Yes, sir; and in the garden scene I shall astonish you!" He could not be persuaded but that he was going to play *Romeo*, and he continued reciting it the whole way. At last he was pushed on the stage, the performers fully convinced that he would begin with a speech of *Romeo*, but the moment he came in sight of the audience his recollection returned, and he went through the real part he

had to perform (*Posthumus*) "much better," says Ireland, "than I have ever seen him!" Yet, on returning to the green-room, *Romeo* again re-entered his head, and the delusion continued until he returned to the business of the play. "After passing through a variety of disgraceful escapades," says Bell, "he became diseased in his brain, appeared for the last time in 1779 as *Posthumus*, was thrown upon the Fund for support, and lingered out the remnant of his wretched life as a maniac in the York Asylum."

### Shuter.

Parsons, who was an exquisite actor, would pay this tribute to Shuter: "Ah, to see *Corbaccio* ('The Fox') acted to perfection, you should have seen Shuter. The public are pleased to think that I act that part well, but his acting was as far superior to mine as Mount Vesuvius is to a rushlight."

Shuter was a man of much wit. A person observing him look with a sort of vacant stare, asked him if he had *bottled his eyes*. "Yes," answered Shuter, "and the next thing I do will be to *cork my eyebrows*!"

When very young, Shuter was potboy at a public-house in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. A gentleman came in late one evening, and, after taking some refreshment, sent Shuter to call a hackney-coach for him. On reaching home, the gentleman missed his pocket-book, and suspecting he had left it in the coach, the number of which he did not know, he hastened the next morning to the house from which it had been ordered, and inquired of Shuter if he knew the number of the coach. Poor Shuter could neither read nor write, and was totally unacquainted with numerals; but he knew the signs by which his master scored the pots and pints which were drunk at his house, and these were, fortunately, sufficient to express the number of the coach; he therefore readily replied to the gentleman's inquiry by saying "Two pots and a pint" (111). This, to the gentleman, was unintelligible till the landlord explained its meaning. The coachman was summoned, and the gentleman recovered his pocket-book. This acuteness of the boy so pleased the gentleman that he immediately placed him in a school, and became his patron through life.

## Michael Kelly's Reminiscences.

EDMUND KEAN.—Before the piece "Cymon" was brought out, I had a number of children brought me, that I might choose a Cupid. One struck me, with a fine pair of black eyes, who seemed by his looks and little features to be most anxious to be chosen as the representative of the God of Love. I chose him; and little then did I imagine that my little Cupid would eventually become a great actor. The then little urchin was neither more nor less than Edmund Kean.

THOMAS KING.—I was standing behind the scenes in Crow Street one night, and I saw him (King) for once rather put out of temper. The play was "The School for Scandal." He was at the side wing, waiting to go on the stage as *Sir Peter Teazle*. At the stage-door was seated an immensely fat woman, the widow of Ryder, the celebrated Irish actor, who had been the original *Sir Peter Teazle*, in Dublin, in the summer of 1777. The lusty dame, looking at King, who was standing close to her, holloed out, with an implacable brogue and the lungs of a stentor, "Arrah, agra! there was but one *Sir Peter Teazle* in the world, and he is now in heaven, and more is the pity. Ah, Tom Ryder! Tom Ryder! look down upon *Sir Peter Teazle* here, your dirty representative!" and after this complimentary harangue the wretched lady began to howl most piteously, to the great annoyance of all behind the scenes, but most particularly to that of King, who appeared really disconcerted. However, the widow was removed, tranquillity was restored, the cloud dispersed, and King acted with his usual excellence.

BENSLEY.—On May 6th, 1796, Mr. Bensley—whom I am proud to have called my friend—took leave of the stage, on his own benefit night, in the character of *Evander*, in "The Grecian Daughter." He was a good actor and a perfect gentleman. In his younger days he had been in the army, and I was told had been at the Havannah. I have seen him often, with great pleasure, act *Prospero*, *Iago*, and *Pierre*. His *Malvolio* was considered a fine performance. He had a manner of rolling his eyes when speaking, and a habit, whenever he entered the green-room, of stirring the fire with great ceremony, *secundum artem*, in which habit I was in the habit of



imitating him. He caught me once in the very fact, and joined heartily in the laugh against himself.

MISS F. H. KELLY.—Mr. Sheridan called upon me one day and said, "Last night I was at Brookes's. Charles Fox came there with Lord Robert Spencer; they had both been at Drury Lane to see 'King John.'" I asked him if he was pleased with the performance. He replied that he was, particularly with Mrs. Siddons. "But," he added, "there was a little girl, who acted *Prince Arthur*, with whom I was greatly struck, her speaking was so perfectly natural. Take my word for it, Sheridan, that girl in time will be at the head of her profession." Mr. Sheridan at that period did not know that Miss Kelly was a relation of mine; but upon this favourable report went to see her, and told me that he perfectly agreed with Mr. Fox, and further said that he should like to read the character of *Monimia*, in "The Orphan," to her; he was convinced she would act it admirably.

G. F. COOKE.—No man, when sober, was better conducted, or had more affability of behaviour, blended with sound sense and good manners, than Cooke. He had a fine memory, and was extremely well informed. I asked him, when he was acting at Brighton one day, to dine with me and Mrs. Crouch, and we were delighted with his conversation and gentleman-like deportment. He took his wine cheerfully, and as he was going away I urged him to have another bottle. His reply was, "Not one drop more; I have taken as much as I ought to take. I have passed a delightful evening, and should I drink any more wine, I might prove a disagreeable companion; therefore, good night;" and away he went.

WROUGHTON.—He was a most intimate friend of Bannister—they were scarcely ever to be seen asunder. I used to nickname them "Orestes and Pylades." Wroughton was for many years stage-manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and had also been for a number of years proprietor of Sadler's Wells, and was supposed to have made a great deal of money by that place of amusement. Wroughton was a sterling, sound, sensible performer; he never gave offence as an actor, and in many parts was truly good.

TATE WILKINSON.—Wilkinson was one of the most eccentric men I ever met with. One of his whims was to hide chocolate drops and other sweetmeats in different holes and corners of his house, his great pleasure consisting in finding them, as if by

accident, some days after. When he had taken a few glasses of old Madeira, of which he was very fond, he would mix his conversation about theatricals and eatables together in a manner at once ludicrous and incomprehensible.

SUETT.—I remember well, after poor Suett's death, Kemble, in lamenting the event, said to me, "My dear Mick, *Penruddock* has lost a powerful ally in Suett. Sir, I have acted the part with many *Weasels*, and good ones too, but none of them could work up my passions to the pitch Suett did. He had a comical, impertinent way of thrusting his head into my face, which called forth all my irritable sensations; the effect upon me was irresistible."

### Miss Pope.

(See page 187.)

When I first saw Miss Pope she was performing *Mrs. Candour* in the "School for Scandal." Her fellow-labourers in the theatric vineyard were Miss Farren as *Lady Teazle*, and King as *Sir Peter*; Parsons and Dodd performed *Crabtree* and *Backbite*; Baddeley personated *Moses*; Smith, *Charles*; and John Palmer, *Joseph*. Here was a galaxy which the dramatic hemisphere will not again present in one night. I have heard people wonder why the good actors in our days will not pull together in one piece, as they did when the "School for Scandal" first came out: meaning, I presume, as they habitually did at that period. I take the liberty to doubt the fact. If the "School for Scandal" had been brought to the theatre by "some starved hackney sonneteer" or me, Parsons would not have acted *Crabtree*, and Dodd would have "fined" rather than perform *Backbite*. I even doubt whether Baddeley would have taken to the Jew. Miss Pope would have unquestionably demurred about *Mrs. Candour*. Not that those parts are bad ones in themselves, but there is too great an interval between the first and last appearance of the "scandalous club." They get out of sight, and consequently out of the mind of the audience. Moreover (which is an inexpressible sin in the perception of a player), there are better parts in the play. Why, then, it may be asked, did those eminent performers act these characters? I answer, because the play was written by a manager. When, many years afterwards, Miss Pope attended the rehearsal of Frederick Reynolds's play, "The Will," I beheld her (for the first and last time I ever witnessed it) a little out

of humour. "Oh, Mr. Reynolds," exclaimed the lady, turning over the leaves of her manuscript, "this is a very bad part." "Very, ma'am," was the answer; "but bad as it is, I can't make it better." Now, be it remembered that Reynolds was not a manager, and, moreover, that he was not a regular writer for Drury Lane Theatre. His movements thither were eccentric. "The Will," "Cheap Living," and "The Caravan," were the only wares he ever carried to that market. This may account for the lady's petulance, and may perhaps excuse it.

Nicknames are often given at hazard. Miss Pope's private alias, in certain theatrical circles, was Mrs. Candour; originating partly from her playing that part, and partly from her readiness to undertake the defence of any person who happened to be run down. I owe it to truth to declare my conviction that, in adopting that course, not a particle of irony or sarcasm was mingled with her encomiums. I never heard her speak ill of any human being. This, in a theatre, where there is so much ill, and so many people disposed to speak of it, is surely no faint praise. I have sometimes been even exasperated by her benevolence. In cases of the most open delinquency, I could never entice her into indignation. "I adore my profession," I have heard her say more than once. She might, therefore, think it policy, at all events, to uphold the professors, in the same way as the sex uphold each other in the article of marriage. You never can prevail upon female A to admit that female B has become an old maid from want of offers. It is constantly a matter of choice. She has bad health: she was attached to a young man who died at Monmouth: she is devoted to her sister's children: or she wont quit her father. Anything rather than the fact.

I saw Miss Pope for the second time in the year 1790, in the character of *Flippanta*, in Sir John Vanbrugh's licentious comedy, "The Confederacy." Miss Farren was the City wife, *Clarissa*; Moody, the husband; John Palmer, the *Dick Amlet*; John Bannister, the roguish servant *Brisk*; and Mrs. Jordan, the *Corinna*. The last-mentioned part was formerly, however, personated by Miss Pope: witness the encomium of Churchill in the Rosciad:

"With all the native vigour of sixteen,  
Among the merry troop conspicuous seen,  
See lively Pope advance in jig and trip,  
Corinna, Cherry, Honeycomb, and Snip.

Not without art, but yet to nature true,  
 She charms the town with humour just yet new,  
 Cheer'd by her promise we the less deplore  
 The fatal time when Clive shall be no more."

This poem was published in the year 1761; and when "the fatal time" which it prognosticated had arrived, Miss Pope wrote poor Kitty Clive's epitaph. It may be seen on a mural tablet in Twickenham churchyard, commencing as follows:

"Clive's blameless life this tablet shall proclaim."

"She was one of my earliest and best friends," said Miss Pope; "I usually spent a month with her during the summer recess, at her cottage adjoining to Horace Walpole's villa at Strawberry Hill. One fine morning I set off in the Twickenham passage-boat to pay her a visit. When we came to Vauxhall I took out a book and began to read." "Oh, ma'am," said one of the watermen, "I hoped we were to have the pleasure of hearing you talk." "I took the hint," added the benevolent lady, "and put up my book." She asked me if I remembered Horace Walpole. I could only say, as Pope said of Dryden, "*Virgilium tantum vidi.*" The only time I ever beheld him was when I went, about the year 1793, in Undy's passage-boat to Twickenham. He was standing upon the lawn in front of his house. "He *could* be very pleasant," said Miss Pope; "he often came to drink tea with us at Mrs. Clive's cottage; and he could be very unpleasant." "In what way?" said I. "Oh, very snarling and sarcastic," was the answer.

When young people look at old people, they find a great difficulty in imagining that the latter were formerly as young as themselves. When I first became acquainted with the lady in question—namely, about the year 1807—she had passed her grand climacteric, and was consequently gifted with a bulky person and a duplicity of chin. "Is it possible," said I to myself, "that this old woman could ever have verified Churchill's assertion, 'Native vigour of sixteen?' Ridiculous!" And yet the matter is mathematically a fact; nay more, Miss Pope was once in love! I had the "soft confession" from her own lips; and as I was not sworn to secrecy, and the lady has long since joined the Capulets, the reader shall have it too.

The scene of the acknowledgment lay in Miss Pope's back drawing-room, at her house in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, situate within two doors of the Freemasons' Tavern,

whether on the north side or the south I will not aver, not having a map of London before me with the points of the compass annexed. All I can say is, that it was on the Lincoln's Inn Fields side of the tavern. She had then lived there for a period of forty years. The room was hung round with portraits of people who had been gathered to their fathers half a century before. "Who is this, madam?" said I, pointing to a three-quarters as large as life. "That is the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield," answered Miss Pope. I stood up to look at that once high-prized beauty, and repeated from Pope's "Imitation of Horace's Second Satire" (I firmly believe the imitation to be his, though he denied it):

"The tribe of templars, players, apothecaries,  
Pimps, poets, wits, Lord Fannys, Lady Marys,  
And all the court in tears, and half the town  
Lament dear charming Oldfield dead and gone.  
Engaging Oldfield! who with grace and ease  
Could join the arts to ruin and to please."

