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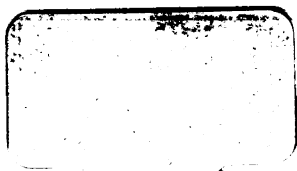
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A SHORT HISTORY OF
THE ENGLISH STAGE,
FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE
SUMMER OF THE YEAR 1908

BY
R. FARQUHARSON SHARP

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PREFACE.

IN the following pages an attempt has been made to give, within a reasonable compass, a connected history of the development of the English theatre from the days of Miracle Plays to the present time. This is, of course, necessarily involved with the history of the English drama; but I have as far as possible dealt with the drama only as incidental to my subject, which is the history of English theatres and English acting.

The compiler of such a book must of necessity be under heavy obligations to previous workers in the same field. I acknowledge gratefully my large indebtedness to Genest, Doran, Fleay, Fitzgerald, Barton Baker, and the numerous authors of monographs on individual theatres or actors. For much of the matter contained in my opening chapter I am indebted to A. W. Pollard's valuable introduction to his edition of English Miracle Plays.

In dealing with so large a subject in a comparatively small space, it is obviously impossible to be exhaustive. I have omitted mention of obscure and extinct theatres whose history has no special bearing on that of the stage, and similar considerations will explain why Grand Opera and the Variety Theatres have seemed to me to be outside the scope of the present volume.

R. F. S.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH STAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND : MIRACLE PLAYS AND MORALITIES.

THE history of dramatic representations in England begins (so far as we have any record of them) about eight hundred years ago. They were originally entirely religious in character; crude plays, dealing with biblical events or incidents drawn from the legendary lives of the Saints, and performed by the clergy. Their aim was obviously didactic. An appeal to the imagination through the eyes was the most effective method of instruction for an illiterate common-folk; and these "Miracle Plays" or "Mysteries," with their subsequent developments, afford an early example of the wisdom of tempering instruction with amusement to render it palatable to simple minds. In the eleventh century such plays were already popular in France, whence came the earliest of which we have any record in England. This play, which dealt with the life of Saint Katharine, was given at Dunstable under the direction of a certain Geoffrey, who had come from France to take charge of the Abbey School at St. Albans, where he afterwards became Abbot. Indeed,

according to tradition, his adoption of the monastic life was a direct result of this performance, to which an untimely end was put by a fire amongst certain of the "properties" which he had borrowed from the St. Albans sacristy. The mishap is said to have so weighed upon him that in consequence he renounced the world and entered the Abbey as a monk.

The Miracle Plays were at first, and for long, performed by the clergy and choristers,—originally within the churches, and then, as their popularity grew, in the churchyards and church precincts, which were in their turn abandoned in favour of open spaces in the towns. As a natural result the performances gradually lost their exclusively ecclesiastical character. Secular scenes were tacked on to the scriptural plots; the "craftsmen" of the towns, and even strolling jugglers and entertainers, were included among the actors; and eventually the ecclesiastical authorities recognized the unsuitability of the clergy's any longer taking part in the performances. This was forbidden by a Papal Bull early in the thirteenth century, though the plays long retained a semi-religious character. The acting of them passed by degrees entirely into the hands of the various "crafts" or trade guilds, and there was evolved a regular system for the due provision of their representation.

Some three hundred years later than Geoffrey's day, Archdeacon Rogers wrote an account, often cited, of such performances at Chester, and it may be taken as a representative description of the Miracle Play at its fullest development.

"Every company," he says, "had its pagiant [the erection which formed the stage was known as the "pageant"], or parte, which pagiants were a high scafolde with two rowmes [rooms], a higher and a

lower, upon four wheelles. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope, that all beholders mighte heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every streete. They begane first at the Abay gates, and when the firste pagiante was played it was wheeled to the high crosse before the mayor, and so to every streete; and soe every streete had a pagiant playinge before them at one time, till all the pagiantes for the daye appoynted weare played: and when one pagiante was neare ended, worde was broughte from streete to streete, that soe they mighte come in place thereof excedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have their pagiantes afore them all at one time playeinge together; to see which players was great resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe their pagiantes."

When the direction of the performances passed from the hands of the clergy into those of the guilds, their organization became definite. The members of the guilds contributed a yearly rate, known as the Pageant Silver, to defray expenses; "foreigners" (non-members of guilds) who took part paying twice as much as members. This rate, it may be observed, continued to be levied for many years after the Miracle Plays ceased to be performed in this manner. The prototype of the modern theatrical manager is to be found in the "Pageant Master," who was elected from among the craftsmen to direct the proceedings. The plays were prepared with the utmost care, and their representation considered an event of great moment.

From extant accounts of the expenses incurred in performances of this kind at Coventry, many interesting details can be gleaned. The "book of the play" was often a traditional one, which would be revised accord-

ing to circumstances and enriched with topical allusions of a comic nature, for such passages speedily found a place in the plays as they became secularized in the handling. Sometimes a fresh play was demanded, as was the case on record at Coventry when *The Destruction of Jerusalem* was performed, and the sum of £13 6s. 8d. was paid "to Mr. Smythe of Oxford for his pains for writing of the tragedy." The actors were carefully chosen, either by the Masters of the Guild or the Town Council, for their "personne, connyng, or voice," and a prompter appointed and instructed. The actors were provided with food and drink during rehearsals, as appears from the Coventry accounts, where "Brede," "Ale," "Vynegre," "Wyne," and "Kechyne" (which included such items as "A Rybbe of Befe," or a "Gose") are provided for. The rib of beef and the goose together cost only sixpence, however, and ale was twopence a gallon.

The pay of the actors varied with the length and importance of their parts, and possibly with the reputation of the individual actor. Thus at Coventry the impersonator of Pilate received four shillings, that of Herod (always an exhausting part, for he was habitually represented as in a constant rage) three shillings and fourpence, those of God and Pilate's Wife each two shillings; Caiaphas, three shillings and fourpence; the Devil and Judas, eighteen pence; Peter and Malchus, sixteen pence. The last two items probably imply the "doubling" of parts by one actor, and as a rule there was a proviso that no actor should undertake more than two parts. Occasionally the guilds contracted with some one person to provide and direct the whole performance for a fixed sum.

The movable stage (the "pagiant" of Archdeacon Roger's account) was a solid and substantial structure,

as indeed was necessary, seeing that it had to be wheeled, with the performers and their accessories, over the ill-paved streets of the day. Usually it consisted of two stories; the upper, which formed the stage, was open on three sides and had its floor strewn with rushes; the lower, which served as the actor's dressing-room, was closed in with curtains. Occasionally, as is inferred from the nature of the scenes represented, there were three stories, the two upper being used in the representation. Trapdoors in the floor served for the appearance of demons and the like, as in the modern stage.

Care was taken for the due preservation and decoration of the "pageant." In the Coventry accounts such items of expense appear as the "reparacion of the pagiant," "burneysshing and paynting," and "new wheles" for the same; also "sope," "talowe," and "gresse" for the "wheles."

Five shillings a year, we learn, was paid by the Coventry guilds for the housing of their "pageants" when not in use. The fact of the stage being open to the air on three sides prevented much attempt at theatrical machinery; but there were used such erections as a "practicable" Ark for the flood scenes, a "Stable at Bethlehem," "Herod's Palace," or the "Temple at Jerusalem." Tapestries were hung at the back for the purpose of scenery; "halfe a yarde of Rede Sea" is one item recorded.

Primitive "stage effects" were attempted, as we see from mention of a "baryll for the yerthequake" (doubtless to produce an alarming noise by having weights rolled about inside it), "starche to make the storm," and the like. The final destruction of the world by fire was represented by the setting on fire of painted globes; "making and paynting three worldys"

appears as an item in the expenses, also pay "for setting the world on fire." Hell's Mouth was a favourite theatrical "property," and the possession of a really alarming Hell's Mouth (represented as the gaping jaws of a hideous monster, with fangs and steel eyes, into and out of whose maw devils and their victims leapt and were thrust) was much esteemed. Contemporary prints show several examples of these.

In dressing their parts the actors to some extent attained a rude appropriateness. The demons were always attired in suitably repulsive fashion, and wore masks, while the performer who represented God wore a white coat and had his face gilt. Saints wore white coats and gilt hair, Angels in addition wearing gilt wings. Adam and Eve were clothed in fleshings; Christ wore a sheepskin; Herod was dressed as a Turk, and represented as always in a passion, Shakespeare's "to out-Herod Herod" being an echo of this practice; the Devil wore a coat and hose of rough hairy stuff, horns, a tail, and a red beard, and carried (as became the low-comedian of the cast) a leather club stuffed with wool, to assist him in his extravagant buffooneries.

The open street was sometimes needed as an annexe to the stage itself. Such characters as Balaam or the Magi had to appear riding, and we find such stage directions as that "Saul rydyth forth with hys servants about the place," or "Here Erode rages in the pagond and in the streete also." A curtain could be drawn across half the space of the stage, to provide for such scenes as needed the sudden display of an "interior."

The distribution of the several scenes among the various guilds was sometimes quaintly appropriate. In the York play the incident of "God warning Noah to make an Ark of floatable wood" was entrusted to the Shipwrights; "Noah in the Ark" with his family "and

divers animals," to the Fishmongers and Mariners; the episode of the Star in the East, to the Chandlers; the offerings of the three Kings, to the Goldsmiths; and the Marriage at Cana, to the Vintners.

The favourite date for the performances was the Feast of Corpus Christi; and, as we see from a York proclamation of 1415, precautions were taken beforehand to ensure due order and decorum. Citizens were bidden not to go into the streets armed on these occasions; the pageants were to halt at the places assigned, and nowhere else; officers of the peace were to be stringent in the exercise of their duties. The players, moreover, were to be "good players, well arrayed, and openly spekyng," and were to be ready between four and five in the morning, in order that each pageant should start on its rounds punctually and in order.

The seriousness with which the performances were regarded is shown by a Papal Bull respecting the Chester Plays, which granted 1000 days' indulgence to whoever assisted "with sincere devotion" in these representations, and pronounced excommunication on whoever interfered with them. Till they became too much overlaid with grossness and buffoonery, the Miracle Plays were obviously a useful means of religious instruction in an illiterate age; indeed, much of what would appear to us as grossness was but a reflex of contemporary life, and much that seems misplaced buffoonery was then a harmless means of popularizing what would otherwise be unknown or ill understood. The writers of the later Miracle Plays had a sound sense of the value of "comic relief," and there is no reason to suppose that Joseph's attitude towards the fact of Mary's conception until he is enlightened by the Angel who appears and explains matters to him, the

publicity given to Sarah's child-bearing, or the fact that Noah and his wife habitually indulged in a wrangle before entering the Ark, lessened the sincerity with which the more solemn scenes were represented or listened to. In one play Noah's wife insists in remaining outside gossiping with her neighbours, until the waves of the flood invade her toes; then she jumps in terror into the Ark, and is received by Noah with a sound beating. Sheep-stealing by one of the watching shepherds at the Nativity was another favourite comic episode.