"Ah, well! we must not believe all that Pope said of her," answered the companion of Kitty Clive. "See what a fine marked tragic brow she has! I myself believe she was a very good woman." "And who is that little child upon whose head her right hand rests?" inquired I. "Did you never see," answered the lady, "a very old man walking about town named General Churchill?" "I have." "Well, that child is he!" Here was another surprise to my then juvenile imagination. General Churchill, aged eighty, once a little boy in petticoats! Miracles will never cease! In the hurry of business I quite omitted to ask Miss Pope how "a very good woman" named Oldfield, could have a son named Churchill. Over the sofa hung an engraved likeness of a gentleman whose ponderous quantum of hair was buckled up behind like the tails of my old maiden aunt Leonora's coach-horses. "That is Baron Newnham, the present Earl of Harcourt," said the owner of the mansion. I bowed acquiescence. "And pray who is this?" said I, turning to a portly gentleman in pearl-coloured dittos, with a laced cocked-hat under his arm. "Oh, that," said the lady, in a hesitating sort of a flurry, "that is Mr. Holland." I thought it rather odd that Holland should be the only *Mister* of the party, and I said to myself, as *Gibbet* said when he heard that *Aimwell* had gone to church, "that looks suspicious." The stomach-pump was not then invented, but I nevertheless

gradually obtained the contents of the old lady's heart upon the subject of the said Holland; who, as the reader will find on consulting Tom Davies's "Life of Garrick," was an actor of celebrity in his day. The ugly curly-pated lapdog having been now silenced by several flirts from a scented cambric handkerchief, Miss Pope confessed her early love and her early disappointment. "Mr. Holland and myself," said the fair sexagenarian, "were mutually attached. I had reason to expect that he would soon make me an offer of his hand. Mr. Garrick—(*here* was a second Mister, but this proceeded from the posthumous awe inspired by the shade of a manager and sole proprietor)—Mr. Garrick warned me of his levities and his gallantries, but I had read that a reformed rake makes the best husband, and I hoped that I should find it to be so. One day I went to visit Mrs. Clive in the Richmond coach. The coach stopped to bait at Mortlake, when whom should I see pass me rapidly in a post-chaise but Mr. Holland, in company with a lady! I could not discern who the lady was, but I felt a pang of jealousy which kept me silent for the rest of the journey. I got out of the coach at the King's Head, near the present bridge, and, with my little wicker basket in my hand, I set off to walk along Twickenham meadows to Strawberry Hill. When I came opposite the Eel-pie Island, I saw the same parties in a boat together, and I then discovered that Mr. Holland's companion was the notorious Mrs. Baddeley. He looked confused when he saw me, and tried to row across to the Richmond side, but the weeds prevented him. I met him on the Tuesday morning following at a rehearsal. He had done wrong, and he knew it, but he tried to veil his degradation by an air of *huteur*. I was as proud as he, and from that time we never exchanged a word. He afterwards made love to this, that, and t'other woman, but I have reason to know that he never was really happy." Here the old lady wiped away a tear, which the remembrance of what happened forty years before had caused to trickle down her cheek.

I cannot despatch this fickle Mr. Holland without relating an anecdote in which he was posthumously concerned. I sat in the pit of Drury Lane Theatre one evening about twenty years ago, when one of Shakspeare's historical plays was performed, embracing "all the strength of the house," accompanied by the usual portion of its weakness. Two worthies sat within earshot of me, between whom an exchange of playbills produced a

temporary intimacy. They conversed to the following effect:—  
 “Do you often come here, sir?” “Yes, sir, now and then. I see by this bill that almost all their actors are engaged.”  
 “Yes, sir.” “Actors live to a great age, sir.” “Yes, sir, some of them.” “Now here, sir,” said the first speaker, “here, sir, is Holland: he was an actor, sir, in Garrick’s time, and yet we have him in the bill for to-night.” “True, sir,” answered the second speaker, “and here is another of the Garrick school—Mr. Powell: he’s in the bill, too: he must be no chicken by this time.” I thought at the moment of proving to both speakers, as Partridge says, “that this Mr. Jones was not that Mr. Jones,” and that of the two Garrick contemporaries whom they had named, the one, if living, would be now ninety-six years of age, and the other a hundred and four. But I left them in the thick of their error. People in the pit of Drury Lane “conceive better than they combine.”

The *Widow Racket* in Mrs. Cowley’s “*Belle’s Stratagem*” was one of Miss Pope’s best parts. It is difficult to describe action in words. Miss Pope’s usual manner of exhibiting piquant carelessness consisted in tossing her head from right to left, and striking the palm of each hand with the back of its fellow, at the same moment casting her eyes upward with an air of nonchalance. Miss Mellon, who came after her, came nearest to her in this manner; but still it was *haud passibus æquis*. One morning, on turning the corner of Great Queen Street, with the intention of making a visit, I beheld the carriage of Lord Harcourt (his lordship’s official vehicle as Master of the Horse to the Queen) standing at the door. The chariot was blood-red, the horses were coal-black, and the coachman and footman were in a complete armour of gold lace. Venturing in was out of the question; so I passed the door, and loitered in front of a broker’s shop about seven doors nearer to Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and close abutting upon the chapel. I had plenty of time, before the departure of the noble Master of the Horse, to make a mental inventory of the contents of the shop. A counting-house stool stood in front of me, with the wadding making a partial exit through an aperture in its morocco covering; an oaken chest of drawers, highly wrought and inlaid with ivory, with a rusty key in the folding-door, gave token of former grandeur.

“Oh, couldst thou speak,  
 As in Dodona once thy kindred trees,”

thought I, thou mightest give me some curious anecdotes of what passed in Old Burlington Street a century ago. A lady in blue velvet, guiltless of neckerchief, with a red rose in her hand, was half hid by a rickety wash-hand stand; a lapdog painted in crayons was ill guarded by a starred and splintered pane of glass; and a crazy mirror in a frame of dingy white and gold, multiplied and distorted my visage as I moved around for a more accurate view of what the back of the shop contained. In a few minutes I peeped forth from my hiding-place. The royal carriage was in the act of departing, and I knocked at the door. I walked upstairs, and on entering the drawing-room I found Miss Pope still in the attitude of graceful deference in which his lordship had left her. Her hands were crossed upon her stomacher, and her eyes were modestly bent towards the earth. She still felt the influence of the patrician deity, although he had corporeally ceased to fill the vacant blue-damask arm-chair which fronted her on the opposite side of the fire-place.

I attended the last appearance of this estimable woman in public. It was on the 26th of May, 1808; the character was *Deborah Dowlas* in the "Heir-at-Law." A week before, she had talked with me about the manner in which she should dress the character, and I answered in black bombazeen. Miss Pope stared; but I proved to her that not only *Deborah Dowlas* but all the rest of the *dramatis personæ* ought, properly speaking, to assume suits of sable. "Attend," said I, while her sister Susan counted them up on her fingers. "All the *Dowlases* should wear black as relatives of the deceased *Lord Duberly*. *Henry Moreland* should do the same as his son; and *Steadfast* as a friend of the family. Clerical custom requires *Doctor Pangloss* to be attired in black. *Caroline Dormer* has recently lost her father, and so have *Zekiel* and *Cicely Homespun*; *Caroline Dormer's* first servant, *Kenrick*, added I, must of course do as his mistress does: and this makes up the whole of the party." Susan, who was a matter-of-fact personage, thought me right, but Miss Pope, notwithstanding, was not "fondly overcome" by my argument, but dressed *Deborah Dowlas* as her predecessors had done. This leave-taking was in character and in rhyme, both of which I thought objectionable. The character, *Audrey*, that of a female fool, should, at all events, not have been assumed. The last line of the farewell address still dwells in my memory.



“And now poor *Audrey* bids you all farewell.” The example of Miss Pope’s friend and patron, Garrick, in a similar situation, might have taught her better. He expressed himself as follows:—“The jingle of rhyme and the language of fiction would but ill suit my present feelings. This is to me a very awful moment; it is no less than parting for ever with those from whom I have received the greatest kindness and favours, and upon the spot where that kindness and those favours were enjoyed.” This was as it should be.

Miss Pope ended her days in a house in Newman Street. I felt grieved when she quitted Queen Street, and so, I believe, did she. The pictures had in a measure grown to the walls; and though the mansion was rather too near to the Freemasons’ Tavern, whence, on a summer evening, when windows are perforce kept open, the sounds of “Prosperity to the Deaf and Dumb Charity” sent forth a corresponding clatter of glasses which made everybody in Miss Pope’s back drawing-room, for the moment, fit objects of that benevolent institution, still, a residence of forty years and upwards is not to be parted from without regret.

Miss Pope gave an evening party at her new residence about a twelvemonth after her retreat from the stage, at which, I remember, the late Mr. Justice Grose was present, as well as a great number of other highly respectable persons of either sex; many of them, as I then learned, from the purlieus of St. James’s Palace. Here I beheld her in society for the last time. She shortly afterwards was attacked by a stupor of the brain, and this once lively and amiable woman, who had entertained me repeatedly with anecdotes of people of note in her earlier days, sat quietly and calmly in her arm-chair by the fireside, patting the head of her poodle dog, and smiling at what passed in conversation, without being at all conscious of the meaning of what was uttered. At her death I promised to myself to write her character in one of the public journals, and at her funeral I vowed to myself to write her epitaph. But, as Doctor Johnson says, “the promises of authors are like the vows of lovers.”

Upon a candid review of my pursuits and feelings at the period above described, it appears to me that I was a much happier man then than I now am. Upon recollection I find that about that time Lewis, the comedian, let me, by anticipation, into the cause of this. We were walking homeward

from the Keep-the-line Club, then held at the British Coffee-house. Lewis asked me my age, and I answered "thirty." "Stick to that, my dear boy," said the veteran, "and you will do. I myself was thirty once. I was fool enough to let it go by, and I have regretted it ever since."  
—*James Smith*.<sup>1</sup>

## Records of a Stage Veteran.

INCLEDON.—Incledon's love of profane jokes was notorious; from his early education (as a Cathedral boy) he derived an extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures, and his quotations were the ebullitions of a heedless, not a heretic nature. He was conversing once with a Scotch gentleman who traced his ancestors back to a period anterior to the Christian era. "By the holy Paul," said Charles, "you'll tell me next that your ancestors were in the ark with Noah!" "I've no precesse evedence o' the fac," replied the Scotchman, "but I've a shrewd conjecture that they were." Incledon, who was never at a loss, replied, "They were in the ark with Noah, werè they? Now, sir, to show you the — superiority of *my* family, at that time, by —, *they had a boat of their own*."

BORROWERS.—When Messrs. H—— and W——n were provincial actors, their treasury ran low. H—— addressed the following note to his friend:—

"Dear W.,—Lend me a couple of shillings until Saturday, and oblige  
Yours, ——.

"P.S.—On second thoughts, make it three."

To this epistle he received the following reply:—

"Dear Jack,—I have only one shilling myself, or would oblige.  
Yours, ——.

"On second thoughts, I must change that for dinner."

STRANGE SIGHTS.—I have seen Wilkinson play *Macbeth*; Mathews, *Othello*; Wrench, *George Barnwell*; Buckstone, *Iago*; Rayner, *Penruddock*; little Knight, *Gossamer*; Claremont, *Richard*; Keeley, *Shylock*; Liston, *Romeo and Octavian*; Reeve, *Othello*; G. F. Cooke, *Mercutio*; John Kemble, *Archer*; Kean, Clown in a pantomime; and Young, *Shaccabac*

<sup>1</sup> "Memoirs, Letters, &c., of the late James Smith," edited by his brother, Horace Smith, Esq. 1840.

in "Blue Beard;" Tom Moore, the poet, playing *Peeping Tom*; and Kenny, the dramatist, *Delaval*.

GRAVES OF GENIUS.—Mrs. Jordan sleeps at St. Cloud; Astleys (father and son), in the Cemetery of Père la Chaise; John Edwin (the Liston and Mathews combined of his day), at St. Paul's, Covent Garden; Kemble (John), at Lausanne; Suett, in the ground of St. Paul's Cathedral; Kean (without a stone to mark the spot), in Richmond churchyard; Elliston, in St. John's Church, Waterloo Road; old Johanna, at Bathwick (old) churchyard; Macklin lies under the chancel of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, in which churchyard his once boon companion Tom King rests; Tom D'Urfey,<sup>1</sup> in St. James's, facing the gate in Jermyn-street; Joe Miller, in the ground in Portugal Street; John Palmer (*THE Joseph Surface*), at Wootton, near Liverpool; Quin, at the Abbey Church, Bath; Wilks, near Macklin, not far from the grave of Wycherly, in the church of St. Paul, Covent Garden, where, nearly a century and a-half since, Joe Haynes was consigned to earth.

ELLISTON AND A COUNTRY ACTOR.—Elliston coming down for a single night to act at Birmingham (then his own theatre), scarcely knew a member of his own company. The play was "The Wonder," and the representative of *Colonel Briton* was woefully imperfect. Elliston reprimanded him harshly. To the manager's great astonishment, the actor retorted with a torrent of abuse, and the assurance that if Elliston added another word he would kick him into the pit! Those who casually knew the then lessee of Drury might imagine that he discharged the actor on the spot. No such thing; he rushed to B——, then stage-manager, and asked who the performer was. "Mr. A——." "A great man—a very great man, sir," said Elliston. "He threatened to kick me, the lessee of Drury Lane: such a man as that must go to London, sir; he mustn't waste his energies here." He there and then engaged the actor for Drury Lane Theatre.

KELLY AND POPE.—Pope, who came out in London in 1784, and was then about twenty-seven years old, was very solicitous, towards the latter part of his life, of being reputed much younger than he really was—a desire that Mick Kelly thought proper on all occasions to thwart. One morning

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas D'Urfey, a comic dramatist, died February, 1723.—ED.

Pope called, and Kelly put into his hands a letter with the Dublin post-mark, addressed to Pope, "To the care of M. Kelly, Esq." After many thanks, Pope opened and read the effusion, which was from an unknown correspondent, begging a favour for his grandson, reminding Pope how often he (P.) in Dublin had patted the writer on the head, and praised his aptitude as a scholar, &c. &c., and concluding with the following paragraph :—" I am now *eighty years* of age, and do hope that the friend and patron of my *boyhood* will not desert me or mine in my declining years." Nothing but Kelly's good dinners could ever have tempted Pope to forgive this.