Owing to the arrangement for moving the pageants so that the whole play should be consecutively performed at each appointed spot, a large number of pageants were often required, as many as thirty being used in the Wakefield play. The Creation would be shown on the first, the scene between Cain and Abel in the second, and so forth through the whole biblical story represented; a typical Miracle Play being roughly cast into three divisions, the first dealing with the Creation, Flood, and subsequent Old Testament episodes, the second with the Nativity of Christ, the third with His Passion and Resurrection and a representation of Doomsday.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, what were known as "Moralities" began to displace Miracle Plays in the public favour. In the Moralities, embodiments of the Virtues and Vices were substituted for the well-known characters of Holy Writ, a change which marks a certain growth of subtlety in the popular appreciation of this form of entertainment. Such Moralities as have come down to us are, to modern thinking, for the most part tediously didactic effusions, losing their direct appeal as the characters in the plays lose their personality, but they were much in favour for

some time. It is not surprising, however, that before long new subjects were looked for to provide dramas, and that eventually there came the transition to purely secular subjects.

It is easy to understand that, as its novelty wore off, the strife between abstract virtues and vices palled on acquaintance, and that plays were welcomed which appealed more directly to the interest of their audiences by means of the humanity of their characters. Just in such a way as, in the history of painting, the representation of sacred subjects prepared the ground for secular arts, so, with the drama, these religious and moral plays prepared the receptivities of the people for what was soon to develop into the glorious outburst of the dramatic spirit in the age of Elizabeth.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRANSITION.

THE rise of a new and entirely secular drama during the latter half of the sixteenth century meant the gradual extinction of the Miracle Plays and Moralities, though these continued to be performed till the end of the century. It meant, too, the development of a new school of acting and a new class of actors.

The germs of both comedy and tragedy were already existent; the former in the comic scenes that had intruded on the original solemnity of the Miracle Play, the latter in the tales of love and valour that were kept alive by balladry. The external stimulus that was needed to bring both to an organic growth was furnished by the Renaissance, one of whose conspicuous effects in England was the imitation of classical dramatic models. The earliest examples of English comedy and tragedy that have come down to us bear unmistakable traces of this influence.

Comedy seems to have developed the easier and earlier of the two. The oldest English comedy that has come down to us, Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*, was one among many that followed the Plautine model pretty closely; but such plays as those of John Heywood (who was Udall's contemporary), or Bishop Still's *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, are comedies of simple

humours, with plots that are practically original and a flavour distinctly national.

The first attempts at formal tragedy in England, such as Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* (which is remarkable as being our earliest blank-verse drama), Preston's *Cambises*, or Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, show the classical influence markedly; but English tragedy was saved from becoming merely imitative by the independent growth of what are known as Chronicle Plays. These plays, which were half dramatic and half epic, were the lineal descendants of the Ballads, and possessed a national character that had hitherto found no such expression. Chronicle Plays such as *The Famous Victories of Henry V.* and *The Historie of King Leir* are the link between the Miracle Play and the Elizabethan historical drama; and they and their kind formed a rich mine of subject-matter from which Shakespeare and his contemporaries drew.

As the drama lost its semi-religious character, and plays became more specialized, the players became a distinct class and their calling a separate one. In these altered conditions dramatic entertainments passed out of the hands of the better class of craftsmen, and the social level of both playwright and playactor became considerably lowered. Patronage was now a necessary condition of the actor's existence, and royal or noble favour was essential to success. The earliest royal patron of the drama was Richard III., and as such he deserves the gratitude of all good playgoers. While still Duke of Gloucester he attached a company of players to his household, granting them permission to travel about his domains and act whenever he did not require their services. This did much to regularize the actor's calling, and an important result of it was that

acting became the fashion. The pastime of amateur theatricals was taken up, first by the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, and subsequently by those of higher degree, with as great a zest as any displayed to-day; and this in its turn led to the custom of regularly training the boys of the public schools to perform plays for the amusement of the Court. Even the "Children of the Chapel Royal" were instructed in the art, and members of the clergy, again, not only wrote plays, but occasionally acted in them.

The Universities naturally caught the infection, and the deeds of the "A.D.C." at Cambridge were foreshadowed by the performance in that city, in Henry VIII.'s time, of a tragedy entitled *Pammachus*, the nature and tendency of which raised a mighty pothor. "I have been informed," wrote the Chancellor of the University to the Vice-Chancellor, in March 1545, "that the youth in Christ's College . . . hath of late played a tragedy called *Pammachus*, a part of which tragedy is so pestiferous as were intolerable. If it be so, I intend to travail, as my duty is, for the reformation of it. I know mine office there, and mind to do in it as much as I may." The Vice-Chancellor replied that the College authorities had approved the performance, after expunging "all such matter whereby offence might greatly have arisen." A stricter inquiry, however, was ordered, and made; much was asserted on both sides in justification, and eventually the matter was allowed to drop.

Direct opposition between Church and Stage came in 1547, when, at Edward VI.'s accession, Bishop Gardiner proclaimed the holding of a "solemn dirge and mass" in memory of the deceased King, and for the same day the Marquis of Dorset's players advertised a "solempne play"—to try, as Gardiner wrote at the time, "who

shall have most resort, they in game or I in earnest." The result was that these players were forbidden to act anywhere except in their master's presence, a regulation which they and other members of their craft did their best to circumvent by means of forged licences.

The strife of opinion which accompanied the development of the Reformation found a convenient weapon in the drama, and stage performances were used as party weapons in the conflict between Protestants and Papists. The Moralities afforded a convenient vehicle for controversy and abuse; and though those which have come down to us are mainly anti-Catholic, and such Catholic Moralities as have survived are non-polemical, there is little doubt that many Catholic plays of a highly polemical character were acted secretly in the houses of the great. Early in the seventeenth century a certain Sir John York was imprisoned and fined for having a play thus secretly performed in his house, ridiculing the Protestants and their tenets. And, some seventy years before this, in the Act for the Advancement of True Religion, "plays and interludes" are referred to as allowable "for the rebuking and reproaching of Vices and the setting forth of Vertue," provided they "medle not with interpretations of Scriptures contrary to the doctryne set forth by the Kynges Majistie."

John Bale, the Protestant Bishop of Ossory, known to his contemporaries as "Bilious Bale," was one of the most prominent figures in these ecclesio-dramatic polemics, and became notorious as the author of a play called *Kynge Johan*, which was deliberately designed to illustrate the attitude of Rome towards this country. Later, in Queen Mary's time, her adherents supported their attacks upon the Reformation by means of a drama called *Respublica*, which pointed out the lament-

able nature of the new spirit that was growing to such powerful proportions.

The players, having as yet no "theatres" as we now understand them, were all strolling players, performing (when released from attendance on their patron) in the yards of inns and similar places. It was inevitable that such gatherings should lead to an undesirable amount of freedom. The inn-yard made a convenient stage, the audience gathering in the galleries that ran round its sides; and one contemporary account tells us how, before the performance began, the gallants would go first into the yard and look round the galleries, "then, like unto ravens when they spie the carrion, thither they fly and press as neare the fairest as they can," frequently to indulge (according to this chronicler) in unseemly dalliance with the fair ones.

For reasons such as this, and still more for the political reasons already alluded to, the players and their art fell into disrepute, and it was not long before stage plays were only allowed in London under very stringent censorship. As early as 1545 "common players" had been included with "ruffyns, vagabonds, masterless men, and evill disposed persons" in a proclamation. In Edward VI.'s time the representation of plays was forbidden altogether for a stated period, to mark the royal displeasure at certain performances which had contained "matter tendyng to sedicion and contempnyng of sundery good orders and lawes." Again, in 1551 players were forbidden to act any play in public which had not received the licence of the Privy Council, for the reason that they were too apt to play "whatsoever any light and phantastical head listeth to invent." This regulation was repeated in a proclamation of Mary two years later; and in 1556 players were altogether prohibited from strolling through the

kingdom, as being "disseminators of seditions and heresies."

Obviously the only solution of this tangled condition of affairs, if the drama were to live, was in the regularizing of the profession and the appointing of suitable places where the performances could be held under proper supervision.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST THEATRES.

THE undesirability of the use of the inn-yards as theatres was obvious; and the removal, by Edward VI.'s orders, of the King's Revels and Masques from the Warwick Inn, Holborn, to the deserted Black Friars' Monastery on Thames-side was at once a prudent measure in defence of law and order and a step towards the regularizing of the actor's profession. A few years later, in consequence of complaints as to the nature of their performances, these players and all others in the city were strictly ordered to perform only such plays as had been approved by the authorities, and that only in the period between All Saints' and Shrovetide. Public dramatic entertainments were strictly subordinate to the Court performances, so that a close censorship was possible. It was furthermore subsequently enacted by an oft-quoted statute of 1572 that all "common players" (that is to say, players not attached to the household of any nobleman or allowed to use a nobleman's name as patron) should be dealt with as "rogues and vagabonds" if they were not licensed by a justice of the peace.

It is worthy of note that in the Black Friars' house considerable outlay is stated to have been incurred for scenery and for machinery to assist stage effects. The

plays and masques being originally devised as entertainments for the actor's royal or noble patrons, money was, no doubt, more readily forthcoming for these purposes than could possibly be the case when the theatre became primarily public places. There is record of a sum equivalent to some £60 of the money of to-day being expended upon "properties" for a masque presented at Court at the end of the sixteenth century—these being "monsters, mountains, beasts, serpents; weapons for war, as guns, dogs, bows, arrows, bills, halberds, boar-spears, fawchions, daggers, pollaxes, clubs; heads and head-pieces, armour counterfeit; moss, holly, ivy, bays, flowers; glue, paste, paper, and such like; with nails, hooks, horse-tails, dishes for devil's eyes; Heaven, Hell, and the Devil."

Although the Black Friars' house was granted to the Court players for their use by Edward VI., it was not formally recognized as a place of public entertainment till Elizabeth was on the throne; when, about the same time, a second theatrical licence was granted authorizing the building of the earliest "theatre," as we now understand the term, in London. This licence was granted in 1574 to the Earl of Leicester's company of players, at the head of whom was James Burbage, father of the famous tragedian Richard Burbage.

James Burbage acquired a plot of ground in Shoreditch, on part of the site of a disused priory, and there erected a wooden building which was known as "The Theatre," and was opened for public entertainments in the autumn of 1576.

On the extensive site of the old priory there also sprang up a number of private dwelling-houses, some occupied by citizens of high degree; and in so favourable a locality a rival theatre was not long—indeed, barely a year—in making its appearance. This second

theatre was called The Curtain, a name of which Curtain Road still preserves an echo.

The Theatre and The Curtain no doubt shared the important patronage of the day with the Black Friars' house, but it must be noted that for some years the inn-yards continued to be popular competitors in dramatic entertainment. Five, at least, are on record as being frequented by players after the performances at the three recognized houses were in full swing. Of these five, one was in Gracechurch Street, one in Bishopsgate Street, one "nigh Paul's," one (the "Bell Savage," a very popular house) on Ludgate Hill, and one in Whitefriars. There was also the "Boar's Head," outside Aldgate, where the performance of what the Mayor and Corporation considered a "lewd play" raised a considerable commotion in Mary's time.

The Theatre had a short life, for in 1597, twenty years after its erection, the ground landlord gave Burbage and his company notice to quit. Burbage had, however, by the terms of the lease the right to remove the fabric, and, in spite of the landlord's opposition, succeeded in doing so. The house was pulled down by the actors and some willing friends, and the materials carried off to the south side of the Thames, where two years later they were used in building the Globe Theatre on Bankside, Southwark,—a house destined, together with the Blackfriars house, to be famous from its close connection with Shakespeare. The Globe was burnt down in 1613, rebuilt, and finally demolished in 1644. The Blackfriars house, which was converted into a regular theatre in 1596, survived till 1655, and The Curtain had a life nearly as long. It is probable that either at the latter or at The Theatre, Shakespeare was engaged in some minor capacity as an actor after his coming to London in 1586. He also

acted at the Globe Theatre and at the Rose, a house built in 1592 close to the notorious Bear Garden on Bankside. It was at the Globe and the Blackfriars that his plays were produced.

Other Elizabethan playhouses were the Fortune, built in 1599 by the actor Alleyn, in Golden Lane, St. Luke's; the Red Bull, in Clerkenwell; the Cockpit, in Drury Lane; and the Newington Butts theatre, which was built about 1592 on a spot near the present "Elephant and Castle." Of these the chief was the Fortune, which stood till 1656, a memorial of its existence remaining in the Playhouse Yard, which occupies part of what was its site. It has an importance in Elizabethan dramatic history only second to that of the Globe and Blackfriars houses. The Blackfriars and the Cockpit were what were known as "private" theatres, established and maintained by the nobility, who directed performances in them instead of, as had formerly been the case, in their own houses.

When Elizabeth came to the throne the chief professional actors of the day were comprised in three or four companies of men (of which the "Earl of Leicester's men," who had inaugurated The Theatre, were the most esteemed), and companies of boys who were trained as occasion required for special Court performances. These were selected from among the scholars of St. Paul's, the Chapel Royal, Windsor, the Merchant Taylor's School, and Westminster School. As the theatrical profession began to crystallize and the public gave a more serious patronage to the newly established theatres, the boys' companies were less seen by the public and only established for occasional Court performances; though a certain number of boys, but these not from the above-mentioned scholars, were always included in the "men's" companies to play

female parts. For a time, however, in Shakespeare's day the boys' companies were extremely popular, and their vogue threatened to turn adult actors out of doors, as we learn from the allusion in *Hamlet* (in the course of Rozencrantz's conversation with the Prince about the players) to the "aery of children" that "are now the fashion," and have so gained the ear of the town that they carry all before them, "Hercules and his load too." The allusion here is to the fact that the Blackfriars theatre, one of the houses with which Shakespeare was immediately connected, had been temporarily leased to the Children of the Chapel Royal, whose popularity threatened even to draw the audiences away from the Globe, Shakespeare's other theatre, whose sign was that of Hercules bearing the Globe on his shoulders.

Besides the houses enumerated above, two others, which had but a brief existence but were popular in the days immediately succeeding Elizabeth's reign, were the Swan on Bankside and the Hope. The latter was a kind of "fit up" theatre in the Bear Garden, and was designed to provide occasional variety from the delights of bear-baiting and cock-fighting.

Our knowledge of the internal arrangements of the Elizabethan playhouses is to some extent conjectural, and is gleaned from allusions, brief mentionings and one or two drawings. Certain details, however, are fairly well established. The outer shape of the buildings, taking such theatres as the Globe, the Theatre or the Swan as typical, was usually oval or hexagonal, the interior being probably round or oval, approximating in appearance to the original inn-yard model. Roughly speaking, the plan of the interior was that of an open arena, part of which was occupied by the stage, with tiers of galleries, partly divided into boxes, built round it. The structures were mostly of wood on a brick or

concrete foundation, though an extant description of the Swan theatre states it to have been built of a conglomeration of flint. The interior was to some extent decorated, this varying with the means of the constructor, and the pillars supporting the galleries and the stage erection were often painted to imitate marble. Coryate in his *Crudities* (1611) says that in Venice in 1608 he visited the theatre, and found it "beggarily and base in comparison with us for apparell, shews and musicke."

The main difference from the modern theatre, except in the matter of roofing, was in the stage itself. This was a flat platform extending well out into the arena, with space for spectators to stand around it; seats were only provided in the galleries, part of which were divided into boxes known as "rooms." This last term is an evidence of the persistence of the inn-yard model adopted by the theatres. The arena represented the yard itself, the boxes taking the place of the gallery which ran round the yard and led to the rooms of the inn.

In the case of the "public" theatres the arena was open to the sky, the roofing only extending over the galleries and the back part of the stage. The "private" houses, however, were completely roofed in, and seats were provided in the arena.

We have no record of what happened in the partially unroofed theatres when the weather was bad. Probably, however, a wetting was not considered of so much account by the actors as would now be the case, there being no women among them. Moreover, the performances taking place by daylight, there was no occasion for much facial "make-up" upon which the rain would produce ravages. In the roofed private theatres the performances took place by candle-light.

During the heat of summer the actors belonging to the "public" theatres usually toured the country, their houses being closed.

Scenic or pictorial effect, such as was looked for in theatres of a later date, was naturally out of the question when the stage was practically as much a platform in the midst of the spectators as the "pageant" had been in the old days of the Miracle Plays. It was raised from the ground, and cellarage underneath afforded possibilities for trap-doors and such necessary devices as Shakespeare's stage-directions prove to have been used. In *The Tempest* the banquet is to "vanish with a quaint device"; in *Macbeth*, "the cauldron sinks and the apparitions rise;" and so forth. It is possible, too, that a trap-door with steps might be used for such scenes as the approach to Juliet's tomb. Some machinery from above must also have been in use in the better-appointed theatres (possibly working from above the balcony at the back of the stage), to make possible such illusions as that directed in *Cymbeline*, where Jupiter "descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle."

The back of the stage seems usually to have been closed by a wall with two doors in it; in front of this stood pillars between which curtains could be drawn, these pillars also supporting the pent-house roof which descended from the top of the back wall. The curtains formed a simple and necessary accessory for such scenes as tented battlefields or for Desdemona's bed-chamber (when the bed would doubtless be behind the curtains), or to enclose the "play-scene" of *Hamlet*, to take obvious instances. There would also probably be, above the doors at the back, a balcony or an enclosed portion of the gallery that ran round the whole house. Besides serving as a balcony, this would

probably also do duty for "battlements" or "city walls." The stage was strewn with rushes, the usual carpet of the day; in some cases it was bordered by a low railing.

By degrees it became the custom to accommodate favoured persons with stools upon the stage, an innovation which led to intolerable abuse. The extent to which this nuisance had grown by the beginning of the seventeenth century is reflected in an entertaining passage in Dekker's "Gull's Hornbook" (1609). In this are given some satirical rules for a "gallant's" behaviour at the theatre. He is recommended to sit on the stage, "on the very rushes where the comedy is to dance." He is to make an effective entry by coming in late: "Present not yourself on the stage, especially at a new play, until the quaking prologue hath by rubbing got colour into his cheeks. . . . Then it's time . . . to creep from behind the arras with your stool in one hand." Again: "It shall crown you with rich commendation to laugh aloud in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy, and to let that clapper, your tongue, be tossed so high that all the house may ring of it." Should the gallant disapprove of the piece performed, he is to "rise with a screwed and discontented face" from his stool; but, if either "the company or indisposition of the weather" compel him to sit it out, he should "take up a rush and tickle the earnest ears of your fellow gallants . . . Mew at passionate speeches, blare at merry, find fault with the music, whew at the children's action, whistle at the songs," and so forth. In short, he is to do everything to show that he goes to the play "only as a gentleman to spend a foolish hour or two, because you can do nothing else."

It is obvious that under such conditions as this

anything like scenic display, as we now understand it, was impossible; although the pernicious custom of allowing spectators on the stage persisted to a much later period, when the stage had shrunk to something more like its present dimensions and painted scenery was in full use. Although, as has been already said, more or less elaborate mechanical and scenic effects were attempted in the costly Masques performed in the mansions of the great or in "private" theatres, in the public theatres of Elizabeth's day elaboration of effect was practically confined to the dressing and grouping of the characters. As Professor Raleigh suggests in his stimulating book on Shakespeare, it must have been "a statuesque rather than a pictorial effect" that was aimed at. The credit of the earliest introduction of what we should call "scenery" into ordinary plays is usually given to the post-Restoration dramatist, Sir William Davenant.

Behind the "back wall" of the stage the actors' dressing-rooms were constructed; above these was usually a sort of turret from which a flag was flown when the house was open. From this, too, a trumpeter used to summon the audiences at the hour for the beginning of the play.

Elizabethan theatre prices ranged from three or four pence for standing-room to three or four times that sum in the best "rooms" or boxes. (It must, of course, be borne in mind that to approximate these sums to their present value they must be multiplied by four or five.) Prices in the private theatres, where there was more comfort and more display, would naturally range higher. In an advertisement at the end of a printed edition of a masque performed at the Cockpit, it is stated that "notwithstanding the great expense necessary to scenes and other ornaments in this enter-

tainment, there is a good provision made of places for a shilling. And it shall begin certainly at 3 afternoon." Descriptions of the pieces to be performed were set upon posts outside the theatres some days in advance.

References to the price of admission are numerous. To take one or two at haphazard, in *The Roaring Girl* (1611) there is allusion to "the twopenny gallery" at the Fortune. In Sir Thomas Overbury's "Characters" (1614) it is said of a spendthrift that "if he have but twelve pence in his purse, he will give it for the best room in the play house." Again, in *Henry VIII.*, Prologue says that spectators "may see away their shilling in two short hours." Stools on the stage, in the houses where this was allowed, were usually priced at six or twelve pence. Smoking was freely indulged in, lackeys attending their masters to attend to the necessary filling of the pipes. Performances were given on Sundays as well as on week days.

In some of the theatres the stage platform was movable, and could be taken away or moved back when other favourite entertainments (such as bear-baiting, or exhibitions of fencing or broadsword play) were prepared for the public's delectation.

An orchestra of musicians was provided, stationed probably at the side of the hindermost portion of the stage, and apparently the music was frequently of no mean quality. It was probably not till late in the seventeenth century that the orchestra was placed where we now expect to see it. In an arrangement of *The Tempest* as acted at the Duke's Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1667, it is directed that the "band of violins, harpsicords, and theorbos which accompany the voices" are to be placed "between the pit and the stage"; and, as Malone remarks, had this not been an

unusual arrangement, the direction would have been unnecessary.