JEW DAVIS.<sup>1</sup>—Mr. Davis, celebrated as a singer, had not an equal reputation as an actor; however, he engaged at a certain theatre as low comedian, and the character he made his *début* in was the *Gravedigger* in "Hamlet." Mr. Davis's style was not *peculiarly* Shakspearian, and one or two hints from the stage-manager at rehearsal were not taken with the spirit of suavity in which they were offered. The whisper went round that this would be an "oyster part"—*i.e.*, the actor open and close the same night; and Davis, it appears, determined to turn the laugh at least against his manager. He had been told, when the funeral procession was about to enter, "to open the churchyard gate with his spade, and remain during the scene in the background," the stage-manager enforcing his direction with "that's the stock-business, Mr. Davis." The scene was over, the procession entering, but no Davis at the gate: the gravedigger had very quietly laid himself down in the grave; to all remonstrances he coolly replied, "*This is my business, Mr. —,*" and the scene was at last concluded by clapping the coffin of the dead *Ophelia* on the carcase of the quick gravedigger.

SOWERBY.<sup>2</sup>—Sowerby, whose mind was always in a ferment, made frequently most ludicrous mistakes, and as they were done during moments of abstraction, he remained wholly unconscious of the cause that had probably convulsed his auditors. In the "Iron Chest," *Sir Edward* says, Act iii. scene last)—

"*Sir Edw.* You may have noticed in my library a chest?

[*At which Wilford starts, when Sir Edward proceeds.*

You see he changes at the word.

*Wilford.* And well I may!"

<sup>1</sup> Davis died in 1824.

<sup>2</sup> Sowerby died in 1814.

Sowerby, whose thoughts were far away, transposed the prominent words in the first line thus:—

“ You may have noticed in *my chest* a library !”

At which *Wilford* was seized with an irrepressible fit of laughter. Mr. Sowerby, however, either did not, or would not, notice it, but went on—

“ You see he *changes* at the word.”

But when *Wilford* exclaimed—

“ And well I may !”

the auditors appeared so perfectly to agree with him, that their laughter awakened Mr. Sowerby to “ a sense of his situation.”

### Actors and Actresses.

W. BOND (died 1735).—An actor named Bond, being delighted with the “ Zaire ” of Voltaire, employed a poet of reputation to translate it into English. He then endeavoured, but fruitlessly, to get it acted at Drury Lane. Upon this, he resolved to represent it privately among his friends, and chose the part of *Lusignan* for himself. It was performed in a concert-room in York Buildings. Neither pains nor expense were spared to render the performance respectable, and the assembly was numerous and elegant. Bond’s acting excited, by its excellence, universal admiration: so passionately did he identify himself with the character, that on the discovery of his daughter he fainted. Here the applause was redoubled, but finding his swoon prolonged, the audience grew uneasy. With some difficulty he was placed in his chair, when he faintly spoke, extended his arms to receive his children, raised his eyes to heaven, and died.

JOHN COOPER (born 1770).—Mr. Cooper is in person of the middle size; his features are not strongly expressive of any particular character; there is more softness and playfulness than spirit or energy about them; yet with artful management they may suit either tragedy or comedy—naturally inclinable perhaps to the latter. His voice is in tone pleasing, capable of more modulation than he seems to know how to give it; firm and extensive in the upper division, in the lower musical and articulate.—*Monthly Mirror*, 1795.

MRS. GREEN (died 1791).—Mrs. Green had humour even to drollery. She had something of Shuter and something of her father. These were not exactly the talents of Miss Pope; who, however, though perfectly unaffected herself, exceeded Mrs. Green in assuming finesse and affectation.—*Dibdin.*

MRS. MARTYR (died 1807).—Mrs. Martyr was once a very great favourite, but never a very great actress or very great singer. When she was most admired was when she was much younger, for then she was a pretty woman, and she bears the vestiges of beauty about her to this day. She had always a strong, shrill, and powerful voice, but never arrived at any eminence as a singer. There is a kind of *hicky-hocky* she often makes use of at the top of her voice which renders it ludicrous. Catley had much of this effect, but she had a better voice than Mrs. Martyr, and she carried herself through her characters by eccentricity; yet she never played any character well except *Juno* in the “Golden Pippin,” or *Euphrosyne* in “Comus.” There seemed to be a natural hilarity in her composition which made those characters sit well upon her, and she was always received by the audience in them with uncommon applause. Mrs. Martyr saw perhaps what kind of effect was produced by Catley’s adopting that kind of acting and singing, and fell into the same manner, most likely from her affection to the style, and has in some measure succeeded, but is by no means so truly *ridiculous* as Catley was.—*C. H. Wilson, 1801.*

NEALE.—Neale was a sort of grotesque actor, whose peculiar talent was suited only to some very peculiar characters, in which he was sure to excel everybody else. Mr. Garrick, when he was under some difficulty how to distribute a part, used to say, “Come, I will give it to Neale, for I am sure he will make more of it than anybody can.”

SANDFORD.—Sandford is supposed to have been the completest and most natural performer of a villain that ever existed. The public identified him with the infamous characters he personated, and could not endure him in any part in which there was the remotest hint of integrity. In a new play, an author had allotted Sandford a character full of rectitude. The audience, who had been accustomed to see Sandford in parts of a contrary cast, imagined that all this honesty was put on, and therefore applauded the author for his art and manage-

ment in having drawn the character of a villain in such dissimulating colours as would give great novelty and force to the *dénouement*. But when they came to find that no friend had been betrayed, no ruin plotted, no destruction accomplished, but, on the contrary, that Sandford turned out as honest a man at last as at first, they fairly damned the play as an imposition upon their understandings.—*Dibdin*.

ANNA SELINA STORACE (died 1824).—This excellent actress and theatrical singer was a pupil of Sacchini. Her eminence commenced about the year 1780, at the Opera at Florence, whence she was invited to Vienna by the Emperor in 1784, a salary being assigned to her of near 500*l.* per annum. She quitted Vienna after the Carnival of 1787, when she came to London, and in a short time ranked among the favourite comic performers and singers of our stage. She died near London about 1814.—*Ed.*

MISS TAYLOR (Mrs. Walter Lacy).—"Miss Taylor," says the *Theatrical Journal* of 1830, "has taken the town by surprise. Without the usual preliminary flourishes, she has burst upon us with a natural freshness and power that must at once secure her fame, and prove of signal advantage to the house (Covent Garden) which has been so fortunate as to engage her. If we speak of Miss Taylor as a singing actress, she is immeasurably beyond anything we have on our own stage (for we do not call Miss Kelly a singer). Miss Taylor's acting was throughout the effect of impulse; all her attitudes rational and noble, without being studied, her voice varying with the different passions which agitate her." Her next part was *Rosalind*, which remained a favourite with the town during her long career. This performance earned her the friendship and admiration of Jack Bannister, who begged Mr. Bartley to bring Miss Taylor to his box, when he reminded her that his admiration of her acting was rendered the more significant by his keen recollection of Mrs. Jordan's *Rosalind*. Miss Taylor's next original part was *Helen* in "The Hunchback," a performance which was unani- mously pronounced exquisite and unsurpassable. The author in his preface says, "Miss Taylor has laid me under deep obligations. With all her heart, and soul, and talent, she advocated my disputed pretensions to the favour of Thalia, and—may I be permitted to say—established them." On one occasion, Sheridan Knowles, who played the *Hunchback*, admired a rose in Miss Taylor's bosom. After the play she sent the flower to

him. In reply, he sent her the following lines, written on a piece of a letter :—

“ I take the flower, a flower more precious gives :  
 This withers in the cherishing—but that,  
 Embosom'd, still more gorgeous rich will grow.  
 So may it ! hue and sweet, ten thousand sweets  
 And hues ! to bless eternally the owner.”

[To Helen, from her Grateful Hunchback. 12 June, 1832.]

When, in later days, Covent Garden was about to close, a piece by Douglas Jerrold was proposed to be read on the morrow, but the morrow proving a Friday, Jerrold protested no piece of his should be either read or acted on that day. “Nell Gwynne” (the piece in question) was therefore read on the Saturday, and renewed the fortune of the theatre. Miss Taylor played *Nell Gwynne*, and both in the song “Buy my Oranges,” and at the end of the epilogue, was heartily applauded. She was also the original heroine in Jerrold’s “Housekeeper.” Miss Taylor played leading comedy, tragedy, and Vestris-business at Covent Garden, Drury Lane, or the Haymarket for twenty years, of which during the last twelve she acted as Mrs. Walter Lacy, shining especially in Shakspearian women. When Vestris produced “Hamlet,” the piece was delayed for a fortnight owing to Mrs. Lacy’s indisposition, Madame Vestris stating by way of apology that as she had gone to great expense in mounting the play, she would not present it without the best *Ophelia* she could procure.—*Walter Lacy*.

LADY THURLOW (Miss Bolton ; died 1830).—The first public appearance of Miss Mary Catherine Bolton, who in 1813 married Lord Thurlow, was at the Hanover Square Rooms (1806), where she sang. She was then drafted by Harris to Covent Garden, and took the character of *Polly* in “The Beggars’ Opera.” She is described as having a delicate figure, blonde in her complexion, with yellow hair. She died of consumption in 1830.

VERNON (died 1782).—Vernon was a good musician, and the best acting singer we ever had, if he may have been allowed the name of a singer, for it was little more than speaking musically, and acting with good effect. He was a compact figure, trod the stage elegantly, and always looked like a gentleman. He studied seriously in his closet, was in love with such parts as deserved affection ; he made use of no mummery or subterfuge, but he presented them to the world in their natural form



and shape ; nor did he ever disgrace the actor by resorting to contortion, or mutilate the language of the author by running away from his text and introducing (what is too commonly done upon the stage at present) any nonsensical ribaldry of his own.

WROUGHTON (died 1822).—Of those gentlemen who owe their success more to industry than genius, this gentleman is perhaps the first. He possesses none of those natural advantages called requisites, the want of which has deterred so many from the pursuit of the stage as a profession : his person being inelegantly formed, his voice inharmonious and confined, his face rotund and insipid, and his features void both of flexibility and expression—he has, nevertheless, contrived to make his way in the theatre, in spite of the deficiencies of nature and the opposition of management, where he has long held a situation of very enviable pre-eminence.—*Monthly Mirror*, 1795.

## A N E C D O T E S.

Griffiths.

(Died 1741.)

When Griffiths became an actor, he contracted a friendship with Mr. Wilks. Though Griffiths was very young, Wilks took him with him to London, and had him entered that season for a small salary. “The Indian Emperor” being ordered on a sudden to be played, the part of *Pizarro*, a Spaniard, was wanting, which Griffiths procured. Mr. Betterton being a little indisposed, would not venture out to rehearsal for fear of increasing his indisposition, to the disappointment of the audience, who had not seen our young stripling rehearse. But when he came ready at the entrance, his ears were pierced with a voice not familiar to him. He cast his eyes upon the stage, where he beheld a diminutive *Pizarro*, with a truncheon as long as himself. Betterton thereon steps up to Downes, the prompter, and cried, “Zounds, Downes ! what sucking Scaramouch have you sent us here ?” “Sir,” replies Downes, “he’s good enough for a Spaniard : the part is small.” Betterton returned, “If he had made his eyebrows his whiskers, and each whisker a line, the part would have been two lines too much for such a monkey

in buskins." Poor Griffiths stood on the stage near the door, and heard every syllable of the short dialogue, and by his fears knew who was meant by it, but, happily for him, he had no more to speak in that scene. When the first act was over, by the advice of Downes he went to make his excuse, with—"Indeed, sir, I had not taken the part but that I was alone out of the play!" "I, I!" replied Betterton with a smile; "thou art but the tittle of an *i*." Griffiths seeing him in no ill-humour, told him Indians ought to be the best figures on the stage, as nature had made them. "Very like," replied Betterton, "but it would be double death to an Indian cobbler to be conquered by such a weasel of a Spaniard as thou art! and after this night let me never see a truncheon in thine hand again, unless to stir the fire!" Griffiths took Betterton's advice—laid aside the buskin and stuck to the sock, in which he made a figure equal to most of his contemporaries.—*Chetwood*.

### Milward.

(Died 1741.)

Milward when young was apprenticed to an apothecary near the Strand. He was once ordered by his master to carry his prescriptions to a gentleman and lady ill of different maladies at the same time; the labels were wrongly directed, but he did not discover his mistake till the next day, when he carried other medicines to the same persons, and by his judgment in the operation soon found out his mistake. He was greatly terrified, but for fear of worse he let fall the phial he had in his hand, as by accident, ran back to his master, and told him what had been done. The master ordered more proper doses, the patients recovered, and all was well.

### Love.

When Love appeared at Drury Lane in the character of *Falstaff*, being a man of some genius, he used to puff constantly in the newspapers upon his excellency in the part, all which, however, availed but little, as he never could bring a full house. One Bignell, sitting with a few of the players at the Black Lion, had filled a pipe, the funnel of which was stopped, and after several attempts to light it he threw it down in a passion, saying, "Egad, gentlemen, I'm like your new *Falstaff*; I have

been puffing and puffing this long while past, but all to no purpose, for I am not able to draw."

### Quin.

It was Quin's custom to act *Falstaff* for his old friend Lacy Ryan's benefit every year, and this practice he continued till the loss of his teeth rendered his speech inarticulate; he then swore he would never whistle *Falstaff*, and to make up for the loss of his annual performance he made his friend a present of five hundred pounds.