The foregoing may perhaps serve to give some idea of the conditions under which the splendid Elizabethan drama saw the light. It is practically impossible for us, familiar as we are with "stage pictures" of a greatly different nature, to realize the effect produced by the materials used, or to estimate how vividly the imagination of the spectators was stirred by the mere effect of language. The pleasure in that, being more direct, was probably keener, the critical faculties of the audience being directed to the drama itself and undiverted by extraneous attractions. Be that as it may, the Elizabethan public was conspicuously a theatre-loving and a discriminating one.

That the level of acting in the Elizabethan theatres was high (despite the difficulty, as it seems to us, of beardless boys giving satisfactory renderings of the great female rôles in the drama) is indisputable. Hamlet's advice to the players, which is obviously founded on close observation, remains to all time as a manual for professors of the craft, and reveals *per contra* the certainty that the performances of Shakespeare's time could reach as high a level as the most exacting required. More than this, there is contemporary evidence to show that the actor's position was, as far as personal conduct was concerned, respectable and respected, and that the majority of actors showed a proper feeling for the dignity of their art.

Some of the most prominent of the day were James Burbage, of the Blackfriars house, the Theatre, and the Globe; his son, the more famous tragedian, Richard Burbage, who also had some repute as a painter; Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, who was connected with the Bear Garden, the Hope, and

the Fortune; Philip Henslowe, who was Alleyn's partner in the latter house; John Hemminge, chief proprietor of the Globe Theatre, fellow-actor of Shakespeare, and part editor of the first folio of the latter's plays, famous also as the original impersonator of Falstaff; Richard Tarleton, the comedian, a popular favourite of Elizabeth's day; and Shakespeare himself, of whose acting at the Rose, the Curtain, and the Blackfriars Theatres in his early days scanty traditions have been handed down, mentioning him as having taken the part of the Ghost in *Hamlet* and Adam in *As You Like It*.

Of the dramatists of these days, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Ben Jonson, Ford, Massinger, Middleton, Chapman, Shirley, and Cyril Tourneur were mostly connected with the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres; the others, such as Marlowe, Dekker, Drayton, Greene and Peele, writing mainly for the Fortune.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEATRE AND THE PURITANS.

WITH the actor's position assured and the popularity of the theatre increasing, it was not surprising that the drama should be used as a mouthpiece of public opinion. On the other hand, the unmistakable allusions to public affairs that were heard from the stage, and the accompanying opportunities for ridicule, were naturally little to the taste of the civic authorities. Court influence, moreover, was behind the players, and the latter's shafts were, in return, least seldom aimed at the fountain-heads of the patronage to which the stage owed so much.

The strongest power of opposition to the theatre lay in the growth of the Puritan spirit; and this was assisted by two external circumstances—the visitations of the Plague and the outbreak of the Civil War. The spreading of the Puritan tendency to regard all amusement (and especially stage entertainments) as iniquitous soon resulted in definite attacks. These began in Elizabeth's time, with a treatise in which John Northbrooke, in 1577, inveighed against “dicing, dancing, plays, and interludes” as immoral and corrupting. In the following year, John Stockwood, a schoolmaster and preacher celebrated in his day, attacked The Theatre by name in a sermon, speaking in terms of the gravest reprobation of what went on at “the gorgeous playing-

place erected in the fields." In 1579, Stephen Gosson, Rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, and himself a writer of "pastoralls," published his "School of Abuse," in which he included "a pleasant invective against poets, players, jesters, and such like caterpillars of a commonwealth." His invective, however, fails from its over-eagerness, and from the fact that he cannot conceal a certain liking for what he professes to attack. He makes a great deal of the overmuch gallantry amongst the audiences, and assails the playwrights with a bitterness which inevitably suggests that he was a disappointed candidate for their ranks, while at the same time he is fain to admit that certain plays (such as his own) may be "good plays and sweet plays." A year or two later Philip Stubbes, a Puritan pamphleteer, followed up the attack with an "Anatomie of Abuses."

Meanwhile the Plague, of which there were constant terrible visitations in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, proved a useful auxiliary to the opponents of the theatre. It enabled them to maintain, not without reason, that the concourse of folk in the theatres meant the creation of centres of infection. "To play in plague time," they said, "was to court infection;" and to this they added as a rider that "to play out of plague time was to call down plague from heaven."

The Puritans continued to bombard the players' stronghold during the early years of Charles I.'s reign, and at least their noisiest, if not their most effective, shell fell within the players' lines when Prynne in 1632 published his famous *Histrio-Mastix*. Stage plays, he affirmed, were the incentive to every kind of immorality, theatres were "the devil's chapels," and the drama and all its works obviously forbidden by Holy Writ. Prynne's zeal, as far as his own fate was concerned,

overshot the mark. A too-outspoken declaration of his opinion concerning female actors (he having in a previous tract stigmatized some French actresses as "impudent, shameful, unwomanish, graceless") was construed as an indirect reproof to the Queen and her ladies for having taken part in a masque; and certain other passages, comparing the authorities to Nero in consequence of their having encouraged the play-actors, were taken to be an attack upon the King and Court. The result was that Prynne was sentenced by the Star Chamber to a large fine, public degradation, and the cutting off of his ears.

His action had its effect, however, and was for a time a powerful weapon in the hands of the strong Puritanical party among the citizens. The Plague, as we have seen, strengthened their hands, and the climax came with the outbreak of the Civil War, when, in September 1642, an Order of Parliament definitely forbade all public performances. "Whereas public sports," it ran, "doe not well agree with publike calamities, nor publike stage-playes with the seasons of Humiliation, . . . being spectacles of pleasure too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levitie, it is therefore thought fit and ordained . . . that while these sad causes and set times of humiliation doe continue, publike stage-plays shall cease and be forborne."

The fortunes of the stage had already been in sad case, as is graphically set forth in a pamphlet called "The Stage-Player's Complaint," published in 1641. This is in the form of a "pleasant dialogue" between two favourite actors, "Cane of the Fortune and Read of the Friers." It laments the bad times that have fallen upon actors and deplores their sad condition for want of employment. "Oh, the times," says the one,

“when we have vapoured in the streets like courtiers.” Everything is “down,” he says, and soon they will be “down” too. The other replies, to cheer him, that players and plays “are very necessary and commodious to all people; first for strangers who can desire no better recreation than to come and see a play; then for citizens, to feast their wits; then for gallants, who otherwise would spend their money in drunkenness and lasciviousness, but doe find a great delight and delectation to see a play; then for the learned it does increase and add wit constructively to wit; then for gentlewomen it teacheth them how to deceive idleness; then for the ignorant it does augment their knowledge; Pish, and a thousand more arguments I could adde, but that I should weary your patience too much. Well, in a word, we are so needfull for the common good that in some respect it were almost a sinne to put us downe; therefore let not these frivolous things perplex your vexatious thoughts.”

In spite, however, of these weighty reasons for the opposite, they were “put downe” within the year.

Another curious pamphlet, “The Actor’s Remonstrance,” which appeared in 1643, complains with some justice that, while stage-plays were banned, the Bear-Garden, where all sorts of abuses prevailed, was tolerated; while “Puppet Plays, which are not so valuable as the very musicque between each act at ours, are still kept up with uncontrolled allowance, witness the famous motion of Bel and the Dragon, so frequently visited at Holborne Bridge these passed Christmasse holidays.” The author draws a sad picture of the probable result to his profession. “Our boyes,” he says, “ere we shall have libertie to act againe, will be growne out of use, like crackt organ-pipes, and have faces as old as our flags. . . . Our musike, that was

held so delectable and precious that they scorned to come to a taverne under twentie shillings salary for two hours," now have to take any alms they can get! "Our ablest ordinarie poets, instead of their annual stipend and beneficiall second days," are, he says, "compelled to get a living by writing contemptible penny pamphlets, feigning miraculous stories and unheard of battles." The pamphlet is drafted in the form of a petition to the authorities, and ends with a recital of the reforms that shall be made in the theatres if only they may be allowed to continue. No female shall be allowed to enter the playhouse unaccompanied, so that there may be no more of the ladies of light virtue "that sit in the sixpenny seats." It is even undertaken that "the tobacco-men, that used to walk up and down selling for a penny pipe that which was not worth twelve pence an horse-load," shall sell none, "not so much as in threepenny galleries, unlesse of the first Spanish leafe." In short, so this fruitless petition runs, they will so conduct themselves that none shall be able to bring the charge of ungodliness against them.

Evidently the edict of 1642 was occasionally evaded, for five years later another ordinance enacted that any one found playing "stage-plays, interludes or other common playes" should be imprisoned and punished as rogues; and in the next year this was repeated in a more stringent form. "Whether wanderers or no, and notwithstanding any license whatsoever from the King or any person," they were to be punished. Further, the authorities were required to have all places demolished where plays should be found to be acted, and any one caught playing in them was to be publicly whipped and to enter into recognizances never to act any more. If they offended again, they were to be proceeded against as incorrigible rogues; any moneys

paid to them were to be forfeited for the good of the poor, and every spectator was to pay a fine nearly equivalent to a pound of our money.

Thus there fell upon the stage a dark and disastrous cloud which did not lift till the more tolerant days of the Restoration. To the credit of the actors, there may be quoted a mention in a newspaper of 1654 of "the poor actors, who have a long time lingered under the heavy yoke of poverty, and fed themselves and families with hunger, sighs and tears; yet not one of these poor men, during this long winter of many years debarment from the exercise of that quality wherein they were bred, but have continued always civil and honest in life and conversation." So glowing an eulogium may be a trifle over-coloured; but apparently there was but little fault to be found with the demeanour in adversity of these men who had been the spoilt darlings of fashion. Many of them risked their lives in the ranks for the Royalist cause, a circumstance which was not forgotten when Charles II. came to the throne and the Puritan gloom was dispelled.

CHAPTER V.

THE THEATRES OF THE RESTORATION.

THE love of the drama—or, perhaps, merely the love of amusement of which the drama was one of the most popular expressions—was only dormant during the gloom and distress of the Civil War, and not dead. Once the crisis of affairs was past and the Commonwealth established, dramatic performances began to crop up again. At first this happened in the way of private entertainments at the houses of the great, Holland House being one of the most conspicuous of these; but public performances were also begun tentatively at such places as the Red Bull, where a company was got together by Rhodes, former prompter at the Blackfriars house. The performances there and at other of the inn-yards, if not openly tolerated, were winked at by the authorities. As soon, however, as the Restoration was an accomplished fact, and it was felt that the Puritans' domination was gone, dramatic performances began to be frequented, and the oppressed actors to hold up their heads and take courage. "To the Red Bull," wrote Pepys in March 1661, "where I had not been since plays came up again"; though he is obliged to record that there was "confusion and disorder" among the performers, and not more than ten besides himself in the pit, and not one hundred in the whole house.