A tragedy was written by one Brown, called "The Fatal Retirement." It was deservedly damned. This the author imputed to Quin, who refused to act in it. In revenge, he procured the constant attendance of some friends at the theatre, who, when Quin came forward in other parts, hissed him. At length, to put a stop to their harassing impudence, he one evening told the audience that he had read a play called "Fatal Retirement" before it was performed, and given the author his sincere opinion that it was the very worst play he ever read in his life, and for that reason had refused to act in it. This avowal confounded his annoyers, who from that night ceased to trouble him.

### Trefusis.

Mr. Joseph Trefusis was the original *Trapland* in "Love for Love," and a well-esteemed low comedian, and was famous for dancing an awkward country clown. He was an experienced angler. As he was fishing by the Liffey side, some friends of his were going in a boat, in order to embark for England. Joe, seeing them, called to them to take him in, that he might see them safe on board. He gave his fishing-rod to a friend on shore to take care of till his return; but Joe, it seems, was prevailed on by his companions to make the journey to London with them, with his fishing clothes upon his back, not a second shirt, and but seven shillings in his pocket. His companions left him at London, and Mr. Wilks found him gazing at the dial in the square at Covent Garden. He hardly knew him at first (as Mr. Wilks told me) but by his particular gait, which was beyond imitation. When he asked him how he came there, and in that pickle: "Hum! ha! why, faith, Bobby,"

replied Joe, "I only came from Dublin to see what it was o'clock at Covent Garden." However, Mr. Wilks new-clothed him, supplied him with money, and sent him back.—*Chetwood.*

Joe was so inimitable in dancing the clown that General Ingoldsby sent him five guineas from the box where he sat. Joe dressed himself next day, and went to the Castle to return thanks. The general was hard to be persuaded that it was the same person, but Joe soon convinced him by saying "I's the very mon, an't please your Excellency," and at the same time twirling his hat as he did in the dance, with his consummate foolish face and scrape. "Nay, now I am convinced," exclaimed the general, laughing, "and thou shalt not show such a face for nothing here." So he gave Joe five guineas more, which so well pleased him that he paid his compliments in his awkward, clownish manner, and, as Shakspeare says, "set the table in a roar."

### Garrick.

Garrick, on his return from the Continent, prepared an address to the audience, which he delivered previous to the play he first appeared in. When he came upon the stage, he was welcomed with three loud plaudits, finishing with a huzza. As soon as this unprecedented applause had a little subsided, he used every art of which he was so completely master to lull the tumult into a profound silence, and just as all was hushed to death, and anxious expectation sat on every face, old Cervetto, who was better known by the name of "Nosey," anticipated the very first line of the address by—aw—a tremendous yawn. A convulsion of laughter ensued, and it was some minutes before the wished-for silence could be again restored. That, however, obtained, Garrick delivered his address in that happy, irresistible manner in which he was almost sure to captivate his audience, and retired with applause such as was never better given nor better deserved. But the matter did not rest here. The moment he came off the stage he flew like lightning to the music-room, where, collaring astonished Nosey, he began to abuse him pretty vociferously.

"Wha—why—you old scoundrel—you must be the most infernal——"

“Oh, Mr. Garrick!” burst out Nosey, “vat is the matter—vat I haf do—oh Got, vat is it?”

“The matter! why you old, damned, eternal, senseless idiot—with no more brains than your infernal bass-viol—just at the—a—very moment I had played with the audience, tickled them like a trout, and brought them to the most accommodat-ing silence—so pat to my purpose—so perfect—that it was, as one may say, a companion for Milton’s visible darkness——”

“Inteed, Mr. Garrick, it vas no darkness.”

“Darkness! stupid fool! But how should a man of my reading make himself understood by—a—a—answer me, was not the whole house, pit, box, gallery, very still?”

“Yes sir, indeet; still as a mouse.”

“Well then, just at that very moment, did you not, with your infernal jaws extended wide enough to swallow a sixpenny loaf—yaw? Oh, I wish you had never shut your damned jaws again!”

“Sare, Mr. Garrick—only if you please hear me von vord. It is alvay the vay—it is indeed, Mr. Garrick—alvay the vay I go when I haf the greatest *rapture*, Mr. Garrick.”

The little great man’s anger instantly cooled. The cunning readiness of this Italian flattery operated exactly contrary to the last line of an epigram—“The honey was tasted and the sting forgot”—and it not only procured Nosey’s pardon, but forced a declaration from his patron that he ought to be forgiven for the wit of the defence.—*Dibdin*.

Whilst Garrick was one night performing the part of *Hamlet*, and when he was arrived at one of the most affecting scenes in that tragedy—the audience all mute attention—when even a pin might have been heard falling to the ground—all at once, to the astonishment of the spectators, Garrick was seen to burst out into a violent fit of laughter, and run suddenly off the stage: in a moment all the players followed his example. The audience, amazed at the strangeness of his conduct, cast their eyes around every corner of the house, when they immediately discovered the cause of Garrick’s merriment. A jolly round-faced butcher was seated in the front row of the pit, wiping his bald pate, from which the sweat flowed in copious streams: his sagacious mastiff, no doubt eager to enjoy, as well as his master, the admirable performance of the prince of tragedians, had placed his fore-feet upon the front rail of the orchestra, and was looking eagerly upon the stage, his grave phiz dignified by his master’s

full-bottomed wig. The audience found it impossible to retain their gravity at this ludicrous sight; the loudest peals of laughter burst from the pit, the boxes, and the galleries; and it was a great while ere the performers could again resume that gravity necessary for performing a tragedy so deeply interesting.

Garrick had one evening quitted Mrs. Garrick in her box at Drury Lane Theatre, saying, as he often did, "I shall be back in a few minutes." A prologue was spoken; Mrs. Garrick was in full sight of the speaker, but thought him to be a stranger till her little dog, who was with her, called her attention by showing signs of great joy, and not until then she knew it to be Mr. Garrick who was speaking.

### Tom Cooke.

When Stephen Kemble was manager of the theatre at Durham, news of one of Nelson's victories reached the city, and an order was issued for a general illumination. The tragedy of "George Barnwell" had been announced for that night's performance, but Kemble, guessing the scanty audience he would have to play before, asked Cooke to take his place as *Old Barnwell*. Cooke, remarkable for his thick lisp, begged to be excused, affirming the difficulty he found in committing a part to memory in a short time. Stephen, however, insisted, pointing out that the character needed no study at all, *Old Barnwell* not being on the stage ten minutes together. "Here," said he, "here's the book; you can manage to get a line or two into your head to speak as you enter, and read the rest, for *Old Barnwell* is supposed to be reading—in fact, just enough to give *George* an opportunity of killing you; then you must add a few words when you die—say anything, for there will be few people in the house to hear you." Cooke, with great reluctance, consented. At the proper time he stalked on, book in hand, spoke the words required, and was stabbed; but in falling, the book unluckily fell with him, and wanting words, the murdered man could see no alternative but to die and make no sign. Meanwhile, *George Barnwell*, who supported him, growing impatient, whispered him to say "anything," as Kemble had suggested; on which, Cooke, taking off his little three-cornered hat, and tossing it in the air, shouted in his deepest bass and thickest lisp, *Nelson for ever!*

Not Garrick's or Siddons's finest stroke ever produced a louder roar of applause than these words ; and amid the uproar Cooke died satisfactorily.

### Mrs. Powell.

After Boaden had read his "Aurelia and Miranda" in the green-room of Drury Lane Theatre, he observed he knew nothing so terrible as reading a piece before a critical audience. "I know one thing much more terrible," said Mrs. Powell. "What can that be?" asked Boaden. "To be obliged to sit and hear it."

### Townshend.

Townshend, of Covent Garden Theatre, being once appointed to a part in a pantomime in which he was to ascend in a cloud while singing, exclaimed: "It may be a flight of the poet's, but curse me if it shall be a flight of mine."

### Vernon.

On one of the first nights of the opera of "Cymon," at Drury Lane, a dissatisfied critic, when Mr. Vernon began the last air in the fourth act,

"Torn from me ! torn from me ! which way did they take her?"

immediately sang in the exact time of the air, to the astonishment of the audience,

"Why, towards Long Acre, towards Long Acre !"

Vernon was for the moment stunned ; but recovering himself, he sang in rejoinder,

"Ho ! ho ! did they so ? then I'll overtake her ! I'll soon overtake her !"

and precipitately ran off amid the plaudits of the whole house.

### Astley.

When Harris was getting up a pantomime at Covent Garden, application was made to old Astley for the loan of some horses. When he had correctly understood the nature of the request, after a variety of incongruous and unintelligible exclamations, occasioned by his indignation lest his horses should be dis-

graced by appearing on the stage, he vociferated, "Here's your works! want my horses to manœuvre upon Common Garden stage. Why, damme, 'tis *scandalous magnesia*. Sir, will Mr. Harris lend me Mrs. Siddons to sing in my amphitheatre?"

### Mongozzi.

One of the singular slips cited in connexion with the French stage was made by Mongozzi, an actor of the old Variétés. The farce to be performed was called "The Piece without an A" ("Pièce sans A"). The author had written it without once using that letter—a feat which presents numerous difficulties in French, similar to that which has now and then been attempted and accomplished in English of writing a song without a sibilant, or without the letter *s*—which is, after all, something more difficult than dancing a hornpipe in fetters. To see the French piece a considerable number of spectators had assembled; the audience did not expect a play of any merit, but they were curious to find how one of any length could be carried on without any use of what is in constant use in French phrases, the letter *a*. At the rising of the curtain, Duval and Mongozzi entered from different sides of the stage, and the latter, on seeing the former, greeted him with "Ah, monsieur, vous voilà!" While the house broke into a roar of laughter, Mongozzi was corrected by the prompter, and he recommenced more correctly with "Eh, monsieur, vous voici!" Certainly, in a piece which boasted of having no *a* in it, the actor slipped drolly when he exclaimed, "Ah, sir, here you are!" instead of "Eh, sir, you here, then?"

### Actors' Memories.

Very few actors have bad memories. Not long since, in the suddenly discovered absence of an actress, in a farce—the curtain was just about to rise—a young lady who had never played the part was asked to "go on," and she readily consented. She took the book in her hand, learnt a few lines at the wings, carried them with her on to the stage, learned a few more as she went to the back, busying herself apparently with what was on the chimneypiece, and came down to the front with what her memory gathered. The audience were unaware of the feat which was being performed, and it was accomplished with only one poor slip.



### “Vivat Rex.”

In the early period of the English drama it was customary for the actors, at the end of a piece, to pray for the King and Queen. This prayer made part of the epilogue, and hence the addition of *Vivat Rex* to the playbills of most ages but our own.

### Delane.

Delane, an actor of great merit, and a valuable member of society, had two peculiarities upon the stage which Garrick took off, and rendered him so ridiculous that he was constantly laughed at. Having generous though weak feelings, Mr. Delane took to drinking, and in reality broke his heart.

### Kemble and Lewis.

Kemble and Lewis chancing to be at Dublin at the same time, were both engaged by the manager for one night's performance in “Leon” and “The Copper Captain.” Their announcement was coupled with the following odd passage:—“They never performed together in the same piece, and in all human probability they never will again. This evening is the summit of the manager's *climax*. He has constantly gone higher and higher in his efforts to delight the public; beyond this it is not in *nature* to go.”

### Drama in America.

The first drama performed in Boston was in 1750. The novelty made such a crowd and so much disturbance, that the Legislature passed a law prohibiting theatrical entertainments, as tending to unnecessary expense, the increase of impiety, a contempt for religion.

### Foote.

When Macklin gave lectures on the drama, Foote being one evening present, talking and laughing very loud just before the lecture began, Macklin, offended, called out rather pettishly, “Sir, you seem to be very merry there; but do you know what I am going to say now?” “No, sir,” said Foote; “pray do you?”

Foote was once walking in Paris with a conceited Frenchman, who had been boasting his country's superiority over England. Coming to the Seine, he pointed to it, saying, "Now, as to a river, you have nothing like this in London." To which Foote replied: "We had just such another lately (alluding to the Fleet-ditch), but we have filled it up, not having any use for it."

When some one was lamenting Foote's unlucky fate in being kicked in Dublin, Johnson said he was glad of it. "He is rising in the world," added he; "when he was in England, no one thought him worth kicking."

Foote, Garrick, and Johnson once went together to Bedlam. Johnson, who was much affected at the sight of so much human misery, withdrew to a corner to meditate, where he threw himself into so many strange attitudes, and drew his face into such odd shapes, that Foote whispered Garrick to know "how they should contrive to get him out."

### Catalani.

When Catalani visited Hamburg, Schevenke, the chief musician there, criticized her somewhat severely. She answered by abusing him roundly, saying, "When God has given to a mortal such marvellous talent as I possess, people ought to applaud and honour it as a miracle, and it is a sin to depreciate such a gift from heaven."

### Penkethman.<sup>1</sup>

D'Urfev, the lyric poet, stuttered extremely when in a passion, though he could speak an oration, read a scene in a play, or sing any of his own songs or dialogues without the least hesitation. He came one morning to the rehearsal a little disturbed about a pending benefit play, and asked in a passion, "W, w, w, where, w, w, was Mr. W, Wilks?" Penkethman answered, "H, he, d, d, didn't, kn, kn, know." But the choleric poet broke his head for his joke; and it was with great difficulty the bard was appeased.

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<sup>1</sup> Died 1740.

## Wignell.

Wignell, who was an under actor, was remarkable for making tragedy comic, and comedy tragic, and was, in consequence, a wonderful favourite with the clodhoppers in the country. Fishing one day in a place in the country, some labourers came by who could not but admire the pompous dexterity with which he played with his prey. "There, there!" said one. "Let un aloane," said another; "if a do but fish as well as a do act, he wanna leave a fish i' th' milldam."