At the Cockpit in Drury Lane, Davenant had already

produced some of the entertainments of "declamation and music" with which he had achieved success at noblemen's houses,—one of these entertainments, *The Siege of Rhodes*, being memorable for the fact that in the records of it we have the earliest mention of English women performing upon the public stage. This was in 1656. Four years later, Pepys records his seeing female actors for the first time, the play being *The Beggar's Bush*, which he describes as "very well done, and here the first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage." In the same year, Davenant opened a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he is credited with having used the earliest movable scenery that was seen on the English stage. Before his death he built a larger theatre in Dorset Gardens, whither the company migrated in 1652, to play for ten years with growing success.

Soon after Charles II.'s entry into London, theatrical matters were regularized by the granting of two patents, the one to Davenant's company at Lincoln's Inn Fields (and subsequently at Dorset Gardens), the other to Thomas Killigrew's company at the Cockpit in Drury Lane. These date from 1662 and 1663 respectively. Davenant's players were known as the "Duke of York's Company," Killigrew's as the "King's Servants." The latter were technically part of the royal household; they took an oath of loyalty at the Lord Chamberlain's office, were privileged to wear his Majesty's uniform, and ranked as "Gentlemen of the Chamber." In 1682 the two companies were united, and opened in November of that year, under the designation of the "King's Company," at the Drury Lane Theatre built by Sir Christopher Wren.

The arrangement of the house and stage at this period was a modification of what had been familiar in

the more fortunate days before the turmoil of war. The stage had shrunk, and was no longer, as in Elizabethan days, merely a platform in the midst of the spectators; but it still projected some way into the body of the theatre, in a fashion long preserved in certain houses. At each side of this projecting portion was a door, through which the characters in the play made their entrances and exits. Boxes were built above these doors, behind the drop-scene, an arrangement which lingers still in some of the older opera-houses. The curtain thus hung behind the projecting portion of the stage, and in front of it were spoken the Prologues and Epilogues which were so prominent a feature in seventeenth-century plays. So much did this arrangement seem a necessary part of the order of things, that Colley Cibber in his "Apology" complains of the curtailment of the stage that took place when Drury Lane Theatre was remodelled.

There were usually, besides a cheap "pit," three tiers of seats. Seats in the lowest of these tiers, which was all arranged in boxes, were priced at three or four shillings; the second tier was mostly occupied by open seats, with a few boxes, the price here being one shilling and sixpence; the topmost tier was a shilling gallery. It must be borne in mind that these sums equalled twice or thrice their value in the money of to-day. Performances were in the afternoon, usually at half-past three; but at the court theatre at Whitehall, the play began about eight and lasted till near midnight.

The theatre, besides being a much-frequented source of entertainment, became also a sort of lounge and *rendez-vous*. For a while the custom existed that any one could walk into the pit without payment, so long as he retired before the conclusion of the act that was in progress; so that a gallant could go in, look round

for his friends, join them if he saw them, or, if not, walk out again unchallenged. Pepys records how on one occasion he saw an act of two or three plays successively on one day without payment! It is obvious that a liberty of this sort was bound to be abused, and it was soon forbidden. It had frequently resulted in disorderly scenes in the pit, and even in disturbances between members of the audience upon the stage. Ultimately it became necessary to issue edicts to prevent spectators forcing themselves into the playhouses without payment.

Satirical advice to a "young blood" as to his behaviour in the theatre is given in the following passage from Samuel Vincent's "Young Gallant's Academy," published in 1674:—

"Let our gallant (having paid his half-crown and given the doorkeeper his ticket) presently advance himself into the middle of the pit, where, having made his honor to the rest of the company, but especially to the Vizard-Masks, let him pull out his comb and manage his flaxen wig with all the grace he can. Having done so, the next step is to give a hum to the China-Orange Wench, and give her her own rate for her oranges (for 'tis below a gentleman to stand haggling like a citizen's wife), and then to present the fairest to the next Vizard-Mask."

Pepys frequently records his visits to the pit, when he went alone to the play; on one occasion he complains of the growing number of "ordinary 'prentices and mean people" that frequent it. In his less prosperous days he favoured the less expensive seats, till an embarrassing occasion occurred when he was "troubled" at being seen in the one-and-sixpenny seats by four of his office clerks who were in the half-crown places. Ladies usually sat in the first or the second circle;

never in the pit. Commonly they wore masks, to hide the blushes that the licentiousness of many of the plays would at all events be expected to produce. The pit, however, with the attractions of diversion that it offered from the presence of the impudent orange-girls and other wenches of easy manners, was popular with the men, who apparently were not unwilling even to leave their fair companions sitting in the boxes and slip away downstairs. "I will not go," says Alithea in Wycherley's *Country Wife*, "if you intend to leave me alone in the box, and run into the pit, as you use to do."

The "booking" of seats being still a thing of the future, gentlemen's servants used to be sent to occupy seats in the better parts of the house and keep them till their masters arrived. "The stinking footman's sent to keep your places," is a line that occurs in a prologue to a play of 1672. On their master's arrival the servants would retire to the gallery, which became practically their perquisite. This invasion of the gallery by the "gentlemen's gentlemen" became in time a nuisance with which managers found it very difficult to cope. The lackeys aped their masters' want of courtesy to the players and to the less sophisticated part of the audience, and their chatter and jesting vied successfully with that of the dearer parts of the house, while the soberer spectators protested in vain against this ill-bred interference with their pleasure. Dryden contrasts the different elements in the audience in his "Prologue for the Women, when they acted at the Old Theatre, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields":—

" Here's good accommodation in the pit;
The grave demurely in the midst may sit,
And so the hot Burgundian on the side
Ply vizard mask and o'er the benches stride.

Here are convenient upper boxes too,
 For those that make the most triumphant show ;
 All that keep coaches must not sit below.
 There, gallants, you betwixt the acts retire,
 And at dull plays have something to admire."

For all this peacocking of the gallants and fair ladies at the theatres, and despite the fact that the theatre of the seventeenth century was to many merely a fashionable lounge, there was still a very keen appreciation of the drama. Plays were ruthlessly criticized by the more intelligent part of the audience, and their good and bad points taken with a quick appreciation. New plays in preparation were previously announced from the stage at the close of a performance, and advertised by broadsheets stuck on posts in the town, as had been the old custom.

The genial and oft-quoted Pepys is a mine of illustration as to the theatres of his day ; and, though he does not shine as a judge of plays, he had a keen sense of good acting, and was an excellent chronicler of the tattle of the *coulisses*. From him, too, we know of the King's visits to the play, and, in consequence, of the various changes in the royal favourites. Pepys had a heart very susceptible to the charms of the actresses ; "but Lord !" he says, "their confidence ! and how many men do hover about them as soon as they come off the stage, and how confident they are in their talk !"

A revolution in the scenic setting of the plays was gradually taking place. In the "Masques," which were performed mainly in the houses of the nobility, scenery and mechanical effects had reached a considerable elaboration, particularly under the ingenious hand of Inigo Jones, who designed dresses, movable

scenery, and mechanical devices for a number of masques by Ben Jonson, Heywood, Davenant, and others. This, as the vogue of the public theatres revived, exercised a great influence upon the staging of plays there. Another indirect result was the complete roofing-in of the theatres and the giving of the performances by artificial light, although the hour of performances remained about the same as heretofore. Wren's Drury Lane was at first open to the sky over the pit, as in the old days, but the space was eventually covered in by a glass cupola.

Before the union of the two "patent" theatres there was of necessity a keen rivalry between the two troops of actors. Both included men of worth and ability—"the best set of English actors yet known," Cibber calls them—though Davenant's company contained on the whole the greater talent. Among the most notable in the "King's" company were Charles Hart, Michael Mohun, John Lacy, Edward Kynaston and William Cartwright. Of these, Hart and Mohun had fought in the Civil War. The former, who was a grandnephew of Shakespeare, was a lieutenant in Prince Rupert's regiment; Mohun was also in the Royalist ranks. Hart has a further claim to remembrance as having coached the famous Nell Gwynne for the stage; she was a later addition to this company, which at the Restoration included amongst its ladies the more faintly remembered Rebecca Marshall and the Mrs. Knipp who figures prominently in portions of Pepys' records.

Lacy was dramatist as well as comedian, and is memorable as the original Bayes in *The Rehearsal* when it was produced in 1671. Kynaston was famous for his impersonation of female characters in his youth, and was one of the last male actors of such parts, for the new fashion of "women actors" was imported from

France in his day; in his maturity, too, he was no mean performer in more serious parts. Cartwright, who during the Civil War had started a bookseller's business, and resumed acting at the Restoration, died a man of some substance, and bequeathed his books and pictures to Dulwich College, an institution founded some sixty years before by another actor, the famous Edward Alleyn, who had been the original Tamburlaine and Faustus of Marlowe's dramas.

The mainstay of Davenant's company was Thomas Betterton. He joined the company as a young man of about five-and-twenty, and made an immediate and remarkable success as Hamlet in 1661. In this part Davenant taught him the true Shakespearean "tradition," Davenant having seen it played, as we are told, at the Blackfriars Theatre by Joseph Taylor, who was instructed by Shakespeare himself. As Mercutio, Othello, Brutus, and Macbeth, Betterton afterwards repeated, if he did not eclipse, his first success. Besides his supremacy as an actor, he was also distinguished as a theatrical manager, his ability in this direction being so well recognized that he visited Paris, at the King's command, to become acquainted with various details of stagecraft in which it was thought the English stage could bear improvement. He went to the new Drury Lane at the amalgamation of the two companies in 1682, was a member of the company at the Lincoln's Inn Theatre, which was opened some twelve years later, and opened Sir John Vanbrugh's theatre in the Haymarket in 1705. It was in the last-named theatre (which was on the site of the present His Majesty's) that he made his final appearance, as Melantius in *The Moid's Tragedy*, only a couple of days before his death, when he was weak and in pain, but still capable of efforts that roused his audience to

enthusiasm. Testimony to his lovable and admirable character as a man is as strong as it is to his pre-eminence as an actor; and as an actor this "phoenix of the stage," as Colley Cibber calls him, was as remarkable in comedy as in tragedy. In tragedy he was perhaps at his greatest. "I never heard a line in tragedy come from Betterton," says Cibber, "wherein my judgment, my ear, and my imagination were not fully satisfied; which, since his time, I cannot equally say of any one actor whatsoever."