When Sheridan reproduced "Cato," it had been the custom for many years to omit Pope's fine prologue. Wignell, who acted *Portius*, on the curtain rising, commenced the play at once with—

"The dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,  
And heavily in clouds," &c.

But he was interrupted with cries for the prologue. Wignell, renowned for his imperturbability, paused a moment, and then turning his face from *Marcus*, whom he was addressing, to the audience, said in as lofty a tone and solemn a measure as if he were reciting lines in his speech—

"Ladies and gentlemen, there has not been  
A prologue spoken to this play for years—

and then to *Marcus*, "the great, the important day," and so on.

## Mrs. Oldfield.

Mrs. Oldfield's vanity is illustrated by her wish that she should be well dressed in her coffin. Accordingly, "as the nicety of dress was her delight when living, she was as nicely dressed after her decease, being, by Mrs. Saunders's direction, thus laid in her coffin; she had on a very fine Brussels lace head; a Holland shift, with tucker, and double ruffles of the same lace; a pair of new kid gloves; and her body wrapped up in a winding-sheet."

## Charles Kemble.

Charles Kemble, when he was once playing *Shylock*, instead of asking "Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?" overturned the text by exclaiming, "Shall I lay surgery upon my poll?"

## Holland and Powell.

When Mrs. Griffiths' "Platonic Wife" was produced, before the first act was over it was seen to be a dead failure. At the end of the third act the performers grew more impatient than the audience; and at last Holland and Powell, thrusting their heads out from opposite sides of the stage, when the "drop" was down, earnestly entreated the spectators to prevent the heavy performance from going any further, by damning it then and there.

## Queer Interruption.

A well-known actress, playing at Bath in the character of *Mrs. Beverley*, had by her powers hushed the house into the deepest possible stillness, when a little Jew, starting up, cried out fiercely, "My Got! who was dat shpiti in my eye?"

## Licensing Act.

This Act was passed in 1736. A piece entitled "The Golden Rump" was presented to Mr. Giffard, then manager of Goodman's Fields Theatre, by a stranger. Looking over the play, Giffard perceived it to be charged with scurrilous abuse of the Parliament and the King. He submitted it to Sir Robert Walpole, then Premier, who, commending his loyalty, purchased the MS.; and when objection was made to the Act, read portions of the play to the House with such effect as to get the Bill passed without opposition. The whole was, no doubt, a contrivance on the part of the minister, "The Golden Rump" being probably written by Giffard himself, or some person hired for the purpose by Walpole.

## "Polly Peachum."

This character, the heroine of "The Beggars' Opera," has led to the peerage three of its representatives—*i.e.*, Miss Fenton (Duchess of Bolton), Miss Bolton (Lady Thurlow), and Miss Stephens (Countess of Essex).

## Liston.

Shortly after Liston had made a popular hit in Fielding's "Tom Thumb," at the Haymarket Theatre, he dined one day in the City; after the dessert, and before the ladies had left the room, the whole party arose, and the tables, chairs, &c., were set back, and the guests left standing, in order, as the host explained, "to make room for Mr. Liston to favour the company, before the children went to bed, with *Lord Grizzle's dancing song*." As may be supposed, Liston *danced off* as soon as he was able from the house of his polite friend, never to return.

## Stephen Kemble.

Mr. Kemble, in 1819, wrote the following acknowledgment of a present:—

“TO MY DEAR FRIEND KEAN, ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH A  
GOLD SNUFF-BOX.

“Thy gift, my friend, I value, not the ore;  
Nor yet the artist's masterly design.  
But truth and talent love I ten times more,  
And these rare qualities I know are thine.

“STEPHEN GEORGE KEMBLE.

“*Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,*  
“*May 19, 1819.*”

## Freedom of the Theatre.

From the *Gentleman's Magazine*:—"Tuesday, 6th February, 1739.—At Covent Garden Theatre one John Somerford tumbled from the upper gallery into the pit, being ten yards, without receiving any hurt. When the play was over, he told Mr. Rich that he had made himself free of the gallery, and hoped he should have the liberty of going into it when he pleased. To which Mr. Rich consented, provided he never again came out of it in the same abrupt manner."

## Rich.

Rich, the inventor of pantomimes, felt and avowed for what is called the regular drama the most supreme contempt; and

this he carried so far that he was sometimes heard to say, after looking through the hole in the green curtain, and seeing a crowded house assembled to witness the performance of a tragedy, "What! you are there, you fools, are you? Well, much good may it do you."

### Epilogue.

*Valeria*, daughter to *Maximin*, having killed herself for the love of *Porphyrus*, in "Tyrannic Love," when she was to be carried off by the bearers, strikes one of them a box on the ear, and speaks to him thus:—

"Hold! are you mad? you damned confounded dog,  
I am to rise and speak the epilogue."

### Abraham Ivory.

In old plays we come across names of actors of whom no trace beyond such mention remains. But sometimes some bygone chronicler devotes a line or two to a player; and often the brief sentence is as pregnant as an exhaustive biography. Here is a case in point. In "The Rehearsal," at the end of the first act, the *1st Player* says:—

"Sir, Mr. Ivory is not come yet, but he'll be here presently; he's but two doors off."

Turning to the Key to "The Rehearsal," we find: "Abraham Ivory had formerly been a considerable actor of women's parts; but afterwards stupefied himself so far with drinking strong waters, that before the first acting of this farce he was fit for nothing but to go of errands; for which, and mere charity, the company allowed him a weekly salary."

### Mrs. Reeve.

The only hint of personal indiscretion ascribed to Dryden is that of having eaten tarts with Mrs. Reeve, the actress, in the Mulberry Gardens, which, if true, amounts to nothing, but which, trivial as it is, must be regarded as apocryphal. To eat tarts with an actress did not necessarily involve any grave delinquency in a poet who was writing for the theatre; yet upon this slight foundation—for I have not been able to discover

that it rests upon any other—a suspicion has been raised that Mrs. Reeve was his mistress. By way, however, of mitigating the odium of this unwarrantable imputation, it is added, that after his marriage Dryden renounced all such association. But his relations with Mrs. Reeve—if he ever had any—must have been formed after his marriage, as a reference to dates will show ; so that the supposititious scandal, as it has been transmitted to us, conveys its own refutation.—*R. Bell.*

### Macklin.

Garrick and Macklin frequently rode out together, and often baited at some of the public-houses on the Richmond road. Upon these occasions, whenever they came to a turnpike, or to settle the account of the luncheon, Garrick either had changed his breeches that morning and was without money, or else used to produce a 36s. piece, which made it difficult to change. Upon these occasions Macklin, to use his own phrase, stood “Captain Flashman”—that is, paid the charge. This went on for some time, when Macklin, finding that Garrick never took his turn of paying the expenses, or repaying those he had advanced for him, challenged him one day for a debt he owed him, and then pulled out a long slip of paper, in which the several disbursements were entered according to *date, place, and company*; “and which, sir,” said the veteran, “amounted to between thirty and forty shillings. The little fellow at first seemed surprised, and then would have turned it into a joke ; but I was serious, sir, and he paid me the money ; and after that we *jogged* on upon our own separate accounts.”—*Cooke.*

### Fielding.

Mr. Garrick once gave a dinner at his lodgings to Harry Fielding, Macklin, Howard, Mrs. Cibber, &c. &c. ; and vails to servants being much then the fashion, Macklin and most of the company gave Garrick’s man (David, a Welshman) something at parting—some a shilling, some half-a-crown, &c.—while Fielding very formally slipped a piece of paper in his hand, with something folded in the inside. When the company were all gone, David seeming to be in high glee, Garrick asked him how much he got. “I can’t tell you yet, sir,” said Davy ;

“here is half-a-crown from Mrs. Cibber, Got bless her ; here is a shilling from Mr. Macklin ; here is two from Mr. Howard, &c. ; and here is something more from the poet, Got pless his merry heart.” By this time Davy had unfolded the paper, when, to his great astonishment, he saw it contained no more than *one penny* ! Garrick felt nettled at this, and next day spoke to Fielding about the impropriety of jesting with a servant. “Jesting !” said Fielding with a seeming surprise ; “so far from it, that I meant to do the fellow a real piece of service, for had I given him a shilling or half-a-crown I knew you would have taken it from him, but by giving him only a *penny* he had a chance of calling it his own.”—*Cooke*.

## Macbeth.

So little did the players know of Shakspeare’s text before the time of Garrick, that Quin, after he had seen Garrick in the character of *Macbeth*, asked him where he got such strange and out-of-the-way expressions as

“The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac’d loon :  
Where got’st thou that goose-look ?”

This play, in particular, was grossly interpolated by Davenant, and held the stage from 1665 to 1744. Davenant not thinking the tragedy had ghosts enough, introduced the ghost of *Duncan*, and tacked on such rhymes as these :—

MACBETH (*solus*).

“She does from Duncan’s death to sickness grieve,  
And shall from Malcolm’s death her heart receive ;  
When by a viper bitten, nothing’s good  
To cure the venom but a viper’s blood.”

## Roxana.<sup>1</sup>

The Earl of Oxford fell in love with a handsome, graceful actress belonging to the Duke’s Theatre, who performed to perfection, particularly, the part of *Roxana* in a very fashionable

<sup>1</sup> This person has been supposed, both by Grammont and Thomas Davies, to have been Anne Marshall, a celebrated actress, about whom, and her sister Beck, Pepys has much to say in his “Diary.” Lord Braybrooke, however, justly points out that whilst Pepys invariably calls the Marshalls by their proper name, he speaks of Lord Oxford’s mistress as “the first or old Roxalana, who had quitted the stage.”



new play ; insomuch that she ever after retained that name. This creature being both very virtuous and very modest, or, if you please, wonderfully obstinate, proudly rejected the presents and addresses of the Earl of Oxford. The resistance inflamed his passion ; he had recourse to invective, and even spells, but all in vain. This disappointment had such an effect upon him that he could neither eat nor drink. This did not signify to him ; but his passion at length became so violent that he could neither play nor smoke. In this extremity Love had recourse to Hymen. The Earl of Oxford, one of the first peers of the realm, is, you know, a very handsome man ; he is of the Order of the Garter, which greatly adds to an air naturally noble. In short, from his outward appearance you would really suppose he was possessed of some sense, but as soon as you hear him speak you are perfectly convinced to the contrary. This passionate lover presented her with a promise of marriage in due form, signed with his own hand. She would not, however, rely upon this ; but the next day she thought there could be no danger when the Earl himself came to her lodgings, attended by a clergyman and another man for a witness. The marriage was accordingly solemnized with all due ceremonies in the presence of one of her fellow-players, who attended as a witness on her part. You will suppose, perhaps, that the new Countess had nothing to do but to appear at Court according to her rank, and to display the Earl's arms upon her carriage. This was far from being the case. When examination was made concerning the marriage, it was found to be a mere deception ; it appeared that the pretended priest was one of my lord's trumpeters, and the witness his kettle-drummer. The parson and his companion never appeared after the ceremony was over, and as for the other witness, he endeavoured to persuade her that the Sultana Roxana might have supposed, in some part or other of a play, that she was married. It was all to no purpose that the poor creature claimed the protection of the laws of God and man, both which were violated and abused, as well as herself, by this infamous imposition. In vain did she throw herself at the King's feet to demand justice ; she had only to rise up again without redress ; and happy might she think herself to receive an annuity of one thousand crowns, and to resume the name of Roxana instead of Countess of Oxford.—

*Count Grammont's Memoirs.*

## Bullock and Penkethman.

Mr. William Bullock and Mr. William Penkethman are of the same age, profession, and sex. They both distinguish themselves in a very particular manner under the discipline of the crab-tree, with this only difference, that Mr. Bullock has the more agreeable squall, and Mr. Penkethman the more graceful shrug. Penkethman devours cold chick with great applause; Bullock's talent lies chiefly in asparagus. Penkethman is very dexterous at conveying himself under a table; Bullock is no less active at jumping over a stick. Mr. Penkethman has a great deal of money; but Mr. Bullock is the taller man.—*Sir R. Steele.*

## Munden's Story.

“When I was very young, and looking still younger, I performed the part of *Old Philpot* in “*The Citizen*” to a respectable audience at Brighton, with great success; and it chanced on the next evening, being disengaged from any professional duty, I was introduced by the gentleman who principally patronized me, as *Mr. Munden*, into a club-room full of company. On hearing my name announced, a nice, snug-looking, good-humoured personage laid down his pipe, and taking up his glass, said: ‘Here is to your health, young sir, and to *your father's health*. I saw him perform last night, and a very nice, clever old gentleman he is.’”

## G. A. Stevens.

When Stevens was a first actor in the Norwich company he performed the part of *Horatio* in “*The Fair Penitent*.” The *Calista* was a Mrs. B——, who had been long the celebrated heroine in tragedy, and the lady in high life in comedy. Mrs. B——, in her decline, sacrificed too often to the intoxicating god. In proportion as the action of the play advanced towards a conclusion, by endeavouring to raise her spirits with a cheerful glass, she became totally unfit to represent the character. In her last scene of *Calista*, it was so long before she died that Stevens, after giving her several hints, cried out, “Why don't you die, you fool?” She retorted, as loud as she could, “You robbed the British mail, you dog!” This spirited dialogue so

much amused the audience that much clapping ensued. The manager seeing no end to the merry business, dropped the curtain.

### John Palmer.

The celebrated actor, John Palmer, whose father was a bill-sticker, and who had occasionally followed the same humble occupation himself, being one evening strutting in the green-room in a pair of glittering buckles, a bystander remarked that they really resembled diamonds. "Sir," said Palmer, with some warmth, "I would have you know I never wear anything but diamonds!" "I ask your pardon," replied the other; "I remember the time when you wore nothing but *paste*." The laugh was much heightened by Bannister exclaiming, "Jack, why don't you *stick him against the wall*?"

### Lee Lewes.

Lee Lewes shooting on a field, the proprietor attacked him violently. "I allow no person," said he, "to kill game on my manor but myself; and I'll shoot you if you come here again." "What!" said Lewes, "I suppose you mean to *make game* of me?"

### Macklin.

Macklin, sitting one night at the back of the front boxes with a friend, a man stood up immediately before him, and his person being rather large, intercepted a sight of the stage. Macklin took fire at this, but managing his passion with more temper than usual, patted the individual on the shoulder with his cane, and gently requested him, "when anything entertaining occurred upon the stage, to let him and his friend be apprised of it; for you see, my dear sir," said he, "that at present we must totally depend upon your kindness."

### Mrs. Gibbs.<sup>1</sup>

A strange blunder was once made by Mrs. Gibbs, of Covent Garden, in the part of *Miss Sterling* in "The Clandestine

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<sup>1</sup> Died 1783.

Marriage." When speaking of the conduct of *Betty*, who had locked the door of *Miss Fanny's* room, and walked away with the key, Mrs. Gibbs said, "She has locked the key, and carried away the door in her pocket."

### Mrs. Davenport.

A similar blunder was once made by Mrs. Davenport, as *Mrs. Heidelberg*, who substituted for the original dialogue, "I protest there's a candle coming along the gallery *with a man in his hand!*"

### Miss Pope.

Miss Pope was rallied one evening by a certain actress, more noted for her gallantries than her professional talents, on the largeness of her shape; on which she observed, "I can only wish it, madam, as slender as your reputation."

### Barrymore.<sup>1</sup>

Barrymore happening to come late to the theatre, and having to dress for his part, was driven to the last moment, when, to heighten his perplexity, the key of his drawers was missing. "Dash it," said he, "I must have swallowed it." "Never mind," said Jack Bannister, "if you have, it will serve to open your chest."

### Dignum.

When "Henry VIII." was in rehearsal at Drury Lane Theatre, and John Kemble, who then acted *Cromwell*, in extolling the merits of Wolsey, came to this passage—

"Ever witness for him  
Those *twins* of learning that he raised in you,  
Ipswich and Oxford!"—

Dignum, who stood by, exclaimed, "Hang me if I knew that Cardinal Wolsey was *married* before!"

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<sup>1</sup> First appearance, 1782.

## Munden.

Munden, when confined to his bed and unable to put his feet to the ground, being told by a friend that his *dignified* indisposition was the laugh of the green-room, replied, "Though I love to laugh and make others laugh, yet I would much rather they would make me a *standing* joke."

## Kemble.

John Kemble, who was so minutely observant of the great dramatic canon, "suit the action to the word," that he would study before a glass the proper position of a finger even, seeing an actor *hold down* his head on his pronouncing "O heaven!" and *hold it up* on pronouncing "O earth!" said, "That fellow has committed a solecism with his head."

## Quin.

Quin was asked once what he thought of turtle-eating. "By Heaven!" he said, "it is a thousand pities that on such an occasion a man has not a stomach as long as the cable of a first-rate man-of-war, and every inch palate."

## Mrs. Salmon.

This lady was in her day a greater favourite than even Catalani. When the latter was at Bath, a lady applied for a ticket for one of the concerts to Vallabrique, not knowing he was Catalani's husband. Vallabrique told her that Catalani's attractions were so great that he feared he could not procure her a ticket. "Oh," said the lady, "I don't care about Catalani; *I want to hear Mrs. Salmon.*"

## Effects of Confusion.

An actor, levelling his halberd to prevent *Richard* from impeding the progress of *Henry's* funeral, instead of saying "My lord, stand back and let the coffin pass," cried, in his hurry and confusion, "My lord, stand back and let the parson cough."

## Cherry.

Andrew Cherry, having received an offer of an engagement from a manager who had not behaved altogether well to him, sent him word that "he had been bit by him once, and he was resolved that he should not make two bites of A. Cherry."

## Rich.

Garrick once asked John Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, how much he thought his theatre would hold. "I could tell you to a shilling," said Rich, "if you would play *Richard* in it."

## Handel.

Great writers and poets have not always been distinguished for their musical ear. Pope declared that "Handel's finest performances gave him no more pleasure than the airs of a common ballad-singer." Neither Johnson, Scott, nor Byron had the least ear for music.

## Elliston's Conceit.

"When you draw your parallels of great actors," said Elliston, addressing Moncrieff, whom he had requested to become his biographer, "you will not fail to recollect that Garrick could not sing—I can. That Lewis could not act tragedy—I can. That Mossop could not play comedy—I can. That Kean never wrote a drama—I have. Do not forget these things, sir, but in mentioning my name you cannot help associating with my name all that is memorable in the age in which I flourished."

## John Heywood, the Jester.

He seems to have been a man of great wit and pleasantry, and very well calculated to innovate, as he did, upon the mysteries and moralities. He was the friend and favourite of many eminent men in his time, particularly of Sir Thomas More, who introduced him to the Princess Mary. She, taking a fancy to his lively wit, presented him to the King, Henry VIII., whose jester he became. He was a bigoted Roman Catholic;

and it is told of him that during the martyrdoms at Smithfield he would entertain Queen Mary by narrating droll stories to lighten the gloom her bloody acts shadowed her with. When Elizabeth came to the throne, he hastened from the country, fearing that his hypocrisy might be detected. He died at Mechlin about 1565, the year after Shakspeare was born. He wrote the following plays :—

1. "A Play between John the Husband, Tyb the Wife, and Sir Johan the Priest."
2. "A Mery Play between the Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate and Neighbour Plat."
3. "A Play called the four P's; being a new and a very merry Interlude between a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar."
4. "A Play of Genteelness and Nobility."
5. "A Play of Love."
6. "A Play of the Weather."—*Dibdin*.

### Heidegger.

Heidegger, Master of the Revels in King George I.'s reign, was famous for his singular ugliness. The following trick was once played off on him. The Duke of Montague, having invited him to a tavern, made him drunk, and when he was asleep had a mould of his face taken, from which was made a mask, and the Duke provided a man of the same stature to personate Heidegger at the next masquerade, when the King, who was apprised of the plot, was to be present. On his Majesty's entrance, Heidegger as usual bade the band strike up "God save the King." But no sooner was his back turned than the impostor bade them play "Over the water to Charley." The company were thunderstruck, and Heidegger ran to set the matter to rights, swearing that the band were drunk or mad, and ordered them most peremptorily to recommence "God save the King." The moment he retired, the false Heidegger commanded "Over the water to Charley" again. The band thought the master mad, but durst not disobey. This went on, to the delight of the King and his courtiers, till, after the band had been kicked out of the orchestra, and their commanding officer driven half frantic, the counterfeit presentment stepped forward and assured the King that he was the true Heidegger, and that the other was only the devil in his likeness. The two

men were now confronted. The King pretended to incline towards the pretensions of the false Heidegger, until the Duke of Montague, in pity to the poor tormented fellow, who was now stark mad with vexation, made the impostor unmask, and the joke was laughed off; but not until Heidegger had obtained a promise that the mask should be melted down in his presence.

### Wewitzer.

It is discreditable to the memory of Mrs. Coutts, afterwards the Duchess of St. Albans, that when Wewitzer the actor, who had been of great use to her during the courtship of Mr. Coutts, was in want, she turned a deaf ear to his application for relief, and allowed him to die almost of starvation in a garret. Some conception of this lady's fortune may be gathered when it is known that she left to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts her fortune, which it is said amounted in cash to 1,800,000*l.*

### Liston.

The following advertisement from Liston appeared in the newspapers in June, 1817, on the approach of his benefit:—  
*“Mr. Liston to the Editor.*—Sir,—My benefit takes place this evening at Covent Garden Theatre, and I doubt not will be splendidly attended. Several parties in the first circle of fashion were made the moment it was announced. I shall perform *Fogrun* in ‘The Slave,’ and *Leporello* in ‘The Libertine;’ and in the delineation of those arduous characters I shall display much feeling and discrimination, together with great taste in my dresses and elegance in my manners. The audience will be delighted with my exertions, and testify by rapturous applause their most decided approbation. When we consider, in addition to my professional merits, the *loveliness of my person* and *fascination of my face*, which are only equalled by the amiability of my professional character, having never pinched my children, nor kicked my wife out of bed, there is no doubt but this PUFF will not be inserted in vain. I am, sir, your obedient servant, J. LISTON.”



## Colley Cibber.

This player, who was often deficient in his part from making too free with the bottle, was one evening sustaining a character in a Roman tragedy. When he came to this passage, "I was then in Rome," his memory failed him, and after several ineffectual attempts to recover the passage, and receiving no assistance from the prompter, he started aside, and seizing the fellow by the collar, fairly dragged him forward, and pinching his ear, exclaimed, "Hang you, you scoundrel, what was I doing in Rome? Why don't you tell me?"

## On Mrs. Abington.

(By HORACE WALPOLE.)

Scarce had our tears forgot to flow,  
By Garrick's loss inspired,  
When Fame, to mortalize the blow,  
Said Abington's retired.

Sad with the news, Thalia mourn'd ;  
The Graces joined her train ;  
And nought but sighs for sighs return'd,  
Were heard at Drury\*Lane.

But see—'tis false ! in Nature's style  
She comes, by Fancy dress'd ;  
Again gives Comedy her smile,  
And Fashion all her taste.

## Tarleton.

Tarleton having run up a score at an alehouse in Sandwich, made a servant-boy accuse him as a seminary priest, and so contrived that the officers of justice, when they came in search of him, found him on his knees crossing himself. These vigilant ministers of justice, fancying they should make a good thing of this discovery, paid his reckoning and conveyed him to London ; but when he came before Fleetwood, the Recorder, who knew him, and recognised in this trick one of the well-known exploits of Tarleton, he not only discharged him, but courteously entertained him in return for his wit.

## Theatrical Riot.

In 1749 the following advertisement appeared in the papers:—

“At the New Theatre in the Haymarket, this present day, to be seen a person who performs the several most surprising things following, viz. :—First, he takes a common walking-cane from any of the spectators, and thereon he plays the music of every instrument now in use, and likewise sings to surprising perfection. Secondly, he presents you with a common wine bottle, which any of the spectators may first examine; this bottle is placed on a table in the middle of the stage, and he (without any equivocation) goes into it, in the sight of all the spectators, and sings in it; during his stay in the bottle any person may handle it, and see plainly that it does not exceed a common tavern bottle. Those on the stage or in the boxes may come in masked habits (if agreeable to them), and the performer (if desired) will inform them who they are.

Stage, 7s. 6d. Boxes, 5s. Pit, 3s. Gallery, 2s.

To begin half-an-hour after six o'clock.”

A great crowd assembled, and sat patiently till nearly seven o'clock, when, finding no performance to commence, they proceeded to raise their cat-calls. On this a person came forward who promised the audience their money should be returned if the performer did not appear. A man shouted out that if they would come again the next night, at doubled prices, the conjuror would go into a pint bottle. A candle was thrown on the stage, which was the signal for a row. In the rush to escape among the more peaceable, the Duke of Cumberland lost his diamond-hilted sword, on which a cry was raised that “Billy the Butcher had lost his knife.” Boxes and benches were then torn up, the curtains and scenes torn down, and an immense bonfire made of them opposite the theatre entrance. Next day the manager wrote a letter to the papers complaining of the loss of his property, and protesting that he was the dupe of an impostor. Samuel Foote is said to have been the wag on this occasion.

## Settle.

Elkanah Settle, who was educated at Trinity College, Oxford, and who was at one time the rival of Dryden, having great lords

for his patrons, and great ladies for his readers, was in the last years of his life so reduced as to appear as a performer at a booth in Bartholomew Fair, and in a farce called "St. George of England," acted a dragon enclosed in a case of green leather of his own invention. Yet his "Empress of Morocco," performed at the Duke's Theatre, Dorset Gardens, met with a great success, was acted at court by peers and peeresses, excited the bitterest envy of Dryden, Crowne, and Shadwell, was defended by the Duke of Buckingham and others, and was, I believe, the first play "adorned with sculptures." He died in a work-house. I have read, though I cannot quote my authority, that at one time his way of picking up a living was by writing elegies, with which he would wander about the streets, and wherever he saw a funeral at a door, would enter and endeavour to dispose of his elegiac doggrel to the mourners.

### William Jackson.

Of William Jackson, who died in 1803, aged 73, Churchill has bequeathed us the following character :

" Next Jackson came :—Observe that settled glare,  
That better speaks a puppet than a player :  
List to that voice ! did ever discord hear  
Sounds so well fitted to her untuned ear ?  
When to enforce some very tender part  
The right hand sleeps by instinct on the heart ;  
His soul, of every other thought bereft,  
Is anxious only where to place the left.  
He sobs and pants to soothe his weeping spouse—  
To soothe his weeping mother turns and bows.  
Awkward, embarrass'd, stiff, without the skill  
Of moving gracefully, or standing still ;  
One leg, as if suspicious of his brother,  
Desirous seems to run away from t'other."