Nell Gwynne appeared as a member of the King's Company at the original Drury Lane Theatre in 1665, when she was fifteen or sixteen. In the serious part in which she made her *début* (that of Cydaria in Dryden's *Indian Emperor*) she made no great impression; it was not until she undertook comic parts that this most impudent of orange-girls, whose rough wit and ready repartee had made her the darling of the pit, showed any particular histrionic ability. The speaking of prologues and epilogues, where natural wit was of obvious service, was her strong point. She had the charm of audacity and irrepressible merriment; and, moreover, she danced remarkably well. What she knew of the technique of acting had been taught her by Hart. She played for five years at Drury Lane; then, after an interval of a year or two, at the Dorset Gardens Theatre with Davenant's company; then again at Drury Lane. After the union of the theatres she retired from the stage. Her amours were many, her lovers including the king and the erratic and brilliant Lord Buckhurst; one of her sons, of whom the king was father, was created Duke of St. Albans. A spasmodic generosity, not uncharacteristic of her type, gained her among the groundlings a popularity that overlooked her frailties; but it is not too much to say that an undue flavour of

romance has been allowed to gather round the repute of this "impudent comedian."

The rivalry between the two companies became intolerable, particularly to the King's Company, many of whose players had deserted to the opposition; in 1682 the two were united and the two patents merged into one. The King's Company was decaying rapidly, and would have disappeared under the stress of competition. It was, indeed, virtually extinguished when the union was accomplished, for the other and robuster company contained the bulk of the available talent. The public was the gainer by the change, and the event inaugurated a second short era of successful achievement.

Of the Restoration dramatists, Dryden and Otway in tragedy, and D'Urfey, Etherege, Sedley, Aphra Behn, and Wycherley in comedy, are the most conspicuous. French influence was very strong in both departments of the drama, and continued so for some time. In comedy it was a particularly good model, and the attempt to imitate it led to a greater effort to depict character and manners, with less reliance upon mere licentiousness and buffoonery. That taint, it is true, lingered for some time, but comedy presently developed on far more individual lines than the artificiality of its conditions allowed to tragedy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNION OF THE THEATRES, AND AFTER.

THE union of the two companies was, as we have seen, for all practical purposes the absorption into Davenant's company of the talent that remained in the King's Company. There had already been serious defections from the latter. Kynaston, amongst others, had joined the rival house; Hart, Mohun, and Nell Gwynne left the stage after the amalgamation; and Davenant's players already included Betterton in their ranks.

The amalgamation only lasted twelve years. It was a period of great initial promise, and of some achievement; but by degrees bad management, seconded by outside influences, produced the inevitable disruption. Our knowledge of the internal politics of the stage during these years and those that immediately succeeded them is fairly full, thanks to the vivid account of contemporary affairs given by Colley Cibber in his "Apology," as he named his vigorous and entertaining account of his dramatic career. He joined the company in 1690, when, besides Betterton and Kynaston, it included Mr. and Mrs. Leigh, Nokes, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Mountfort, and Mrs. Bracegirdle. Cibber made only a moderate success at first, but eventually became distinguished for his performance of certain comic parts, and still more by his ability as a playwright. His first play, *Love's Last Shift*, produced in 1696, was one of the few of its day that escaped condemnation at the hands of

intelligent contemporary criticism. He wrote some thirty plays in all, and was appointed Poet Laureate in 1730, soon after which he retired from the stage.

During the time that the "union" lasted, the Theatre Royal was indebted to the pens of many able writers—Dryden, D'Urfey, Congreve, Wycherley and others—who to a great extent created a "comedy of manners," though licentiousness coloured their work to a degree that now seems amazing. The level of acting was high, and a considerable advance was made in what we should now call character-acting. In the matter of costume some curious conventions grew up, and were in some cases maintained till Garrick's time. Among these were the wearing, by all "heroic" characters, of a headdress of nodding plumes, the "forest of feathers" that Hamlet alludes to in his scene with the players; coarse black wigs and whitened and disfigured faces for "murderers" and the like; brilliant red wigs for Jews, and so forth. The actors themselves were courted and made much of, and for the most part acquired such an overweening idea of their importance as has not been paralleled till the present day. They enjoyed, it must be remembered, certain very definite privileges as "His Majesty's Servants," one of the most convenient of these being immunity from ordinary arrest for debt. The tastes of the Court and the temperament of the monarch were such as to encourage the actors to make very free with their opportunities and to breed an overbearing spirit in those that were popular favourites; while, at the same time, the proclivities of both monarch and audiences were such as to lead to the gradual debasement of the drama. Charles's predilections were more for the elaborate display of the masque than for the poetry of the drama, and still more for the licentiousness of an Aphra Behn than for honest

fun or clean wit. The flood of viciousness which overspread the comedy of the time—a time which could tolerate Dryden's *Limberham*, Wycherley's *Country Wife*, or the obscenities of Aphra Behn—reflected the manners that were in vogue at Court and among the Court's followers, manners that were an inevitable accompaniment of the reaction from the recent trammels of Puritanism. It is instructive to remember that Aphra Behn is buried in Westminster Abbey.

The tide of indecency was eventually checked to a considerable degree, and the acceptance of wholesome work made possible, by Jeremy Collier's "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage," which appeared in 1698. This work, whose earnest purpose was immensely aided by the author's keen and vivacious style ("harmoniously and becomingly blending mirth with solemnity," as Macaulay afterwards said of it), nobly swept the ground from under the feet of the licentious writers and their apologists. Collier brought to bear upon his argument not merely prejudice, for that alone would have been ineffectual, but a thorough knowledge of his subject, a searching humour and an uncompromising courage. Vanbrugh, Congreve, and others attempted replies, but to these Collier furnished rejoinders that amply upheld his case; and the result of his crusade was a stricter restraint and the possibility of a finer and more decent style of writing. It is rarely that a single controversial work has had so complete an effect, nor is it less rare for a book written from so thoroughly unpopular a standpoint to be penned in so vivaciously attractive a style and to prove itself so thoroughly informed with knowledge.

The management of the Theatre Royal rapidly deteriorated after 1690. At that time an enterprising

and unscrupulous attorney, Christopher Rich, had by purchase become joint owner with Charles Killigrew of the patents which governed theatrical performances. Killigrew took no active share in the management, and so became a negligible quantity ; while Rich, who thus practically had everything in his hands, was from the first continually entangled in quarrels with actors, authors, shareholders, in fact with every one connected with the theatre. His legal training enabled him to take advantage of every quibble and trick to best his opponents, who usually gave up the fight from sheer exhaustion ; consequently he secured his position as a rapacious, dictatorial and not over-honest manager who had little or no qualifications to fit him to direct the theatre over which he had assumed the sole control. The theatrical historian Genest sums him up as "a despicable character, without spirit to bring the power of the Lord Chamberlain to a legal test, without honesty to account to the other proprietors for the receipts of the theatre, without any feeling for his actors, and without the least judgment as to plays and players."

It was impossible that his company should be loyal to such a manager as this. The pieces presented began to lose their power of attracting audiences, and the receipts to diminish. Thereupon Rich tried the fatal expedient of diminishing the actors' salaries and employing inferior players to play prominent parts. As a result, he soon had the principal members of the company in open revolt ; and a seeming way out of the difficulty was found by King William's granting (in 1695) a separate patent to Betterton, Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle, and licensing them and their company to play in a separate theatre which they fitted up in a disused tennis-court in Lincoln's Inn Fields. These actors found a useful auxiliary in Congreve, the most

prominent dramatist of the day, who cast in his lot with them and took an active share in the management of the new theatre. This opened with Congreve's *Love for Love*, "which," says Cibber, "ran on with such extraordinary success that they had seldom occasion to act any other play till the end of the season."

At first the new house had all the best of it. The ablest actors from the old theatre had seceded to it, and its novelty drew the town in spite of Rich's attempts to make Drury Lane attractive. By degrees, however, the novelty wore off, and the management felt the pinch of the heavy expenses incurred in starting the new venture. At Drury Lane, moreover, the younger actors were improving with practice, Vanbrugh had stepped into Congreve's shoes, and, with the help of the few experienced seniors who had remained there, the old house came by degrees to give performances not much inferior to those of the seceders.

Colley Cibber had become a member of the Drury Lane company before the disruption, and remained faithful to it. Besides his "Apology," another entertaining source of information as to the theatrical events of these days is a work entitled "A Comparison between the two Stages," which appeared in 1702, when the rivalry was at its keenest. It is attributed to Charles Gildon, a miscellaneous writer who was also a dramatist. In the form of dialogues between friends who meet to discuss the stage and its concerns, it not only contains some searching criticism and much detailed information about the fortunes of individual plays and players, but also sheds some interesting side-lights on the social life of the day.

In this work one of the interlocutors confesses himself to be "in a perplexity" concerning the success of the two play-houses. "I have often wondered," he

says, "how they have so long subsisted in an age so barren of good plays and in such a dearth of wit." He notes that "the emulation between 'em" had (in 1702) already lasted for seven years, in spite of the difficulties that beset both houses. Sixteen of the old company had left Drury Lane, thus robbing it of its best talent; and yet it held on pertinaciously, though "sunk into a very despicable condition" as the result of Rich's methods of management. The new house, on the other hand, though better equipped with actors and more honestly managed, had with difficulty tided over its initial expenses, and there was much "dunning the noblemen" to finance it. It had the advantage in popularity at first, but the audiences, says Gildon, "being in a little time sated with the novelty of the new house, returned in shoals to the old," where the younger talent was beginning to mature. By degrees it became evident that the town could not furnish two regular audiences, and theatre-goers took to visiting Lincoln's Inn for tragedy and Drury Lane for comedy.

The necessity of attracting an audience by hook or by crook made the rivalry more desperate, and to this end devices of all kinds were tried. If Rich played what he considered to be a good card at Drury Lane, Betterton was obliged to try and trump it in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and vice-versa. Extraneous attractions of all kinds were introduced—singing, dancing, "foreign postures and pantomimists"—anything, in fact, that would create any sort of sensation. The old house, says Gildon, called in "the Fiddle, the Voice, the Painter, and the Carpenter to help 'em; and what neither the Poet nor the Player could do, the Mechanic must do for him. . . . The Opera now possesses the Stage." So Lincoln's Inn had to follow Drury Lane's lead and take to opera also, but the restricted size of

the stage was so much against this that Betterton gave it up and tried revivals of Shakespeare. Rich, not to be outdone, replied with revivals of Ben Jonson. "They fell to task," says Gildon, "on the *Fox*, the *Alchymist*, and *Silent Woman*, who had lain twenty years in peace. They drew these up in battalia against *Harry the 4th* and *Harry the 8th*, and then the fight began."

Gildon, who has a very proper sense of the dignity of the drama, draws a sad contrast between this state of things and what was the case in the "palmy days." Then, he says, the Duke of Monmouth brought a French dancer to London, but no one would go to see him, for "the plays were then so good, and Hart and Mohun acted 'em so well, that the audience would not be interrupted for so short a time, though 'twas to see the best Master in Europe." Whereas now, he says, a stage that had "kept its purity a hundred years (at least from this debauchery) is prostituted to Vagabonds, to Caperers, Eunuchs, Fiddlers, Tumblers, and Gipsies."