### George Anne Bellamy.

The career of this celebrated actress and beautiful woman is singularly romantic, and should find a place in these pages. She was the daughter of a woman of the name of Seal, by Lord Tyrawley, and was born in 1773. She was put out to nurse till she was two years old, and at the age of four was placed in a convent at Boulogne. On her return to England she was received by her father and introduced to his circle ; and on his

being ordered abroad, he committed her to the care of a lady, with strict injunctions that she should not see her mother. She, however, disobeyed his lordship's request, and he renounced her. Soon after, Rich of Covent Garden, having heard her recite some passages in "Othello," offered her an engagement, and she made her first appearance as *Monimia*. Quin and the rest of the company treated her at the rehearsal with contempt, but her performance in the evening was much applauded; and Quin, as an apology for his misapprehension of her powers, offered her his sincere congratulations. She speedily achieved a reputation and made the acquaintance of people of high rank, among whom was Lord Byron, an ancestor of the poet, who made overtures to her which she indignantly rejected. Byron, enraged at her refusal, concerted a plot to carry her off. He procured a noble earl to call upon her in Southampton Street, who informed her that a Miss B——, an intimate friend of hers, was waiting for her in a coach, and wished to speak with her; but on going to the coach door, without hat or gloves, she was suddenly hoisted into it by his lordship and carried off. The coach stopped at the top of North Audley Street, at that period a lonely district; here she was compelled to alight and enter a house. The earl went away, but presently returned, accompanied by her own brother, to whom she flew for protection, but who repulsed her so violently that she fell to the ground insensible. On regaining consciousness she found herself attended by an old woman, who told her that her brother had well thrashed the earl for his conduct, and that he had withdrawn, vowing never again to see his sister, whom he believed had consented to the elopement. The woman added that he had threatened the earl with a prosecution, which had so alarmed his lordship that he had given orders for her instant removal. After various adventures she was engaged by Sheridan, in 1745, to accompany him as a theatrical recruit to Ireland, where she remained for two seasons, when she eloped with a Mr. Meatham, whom she left later on for a Mr. Calcraft. Him too she deserted for Digges the player, who married her, but whom she subsequently discovered to have had a wife living. Meanwhile her debts pressed heavily upon her, and to avert the arrests with which she was perpetually threatened, she took the name of Nash. Her next lover was Woodward, the harlequin, who on his death left her 7000*l.*, the whole of which, excepting 59*l.*, she lost through a lawsuit. She took leave of the

stage in 1784, and died 16th February, 1788. She printed in 1785 an apology for her life, of which the looseness hardly qualifies the interest. Her veracity, however, is to be suspected.

### Theophilus Cibber.

The annals of scoundrelism exhibit no worse illustration than the behaviour of this infamous person to his wife, the famous Mrs. Cibber. His extravagance had plunged him into difficulties; and in order to raise money he introduced a gentleman for whom he professed the greatest regard, to the embraces of his wife, and then commenced proceedings against them, laying the damages at 5000*l.* The jury found for the plaintiff, and gave him—some say a farthing, but I believe ten pounds damages.

### Damned by a Line.

Dr. Parr used to tell the following story;—A Mr. Greethead wrote a tragedy which he called “The Regent.” It came out whilst the great question of the Regency was pending, and so hotly debated by Pitt and Fox. Of course people flocked to see a play with such a name, thinking, no doubt, it related to the great party question of the day. But it was a Spanish story, and had nothing to do with the Regency; and everybody was disappointed. Mrs. Siddons, by her excellent acting, kept it up for some nights, but it was only a faint, languishing state of existence. At last some wags in the pit set up a laugh at some ridiculous passage in the dialogue, and then it sank for ever. Somebody asks one of the personages where he had left the king, and is answered thus:—

“ Within his tent, *surrounded* by a friend  
Or *two*, he sits and mocks at fortune.”

Now, if the word had been *attended*, all would have been well; but the idea of a man *surrounded* by a friend or two was most egregiously absurd.

### Miss O'Neill.

A finely-chiselled Grecian countenance, dark glossy hair, a skin smooth as monumental marble, and beautiful figure, gave her every advantage which genius could covet for awakening emotion; but to these were added the very mental qualities

which were fitted to bring them forth in full lustre. She was not majestic and queen-like, like Mrs. Siddons—nor stately and imposing, like Kemble; she was neither the tragedy queen nor the impassioned sultana. The tender woman was her real character, and there she never was surpassed. She had not the winning playfulness which allures to love, nor the fascinating coquetry which confirms it; but none ever possessed in a higher degree the bewitching tenderness which affection, when once thoroughly awakened, evinces in its moments of unreserve—or the heartrending pathos with which its crosses and sufferings in this world are portrayed. In the last scenes of *Fuliet*, *Belvidera*, and *Desdemona*, nothing could exceed the delicacy, power, and pathos of her performance. She was too young for *Queen Catherine*—too innocent for *Lady Macbeth*; but in *Mrs. Haller* her powers, aided by her beauty, shone forth in the highest perfection; and when she appeared on the boards of Covent Garden in that character with John Kemble, whose older aspect and bent figure so well suited her deserted husband as the *Stranger*, a spectacle was exhibited such as no one ever saw before, as no one will ever see again, and which did not leave a dry eye in the whole audience.—*Sir A. Alison*.

### *Perdita* (Mrs. Robinson).

For this lady, celebrated in her day for her beauty, her singing, and her amours, room must be made in a work treating of actors. Her maiden name was Darby. Her father had been a captain in the Russian navy. At fifteen she married Mr. Robinson, who shortly after their union got into the hands of the bailiffs. It is said Mrs. Robinson passed fifteen months with her husband in prison, during which time she had recourse to her pen in the hope of earning money. As a last resource from absolute penury, she turned her attention to the stage, and procured an engagement at Drury Lane Theatre. The Prince of Wales having seen her in the character of *Perdita*, fell in love with her, and in return for her favours settled 500*l.* a year on her, with 200*l.* on her daughter, for life. She then fell in love with a person who squandered her money, and whom she one night pursued in the dead of winter in a coach with the windows open, by which she lost the use of her limbs, and could never afterwards stand or walk. In Miss Hawkins's "Memoirs" a graphic account is given of this woman. "She was," she says,

“unquestionably very beautiful, but more so in the face than in the figure ; and as she proceeded in her course she acquired a remarkable facility in adapting her deportment to her dress. When she was to be seen daily in St. James’s Street or Pall Mall, even in her châriot, the variation was striking. To-day she was a *paysanne*, with her straw hat tied at the back of her head, looking as if too new to what she passed to know what she looked at. Yesterday, perhaps, she had been the dressed belle of Hyde Park, trimmed, powdered, patched, painted to the utmost power of rouge and white lead ; to-morrow she would be the cravated Amazon of the riding-house ; but be she what she might, the hats of the fashionable promenaders swept the ground as she passed. But in her outset ‘the style’ was a high phaeton, in which she was driven by the favoured of the day. Three candidates and her husband were outriders : and this in the face of the congregations turning out of places of worship. . . . . About the year 1778 she appeared on the stage, and gained from the character in which she charmed the name of *Perdita*. She then started in one of the new streets of Marylebone, and was in her altitude. Afterwards, when a little in the wane, she resided under protection in Berkeley Square, and appeared to guests as mistress of the house as well as of its master. Her manners and conversation were said by those invited to want refinement. . . . . I saw her on one day handed to her outrageously extravagant *vis-à-vis* by a man whom she pursued with a doting passion ; all was still externally brilliant : she was fine and fashionable, and the men of the day in Bond Street still pirouetted as her carriage passed them : the next day the vehicle was reclaimed by the maker ; the Adonis whom she courted fled her : she followed—all to no purpose. She then took up a new life in London, became literary. . . . . What was the next glimpse ? On a table in one of the waiting-rooms of the Opera House was seated a woman of fashionable appearance, still beautiful, ‘but not in the bloom of beauty’s pride ;’ she was not noticed except by the eye of pity. In a few minutes two liveried servants came to her, and they took from their pockets long white sleeves, which they drew on their arms ; they then lifted her up and conveyed her to her carriage—it was the then helpless, paralytic *Perdita*.” She died on the 26th of December, 1800.

## Shiel and Young.

Shiel, the dramatist, an Irishman, one day being present at a rehearsal where Charles Young was playing the hero, intending to give peculiar effect to a situation, cried out, "Here, Mr. Young, you must draw your sword, and find you have not got one!"

## Salaries of Actors.

A writer, in 1840, commenting on the state of the drama, asserts that the first blow to the destruction of the great theatres has been the extraordinary increase in the demands of all kinds of actors; and to illustrate the injustice of the salaries then given, gives the following statistics of the payments made to actors of a preceding generation:—Munden, Fawcett, Quick, Edwin, Jack Johnstone, and their class, received 14*l.* a week; William Lewis, a superb comedian, 20*l.* a week; Mathews, in 1812, wrote, "Now to my offer, which I think *stupendous* and *magnificent*, 17*l.* per week; John Kemble, 36*l.* a week; Miss O'Neill, after achieving a good provincial reputation, received 15*l.* at Covent Garden, and never more than 25*l.*; Cooke was paid 20*l.* a week; Mrs. Jordan, 31*l.* 10*s.* a week; Downton, 12*l.*, and never more than 20*l.* a week; Miss Stephens, 20*l.* a week. All these actors were first-rate. But looking down the list we find Macready, in 1839, receiving 25*l.* a night; Power (1840), 120*l.* a week! Farren, at the same period, 40*l.* a week. Liston, who began at 17*l.* a week, ended by receiving 20*l.* a night; and Miss Ellen Tree, "certainly a pretty and popular actress, was engaged by the Drury Lane manager, when lessee of both theatres, to play at both for 15*l.* a week. She then went to America, returned after two seasons, and even after this rustication she comes, demands, and even actually obtains 25*l.* a night!" The same writer says that, were it not for these heavy demands upon the treasury of the management, the dramatic author would receive larger sums for his plays; and instances the money paid to authors in the days of Kemble and Suett by quoting Colman, who received 1000*l.* for "John Bull;" Morton, 1000*l.* for "Town and Country;" Mrs. Inchbald, 800*l.* for "Wives as they Were;" and Reynolds for two works in one season ('The Blind Bargain' and "Out of Place"), 1000*l.*



## Charles Dibdin.

Dibdin once gave a musical entertainment at Torbay, and called the rooms in which it was given "Sans-Souci," which gave occasion to the following verses:—

"What more conviction need there be  
That Dibdin's plan will do?  
Since now we see him *sans-souci*  
Who late was *sans six-sous*."

## Charles Mathews.

Mathews once arrived at a forlorn country inn, and, addressing a melancholy waiter, inquired if he could have a chicken and asparagus? The melancholy waiter shook his head. "Can I have a duck, then?" "No, sir." "Have you any mutton chops?" "Not one, sir." "Then as you have nothing to eat, bring me something to drink. Have you any spirits?" "Sir," replied the man, with a deep sigh, "we are out of spirits." "Then, in heaven's name, what have you got in the house?" "Sorry to say, sir, nothing but an execution."

## Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Cibber.

"I remember," says Miss Hawkins, "old Lady Lucy Meyrick's being prevailed on—perhaps not less with reluctance than George III. and his Queen—to see a tragedy, for the sake of seeing Mrs. Siddons. We were curious to see what impression had been made on her mind by that which so forcibly impressed that of the public. She acknowledged the execution of the character very fine, yet not to be compared with what she remembered of former actors. In short," she concluded, "I must say that, compared with Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Siddons's grief is the grief of a cheesemonger's wife!"

## Edmund Kean and his Son.

The elder Kean on one occasion consented to appear at the Glasgow Theatre for his son's benefit. The play chosen was Howard Payne's tragedy of "Brutus," in which Kean took the

part of *Brutus*, and Charles Kean that of *Titus*. The house was filled to overflowing, and the receipts were nearly 300*l*. Charles Kean's biographer, Cole, says: "The stirring interest of the play, combined with the natural acting of the father and son, completely subdued the audience. They sat suffused in tears during the last pathetic interview, until *Brutus*, overpowered by his emotions, falls on the neck of *Titus*, exclaiming, in a burst of agony, "Embrace thy wretched father!" when they broke forth into prolonged peals of approbation. Edmund Kean then whispered in his son's ear, "*Charlie, we are doing the trick!*"

### David Ross.<sup>1</sup>

I find the following anecdote in Pelham's "Chronicles of Crime:"—"A gentleman, much dejected in his looks, called one day on Ross, when stricken with years, and told him that his father, a wealthy citizen in London, lay at the point of death, and begged that he might see him, or he would not die in peace of mind. Curious as this request appeared from a stranger, and in such extremity, the actor hesitated; but being much pressed by his visitor, he agreed to accompany him. Arrived at the house of the sick man, Mr. Ross was announced and soon admitted; but observing the family to retire, and being left alone with the patient, his wonder was again aroused. The dying penitent, now three score years and ten, casting his languid eyes upon Ross, said, "Can it be you who raised my fortune—who saved my life? Then were you young like myself—ay, and amiable, amid the direst misfortunes." Here nature, in a struggle with death, became overpowered; and as the sick man's head fell upon his pillow, he faintly ejaculated, "O, Barnwell! Barnwell!" We may conceive the astonishment of the player, whom age had long incapacitated from representing the unfortunate London apprentice. The feeble man, renewing his efforts to gratify a dying desire, again opened his eyes and continued:—"Mr. Ross, some forty years ago, like *George Barnwell*, I wronged my master to supply the unbounded extravagance of a *Millwood*. I took her to see your performance, which so shocked me that I silently vowed to break the connexion then

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<sup>1</sup> Born, 1728; died, 1790.

by my side, and return to the path of virtue. I kept my resolution, and replaced the money I had stolen before my villany was detected. I bore up against the upbraidings of my deluder, and found a *Maria* in my master's daughter. We married. I soon succeeded to my master's business, and the young man who brought you here was the first pledge of our love. I have more children, or I would have shown my gratitude by a larger sum than I have bequeathed you; but take a thousand pounds affixed to your name." At the dying man's signal, old Ross left the room overwhelmed by his feelings.