One piece of criticism of Gildon's, to quote him yet once more, is of general application. "Sometimes," says he, "a song or a dance may be admitted into a play without offending our reason. I won't say it is at any time necessary, for some of our best tragedies have neither; but perhaps it may be done without offence, sometimes to alleviate the attention of the audience, to give the actors time and respite, but always with regard to the scene, for by no means must it be made a business independent of that. In this particular our operas are highly criminal, the music in them is for the most part an absurd impertinence. For instance, how ridiculous is it in the scene in *The Prophetess*, where the great action of the drama stops and the chief officers of the army stand still with their

swords drawn to hear a fellow sing, 'Let the soldiers rejoice'; faith, in my mind, it is as unreasonable as if a man should call for a pipe of tobacco just when the priest and his bride are waiting for him at the altar. The examples are innumerable, no opera is without them."

The popularity of opera led to the planning of a special theatre for such performances. The project was favoured by the Court, perhaps because it offered an opportunity of closer control than was possible with the older patents. Capital was advanced by "persons of quality," and by the spring of 1705 the town was possessed of a new and magnificent house built in the Haymarket upon the site now occupied by His Majesty's Theatre. It was designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, who, besides being a dramatist, was an architect of no mean powers; but the original building, being faulty in its acoustic qualities, was subsequently a good deal remodelled. The Queen's Theatre, as the new house was called, was opened in April 1705 with an opera performed by a company of singers from Italy—"the worst," says a contemporary, "that ever came from thence"—with the result that the players were at once hissed off the stage. Thereupon Betterton, who was finding the strain of his Lincoln's Inn Fields venture too great for him, joined forces with Vanbrugh and transferred his company to the new theatre. Except for a considerable success with Vanbrugh's *The Confederacy* (in which Doggett, of "Doggett's Badge" fame, made one of his greatest hits) affairs did not prosper under the new conditions. Betterton, now an old man of failing powers, was compelled to leave the greater part of the management in Vanbrugh's hands, and Vanbrugh was not a good manager. Nor does he seem to have been particularly scrupulous; for, whereas those who

had supported the scheme for the new house had done so in the belief that it would constitute an opposition to the old patents, Vanbrugh contrived that his theatre should be leased to Owen Swinny, who was a hanger-on of Rich's, thus paving the way for an admixture of Rich's Drury Lane company with the attenuated remains of the old Duke of York's. Colley Cibber was amongst the Drury Lane players who acted under Swinny, whose first season was successful. According to Cibber, however, the new house was too much out of the way. "The City, the Inns of Court and the middle part of the town," he says, "which were the most constant support of a theatre and chiefly to be relied on, were now too far out of the reach of an easy walk, and coach-hire is often too hard a tax upon the Pit and Gallery."

By the end of 1707 various causes (among which were a quarrel between Swinny and Rich, and persistent wire-pulling on the part of Rich's backers at Court) resulted in an edict of the Lord Chamberlain to the effect that only operas should be performed at the Queen's Theatre, and only plays without singing or dancing at Drury Lane. The obvious effect of this was to recreate Rich's monopoly at Drury Lane; and in spite of its protests the older house, whose players petitioned that they had "by their long labours and diligence (notwithstanding many discouragements) improved themselves into an able and active company, to the general satisfaction of the town," was obliged to receive the Haymarket actors, the amalgamated company being announced as the "United Company of Comedians." Under this style an opening was made at Drury Lane in January 1708. Rich professed sympathy with the abortive petition of his Drury Lane company, but it is difficult to believe that he can have

been displeased at the disappearance of competition that was bound to result from the order limiting plays to Drury Lane and opera to the Queen's Theatre.

The "United Company" included the names of Betterton, Wilks, Booth, Cibber, Estcourt, Pinkethman, Doggett, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Oldfield. Betterton acted but seldom, owing to age and physical infirmities; but the company was a powerful one and the performances reached a high level. All went prosperously for a time and fairly smoothly, the more so as Rich's autocracy had been a good deal impaired by the growing influence of a certain Henry Brett, who had acquired a considerable share in the patent. This share Brett assigned (in 1708) to Wilks, Cibber, and Estcourt, and with this transference began the final decline of Rich's power. Wilks was stage-manager; Cibber, Doggett, and others had the advantage of a popularity that Rich's chicanery had alienated from him; and circumstances culminated in a revolt against Rich. This meant the end of his reign, for he was peremptorily ordered to close the theatre until he had satisfied the grievances of his company, which he never did.

The salaries of the chief actors at this time are on record. Betterton received £4 a week, and £1 for his wife, "although she does not act"; Cibber, £5; Mrs. Oldfield, £4; Estcourt, £5; Wilks, £7, he being stage-manager as well as actor; each of these, moreover, claiming a considerable sum by the customary "benefit nights" that were their perquisite.

When Rich was ousted from Drury Lane, his financial interest in the theatre passed (not without considerable wrangling) to William Collier, a member of parliament. He, in his turn, found theatrical management a more formidable task than he had

anticipated, and the combination of ill-success with frequent defections of prominent members of his company led him to invite Cibber, Wilks, and Doggett to assume the management, he himself remaining merely a "sleeping partner" with a monetary stake in the business.

The prosperity that the new triple management brought to Drury Lane was happily not endangered by the fact that at first its existence depended solely on licence granted by favour of the authorities; this was so from the fact that Rich, in whom the old "patent rights" to produce plays were still vested, was projecting a new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He died, however, before it could be opened.

In contrast to the new prosperity at Drury Lane, opera at the Queen's Theatre ended in ruining Swinny, who eventually bolted in 1711, leaving only debts behind him. His period of management is chiefly notable as marking the establishment of Italian opera as a form of entertainment in England. At first it was a hybrid entertainment, Italian "principals" singing in their own tongue to the accompaniment of English from the rest of the singers, a condition of affairs which Addison's ridicule helped to kill. Just before Swinny's collapse, however, Handel's *Rinaldo*, the first opera he produced in England, was performed at the Haymarket house.

The disturbed years just described, anterior to the famous triple management of Drury Lane, were remarkable for the production of a number of brilliant plays, or, at any rate, of a number of plays from brilliant pens. Dryden, Congreve, Wycherley, Cibber, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, Sedley, Steele—these are names that mean much in the history of the drama. The post-Restoration drama had not, indeed, the solid qualities of the Elizabethan, and had but little of its grandeur of aim;

it was overlaid with licentiousness to an extent that is unforgivable; but it atoned for this in some measure by sheer brilliance and audacity of wit. As was but natural under these conditions, comedy was its best outcome; the poetic drama had become stilted in form and altogether unreal in sentiment, or, at any rate, must seem so to us to-day.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE DRURY LANE "TRIUMVIRATE" TO GARRICK.

COLLEY CIBBER's well-known and much-quoted account of the Drury Lane management in his time is justifiably coloured with pride at the achievement he and his fellow-managers accomplished. The prosperity of the theatre was doubled; the company worked loyally together; honesty and decency of behaviour were the rule instead of the exception. "In the twenty years while we were our own directors," says Cibber, "we never had a creditor that had occasion to come twice for his bill; every Monday morning discharged us of all demands, before we took a shilling for our own use." A welcome contrast this to the bygone Richian methods! Chetwood, who was the prompter at Drury Lane, fully bears out all that Cibber says on this score.

In their time, Chetwood maintains the stage to have been "in full perfection; their green-rooms were free from indecencies of every kind, and might justly be compared to the most elegant drawing-rooms of the prime quality; no fops or coxcombs ever showed their monkey tricks there, but, if they chanced to thrust in, were awed into respect; even persons of the first rank and taste of both sexes would often mix with the performers without any stain to their honour or understanding." They also achieved the feat of securing a clear stage for the actors, forbidding the

spectators to come upon the boards as they had formerly done to the embarrassment of the performers. *

Each of the three managers was a capable actor. Wilks possessed great personal charm, and was seen to best advantage in parts of an easy and natural kind; Cibber had a particular aptitude for parts that caricatured affectation; Doggett, for those of broad farce. On the business side of their collaboration, Cibber seems to have supplied the critical, as well as the venturesome, element; Wilks, the important element of personal charm and a capacity for smoothing down feathers ruffled by his colleague's manner; Doggett, in his turn, was an admirable business man, and his conscientious care of the theatre's accounts was invaluable.

How greatly this new tone in theatrical life was appreciated in the highest quarters is evident from a Royal Order of November 1711 forbidding any one to go behind the scenes at a performance. In the preamble to this it is admitted that the orders already given for the reformation of the Stage "have in great measure had the good end we proposed," and satisfaction is expressed that nothing is "acted contrary to religion or good manners." The three managers, besides winning good opinions, had substantial reward in the shape of receipts far greater than any theatre had hitherto reached. Congreve, Gay, Rowe, and Addison are the most famous of the many playwrights who were concerned with the earlier days of this management. Addison's *Cato* and Rowe's *Jane Shore* (two plays of widely opposite character), which were produced in 1713 and 1714 respectively, were among the most prominent of all their productions.

Cato, which Doran characterizes as "a compound of transcendent beauties and absurdity," is remarkable,

besides its intrinsic merits, as having established the position of Barton Booth, who as a Westminster boy had attracted attention by the "musical sweetness of his voice and his elegance of deportment" in the Westminster Plays. Betterton befriended and advanced Booth when the latter took to the stage as a profession, and Booth's impersonation of Cato in Addison's play now made him a personage to be reckoned with.

So popular did he become, both with the public and at Court, that before long he used all his efforts to be included in the management. Doggett was obstinately opposed to any such course; and, finding his opposition fruitless, resigned active participation in the management, and had recourse to lawsuits which ended in his discomfiture. He was obliged to acquiesce in being bought out of his share in the patent, and in seeing Booth take his place in the "triumvirate." Being subsequently fortunate in several financial ventures, he died a rich man some seven years later. Besides his reputation as an actor, he left behind him an abiding memento in the shape of the "Coat and Badge" annually competed for by Thames watermen on the first of August in commemoration of the accession of the House of Hanover to the English throne.

Doggett's businesslike qualities must have been missed, but the new management nevertheless enjoyed a long period of prosperity. This was, no doubt, in great measure due to the fact that all the three managers were able and popular actors, and fortunate in having a strong company under their command. Cibber became inflated with a sense of his importance and played the autocrat; but the deserved popularity that his two colleagues enjoyed among the rest of the

company, and with the public, helped the management over many difficult places.