### Thomas Sheridan and the Gunnings.

The following anecdote, doubly interesting in that it concerns the well-known actor, Thomas Sheridan, and the two celebrated beauties, is given in the "Diary of a Lady of Quality:"—"Mrs. Gunning consulted Sheridan as to what she should do with her two beautiful but penniless daughters. He recommended that they should be presented at the Castle. Here a great difficulty occurred—by what possible means were they to procure court dresses? This Sheridan obviated. He was at the time manager of the Dublin Theatre, and offered them a loan of the stage dresses of *Lady Macbeth* and *Fuliet*. In these they appeared most lovely; and Sheridan, after having attended the toilet, claimed a salute from each as his reward. Very soon after this a most diabolical scheme was formed by some unprincipled young men: they invited Mrs. Gunning and her two daughters to dinner, and infused strong narcotics into the wine, intending to take advantage of the intoxication which must ensue to carry off the two young women. Fortunately, Sheridan discovered their base designs, and arrived just in time to rescue the ladies. He lived to see one of these girls Duchess of Argyll, and the other Countess of Coventry; and, it is melancholy to add, lived to see his application for admission to their parties rejected."

### Henry Russell.

Mr. Henry Russell, the accomplished composer of some of the most stirring melodies in English music, was born, we believe, about the year 1815. At an early age he exhibited a decided taste for the profession he subsequently adorned, which,

being remarked, induced his friends to send him to Italy, where, under the direction of the maestro Rossini, he completed his musical education. Returning to this country, he married, about the year 1836, Miss Lloyd, a granddaughter of the well-known Birmingham banker. He shortly after embarked with his young wife for America, where he commenced a series of entertainments. The novelty of these performances, coupled with the impressive, brilliant, and original songs introduced into them, and the great mimetic powers of the performer, conspicuously exhibited in his delineations of the Yankee, French, Italian, and Negro characters, speedily achieved a great reputation for Mr. Russell in the United States. On his return to England he found that the echo of his fame had preceded him. He met everywhere with the most enthusiastic reception, and the announcement of his name, whether in London or in the provinces, was sufficient to crowd the theatres. Such was the popularity of his songs that they superseded for the time the best known compositions of his predecessors. Since then he has pursued his successful career throughout the three kingdoms, earning on all sides the approbation of the judicious and the esteem of the wise, as a performer whose genius has always been sincerely directed in the interests of truth, morality, and religion. In the selection of the words of his songs, many of which are written by our esteemed countryman, Mr. Charles Mackay, Mr. Russell has shown considerable judgment; in them he has always kept particularly the working classes in view—preaching in melodies wholesome maxims and wise truths; stirring hope by his “Good Time Coming, Boys!” repressing vice—the vices of drinking and gaming—by the tragical inspirations of “The Dream of the Reveller,” and “The Gambler’s Wife;” animating patriotism by his immortal “Britannia, the Pride of the Ocean;” and awakening the best feelings of the heart by such homely, soothing lyrics as “Woodman, Spare that Tree,” “The Old Arm Chair,” and by a host of other songs which recur at once to the memory at the mention of the name of Henry Russell.—*The Modern Drama.*

Singing once on behalf of a charity in the North of England, Mr. Russell struck up the chorus of his popular song, “There’s a Good Time Coming, Boys!” whereupon a thin, hungry man, suddenly rising, called out, “Mr. Rouscell, can yer fix the toime?” *Contretemps* of this kind belong to the experiences of most performers. “The Gambler’s Wife” was a great favourite with

Mr. Russell's audiences. The story is simple. It tells of a woman who lies dying, with her baby at her breast, by the extinct embers in the grate; the husband is away at the gaming-tables. On his return he finds his wife and child dead. Mr. Russell had got to the most affecting portion of this song, and had worked the audience into the deepest silence, when a bony, red-faced woman, jumping up, shouted out, "Wouldn't I have fetched him home!" When such things happen *before* the scenes, the performer is at least secure in knowing that it is the audience who are in the wrong. But it is otherwise when the incident occurs *behind* the scenes. Mr. Russell's delivery of "The Maniac" always worked a spell upon his listeners; yet once, in singing this song, a drunken fellow who was at work on the top of the panorama missed his footing, fell on the stage, and rolled unharmed to the footlights, amid a scene of dismay and merriment no singing could control. The manipulation of the panorama, too, was sometimes troublesome. On more than one occasion Mr. Russell has stood, with his back to the scene (as was his custom), pointing out to an attentive audience the solemn and splendid effect of the Falls of Niagara, when, had he looked at the picture he was describing, he would have observed it to represent the interior of a log-hut or negroes dancing in a plantation.—*Ibid.*

### Ennobled Actresses.

In the "Remains" of James Smith, published in 1840, are found some amusing verses on the marriages of the actresses of his day who wedded noblemen or men of good position. Of Miss Farren, who married the Earl of Derby, he says :

"Farren, Thalia's dear delight,  
Can I forget the fatal night  
Of grief unstained by fiction  
(Even now the recollection damps),  
When Wroughton led thee to the lamps,  
In graceful valediction?"

He next celebrates Miss Brunton, who married the Earl of Craven :

"The Derby prize by Hymen won,  
Again the god made bold to run  
Beneath Thalia's steerage;  
Sent forth a second Earl to woo,  
And captivating Brunton, too,  
Exalted to the peerage."

Then follows Miss Searle, a good dancer and pantomime actress, who married Mr. Heathcote, a fashionable man of his day. He then turns to Miss Bolton :

“ Thrice vanquished thus, on Thespian soil  
Heart-whole from Cupid’s toil  
I caught a fleeting furlough :  
Gay’s Newgate Opera charmed me then ;  
But *Polly* sung her requiem when  
Fair Bolton turned to Thurlow.”

Of Miss O’Neill :

“ Those wounds some substitute might heal,  
But what bold mortal bade O’Neill  
Renounce her tragic station? . . . . .  
Stunned like a skater by a fall,  
I saw with unconcern Hughes Ball  
Elope with Mercandotte.”

Mercandotte was a beautiful Spanish *danseuse*, who married Mr. Ball, a man of large fortune, who was commonly known as “Golden Ball.” The last stanza, written by another hand, mourns Miss Stephens’ marriage :

“ Last of this dear, delightful list,  
Most followed, wondered at, and missed  
In Hymen’s odds and evens :  
Old Essex caged our nightingale,  
And finished thy theatric tale,  
Enchanting Kitty Stephens.”

### Charles Dibdin on the Actors.

If the merit of Shakspeare and his contemporaries maintained at least eight theatres at a time, there clearly must have been a deplorable deficiency in the dramatic productions at the Restoration, when two theatres at a time made so indifferent a shift to get on that, in order to give strength to their performances, they united, and thus all the dramatic merit of the kingdom was concentrated in one company. The steps that led to this union it will now be necessary to trace. Under the patent granted to Killigrew, the actors were denominated the King’s servants, and performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Sir William Davenant’s company were called the Duke’s company, and they performed first at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and afterwards at the Duke’s Theatre, in Dorset Gardens. About

ten of the King's company were on his Majesty's household establishment. They were allowed scarlet cloth and lace for their uniform, and were styled by the Lord Chamberlain Gentlemen of the Grand Chamber. This distinction does not, however, appear to have been extended to the Duke's company. Both were greatly respected and caressed at court. Of so much consequence were they considered, and of such import to the state appeared their establishment, that whenever there were any disputes, either the King or the Duke in person condescended to decide on them.

Davenant, finding his company weaken in the public estimation, introduced what was then and is at this moment the disgrace and reproach of the theatre. Operas and masques took the place of tragedies and comedies, and to Psyche and Circe yielded Cleopatra and Rosalind.

Before Sir William died he began the theatre in Dorset Gardens, but did not live to see it finished. It was opened in November, 1671, and in the following January, Drury Lane, belonging to the King's company, was burnt down. It was rebuilt and opened on the 26th of March, 1674.

“Dorset Gardens, by means of show and parade, obtained a complete victory over Drury Lane, nature, and common sense. This induced the King's company, who were severely galled at such unmerited preference, to attempt at many expedients to revenge themselves; and among the rest, authors were employed to parody and turn into ridicule the spectacles of the other house. It has by some of the writers on the stage been mentioned that Betterton belonged to the King's company; and when Sir William Davenant produced scenes, that he went over to France to procure others more splendid. The fact is, Betterton went to France at the express command of the King, to try, by a review of the French theatre, to add every possible improvement to the English; so that those scenes and decorations which were really after the fire of London, improved the Duke's Theatre so materially that it greatly contributed to the downfall of their opponents. Though the performers at Killigrew's Theatre had been acknowledged on the whole as the best, they about this time dwindled considerably. Some had quitted the stage, some had died, and the remainder were old and infirm. It was at this favourable moment that Betterton, full of anxiety to provide comfortably for his comrades, proposed to unite the theatres, which union was at length effected. They now per-

formed by the title of the King's servants, under Sir William Davenant's patent.

"When the two theatres were established at the Restoration, the King's company were supported, as principal performers, by Hart, Mohun, Burt, Winterton, Lacy, Cartwright, and Clun, to whom in a short time were added Haines, Griffin, Goodman, and some others. The principal women were Mrs. Corry, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Knapp, and afterwards Mrs. Boutel and Mrs. Eleanor Gwynne. The Duke's company consisted of Betterton, Sheppy, Kynaston, Nokes, Moseley, and Floyd, who had all performed under Rhodes. Shortly afterwards they were reinforced by Price, Richards, and Blacden, and again by Smith, Sandford, Metbourne, and others. The actresses were Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Saunders (whom Betterton married), Mrs. Davies, and Mrs. Long, besides Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Holden, and Mrs. Jennings.

"Many of these actors, if we are to believe the most dispassionate and rational accounts of them, were not mere auricular imitators, not mannerists, not copies of this or that particular whim, fancy, deportment, voice, or manner, but judges of nature through all her various workings, and close observers of all the passions that move and actuate the mind of man. Nay, more, they were all perfect and complete masters in those different styles of acting in which they chose to display their several abilities. These actors were the flower of that company which united in 1684, at which time Hart, who also was an excellent actor, had left the stage. Mohun was dead, and several others were either dead or had retired. Goodman, Clark, and many more might be spoken of with great propriety; for it is a remarkable thing—which, by the way, I never saw since I have known the stage but in the time of Garrick—that let the situations be principal or subordinate, it was their study to be respectable. The underlings felt like apprentices at a trade of which every one hoped in time to become a master. They thought it the height of absurdity to expect to arrive at perfection till it could be gradually attained; they considered it as a building in the air and ornamenting the structure before they had lain the foundation."

[In 1690 the united companies in Drury Lane were "convulsed with intestine broils." The profits of the theatre were divided into twenty shares, ten of which went to the ten proprietors, the other ten to the actors. The proprietors proved hard task-



masters ; they quarrelled with the actors, who, setting subscriptions on foot, built a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields which they opened in April, 1695, with Congreve's "Love for Love." The success of the new theatre was splendid and protracted ; and by the time the public curiosity had divided itself between the old theatre and the new, a fresh school of performers, headed by Cibber, may be said to have come in. Of these the greatest were Wilks, Booth, Doggett, Estcourt, Norris, Keen, Milward, and Griffith. Speaking of these actors generally, Dibdin pronounces them as men who supplied the genuine requisites of their art by sound judgment and strong discernment.]

"The dearth of great excellence in acting from Cibber's secession to the time of Garrick's approach gave me but little opportunity of going into that subject, and I now take it up merely to join the chain together, so that the reader's view of the comparative merit of actors may be collected and undisturbed. Many of the actors and actresses ranked respectably, but that was all. Among these were, as we have seen, Keen, Milward the elder and younger, Mills, Johnson, Bowman, Thurmond, Walker, Wright, Bullock, and Mrs. Bullock and others, most of whom were brought forward to England from Ashbury's nursery in Ireland, which certainly promoted very materially the interest of the stage. The public, however, were obliged to be content with these and a few more till the time of Fleetwood, when the later shoots from Ashbury's stock began to emancipate and expand in English soil.

"From this time the English stage began to know, among many others, Macklin, Quin, Ryan, Delane, Hulet, and afterwards Sheridan, Digges, Sparks, Barry, Mossop, and Woodward among the men, and Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Woffington among the women ; besides Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Cibber, and a large addition of names somewhat respectable, though less eminent than those I have mentioned.

"It seems to be evident that acting, having fallen off from the death of Booth and the secession of Cibber, never regained its natural tone till the public saw a perfect model for imitation in Garrick. Macklin was surely a turgid, heavy actor, with neither real dignity in tragedy nor native humour in comedy. Quin was still in stilts, and proved that though acting comprehends the whole of oratory, oratory by no means comprehends the whole of acting. Ryan was a very sensible man, and a most respectable member of society, and upon

this account he was probably encouraged greatly beyond his professional merit. . . .

“I come now to consider when acting was in its greatest prosperity, and I think it will not be difficult to prove that moment to have been at the time of Garrick, and, upon the whole, after his return from Italy. His great example had been long operating on the minds of others, and when practice had grown into maturity, every point of excellence appears to have been attained. We are told that Betterton was taught by Taylor, Booth by Betterton, and Quin by Booth. Garrick, however, seems only to have been taught by nature; and in spite of all we can gather of the extraordinary merits of Shakspeare’s contemporary actors, of those afterwards under Betterton, and onward to the end of Cibber’s management, there does not appear a demonstrative reason to suppose that acting reached its consummation till the appearance of Garrick.”

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