There were, indeed, plenty of troubles to assail them from without. There were squabbles with the Lord Chamberlain and difficulties with Sir Robert Steele, besides the energetic competition of John Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields, which he had opened under Letters Patent in 1714. There Quin (who made his *début* at Drury Lane, but had gone over to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1717) was becoming a serious rival to Booth in popular favour. Rich, moreover, had given a fillip to the languishing fortunes of his house by the introduction of "pantomimes," dumb-show plays dealing with the adventures of Harlequin and Columbine, and presented with considerable elaboration of scenery and machinery. Rich himself was an excellent mimic, and excelled in the part of Harlequin. "New-fangled foppery," Cibber called it; nevertheless it proved so much to the taste of the town that Drury Lane was obliged to follow suit. Pantomime after pantomime was brought out at both houses, each trying to outdo the latter's last effort; and for a long time this form of entertainment remained a standing dish, to be returned to when other fare did not please the audiences' palate.

A curious feature of the competition between Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields was a mutual engagement entered into by the rival managers in 1722. By this they bound themselves not to engage each other's actors without consent, under penalty of a forfeit of £20. This high-handed arrangement quietly ignored the wishes of the actors themselves; no doubt it was designed to prevent such defections as that of Quin from Drury Lane.

The growing ill-health of Booth was the first portent of the dark days that were looming ahead. The death

of two of the triumvirate and the retirement of the third were not far off; the deaths of Anne Oldfield, Congreve, and Steele were, as will presently be seen, additional disasters, and the break up of the management could not long be delayed.

Meanwhile the centre of interest shifts for a while from Drury Lane to Lincoln's Inn Fields. At the latter house Gay's "Newgate pastoral," *The Beggar's Opera*, was produced in 1728 with a success that put the older theatre entirely in the shade. This satire against ministers and court favourites was offered to (and most unfortunately declined by) Cibber. Rich accepted it, and was rewarded by one of the most remarkable successes in dramatic history. The piece, which was a comedy interspersed with songs, was performed during two seasons with ever-increasing favour. The oft-quoted saying, that it "made Gay rich and Rich gay," was more than justified. Nothing that Cibber could do at Drury Lane made any impression upon its popularity or power of attraction; according to its foster-father, Swift, it even drove "Gulliver" out of people's heads. It brought money in welcome abundance to its producers, and made the fame of its performers,—notably of two, Thomas Walker, who played Macheath, and Lavinia Fenton, who drew the town with her impersonation of Polly Peachum. The latter became the craze of the day and captured the affections of the Duke of Bolton, who some twenty-three years afterwards, on the death of his wife, made the sprightly Lavinia his duchess.

For a long period this attraction, alternating with Quin's performances in tragedy, drew the town to Lincoln's Inn Fields; while Old Drury was as unlucky in its plays as in the fortunes of its players and its dramatists. Besides this, there was the additional

competition of a new theatre opened in the Haymarket in 1720, and of a theatre (for which Fielding was writing) in Goodman's Fields. The life of the Lincoln's Inn Fields house practically ended in 1732, when John Rich migrated to the newly-built Covent Garden Theatre. Although in a season from 1733 to 1734 an Italian Opera company performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields under Porpora's direction, as an opposition to Handel at the Queen's Theatre, there is practically nothing else to note in its history. Subsequently it was utilized as a barrack, an auction hall, and a warehouse, and was ultimately pulled down in 1848.

The series of disasters from personal causes that befell the Drury Lane triumvirate during the last five years of their reign was overwhelming. To begin with, Booth retired in 1728. He had been overtaken by severe illness, after a season of particularly brilliant acting; and when he reappeared it was obvious that he was a doomed man. His last season was simultaneous with the vogue of the *Beggar's Opera* at the rival house. For five years after his retirement he struggled against increasing illness, and wandered from place to place in search of health; eventually he fell into the relentless hands of a London quack, whose nostrums almost certainly killed him. He died in May 1733, and was buried at Cowley, near Uxbridge. Barton Street in Westminster perpetuated his memory in its name.

Booth's acting was the "grand style" at its best. Parts such as Cato in Addison's play of the name, Othello, or Pyrrus in *The Distressed Mother*, are those with which his name will always be bound up. He was a man of education and imagination, but was apt in his acting to set too much store upon moments of supreme effectiveness. For such moments he would save his energies, while, as a contemporary critic tells us, he

would "soften and slide over with an elegant negligence" the weak places in his parts. The adulation he received, coupled with his own sense of his powers, led him into occasional contempt of unappreciative audiences, for whom he would act indolently; ill-health had probably also something to do with this; but let him only realize that there was one intelligent spectator among his audience, and he would be on his mettle and all alert. While (as Doran tells us) he once so markedly refrained from exerting himself before a cold audience that "a note was addressed to him from the stage box, the purport of which was to know whether he was acting for his own diversion or in the service and for the entertainment of the public," on the other hand, when one night he was acting Othello rather languidly to a poor house, "he suddenly began to exert himself to the utmost in the great scene of the third act. On coming off the stage, he was asked the cause of this sudden effort. 'I saw an Oxford man in the pit,' he answered, 'for whose judgment I had more respect than for that of the rest of the audience'; and he played the Moor to that one but efficient judge."

The tale of misfortunes at Drury Lane was continued by the deaths of Congreve and Steele in 1729; by the death, in the following year, of Anne Oldfield, whose acting, as Dibdin declares, "embraced every description of tragedy and comedy," she possessing "some portion of every requisite that characterized the method of the old school"; the death, in 1732, of Wilks, a generous and kind-hearted man and a fine actor, inimitable as Macduff and Sir Harry Wildair, equally at home in both comedy and tragedy, described by Steele as unsurpassed in representing "the graces of nature," and yet excellent in such heavier parts as Hamlet, Othello, Jaffier in *Venice Preserved*, or Edgar

in *King Lear*; and, finally, the retirement (in 1733) of Cibber, who had been appointed Poet Laureate three years previously. A useful and shrewd manager, Cibber was also an excellent actor in a certain range of characters, a good writer of comedy, an industrious poet, and an honest man. His conceit was his weak point; still, as Dr. Johnson said, "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." He reappeared at intervals on the stage, after his "retirement," until 1745, published his entertaining autobiographical "Apology" in 1740, and died in 1757. Doran describes him as a man who to the end excelled in making the best of circumstances. To illustrate this he quotes an anecdote of Horace Walpole's hailing Cibber on his birthday (just two years before his death) "with a 'good-morrow,' and 'I am glad, sir, to see you looking so well.' 'Egad, sir,' replied the old gentleman, all diamonded and powdered and dandified, 'at eighty-four it's well for a man that he can look at all.'"

From the hands of the triumvirate Drury Lane passed into those of a "young man of the town" of the name of Highmore, who speedily ruined himself over it; and from his into those of a similar individual named Charles Fleetwood, an unthrifty and not over-scrupulous manager, whose sole claim to recognition is the fact of his having engaged Macklin to act at Drury Lane. His reign lasted some twelve years, and then the management came into the hands of James Lacy, who had been Rich's assistant manager at the new Covent Garden Theatre. To further anticipate the sequence of events, it will be convenient to state here that in 1746 Lacy took into partnership David Garrick, who had already acquired fame and a considerable

fortune. Garrick was to be sole manager of the stage, Lacy of business matters; and from this time there began for Drury Lane, under Garrick's direction, a brilliant epoch of thirty years, which demands separate consideration.

Meantime, in the period between Colley Cibber's retirement and Garrick's assumption of management there intervened some ten years that in many ways proved important to the fortunes of the various theatres. These, it may be convenient to recall, were Drury Lane, the King's Theatre (as the opera-house in the Haymarket was now called), Goodman's Fields, and the newly-erected Haymarket and Covent Garden Theatres.

At Drury Lane, as has been already said, the engagement of Charles Macklin, with his appearance as Shylock, was the only memorable incident during this period. Intrigues and discord were continually upsetting a management that was feeble and reckless by turns; and at the bottom of most of the trouble was Theophilus Cibber, the entirely discreditable son of the famous Colley. He seems to have been but an indifferent actor, with a love for notoriety that knew no checking by the bounds of good taste or good manners. His life closed in disgrace, and ended by his being drowned in shipwreck in 1758, when he was on his way to Dublin as member of a miscellaneous troupe of players.

Macklin, who had earned his discharge from the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre some years previously, owing, as it is said, to his obstinacy in persisting in a more "natural" style of acting in opposition to the traditional stilted method, triumphed over strong opposition when he appeared early in 1741 at Drury Lane in *The Merchant of Venice*. For many years the play had only been presented in a mutilated and per-

verted version called *The Jew of Venice*, in which Shylock was played as a low-comedy part. Macklin's determination to use the original text and to play the character as he conceived it was rewarded with a success that is historical, immortalized in Pope's "This is the Jew that Shakespeare drew." He was a brusque and irascible, but honourable and generous man, and a fine actor within certain limits.

As we shall see, his stage career was of unique length, lasting till he was in his ninetieth year. "Not a great tragedian," says Doran, "nor a good light comedian; but in comedy and farce where rough energy is required, and in parts resembling Shylock in their earnest malignity, he was paramount." In any case he dealt a blow to the old style of acting, and began a reform in that respect that his greater successor Garrick was to complete.

Partly by accident, and partly owing to the constant troubles at Drury Lane during Fleetwood's management and the era of Theophilus Cibber's mischievous ascendancy, the history of Drury Lane is, during the period we are considering, connected with that of the new theatre that had been built in the Haymarket in 1720. This was popularly known, in contradistinction to the King's Theatre, as the "little house" in the Haymarket. This house was the ancestor of the Haymarket Theatre of the present day, and stood next door to where the present house stands. There is extant a drawing, made in 1821, of the "little house" still standing at the north side of the present theatre, at whose completion it was demolished. It was built on the site of an old inn, by John Potter, a carpenter who had bought the site. It had no patent or licence, and existed practically on sufferance.

A "French comedy, with actors from Paris," with

which it opened, failed entirely; and for the first ten years of its life it was given over to miscellaneous entertainments, mainly musical or acrobatic when professional, occasionally dramatic when provided by amateurs.

Stilt-walking, acrobatic performances, and tight-rope dancing were to be seen there; among the professors of the latter was Madame Violante, who is chiefly remembered as having trained Peg Woffington for the stage. The first name of any consequence to be met with in connection with the Haymarket Theatre is that of Fielding. The great humorist of *Tom Jones* had already written several comedies after the Congreve model, and in 1730 produced at the Haymarket his *Tom Thumb*, a burlesque which unsparingly ridiculed the "grand manner" of contemporary tragedy, and at the same time tickled the ears of the groundlings with audacious personal satire. From 1735 to 1737, again, Fielding was manager of the theatre, and produced various of his comedies there until the Licensing Act of 1737 (which the nature of one of his productions had no small share in bringing about) put an end to his managerial career.

During the intervening years, from 1733 to 1735, the Haymarket was occupied by a group of actors who, in consequence of squabbles with the Drury Lane patentee, had seceded from there with Theophilus Cibber at their head. In spite of attempts on the part of the accredited patentees of the two old houses to dislodge them, they managed to hold the boards for a time. Eventually, as a result of further legal proceedings, they were ordered to return to Drury Lane. Macklin alone remained at the Haymarket under the brief Fielding management.

The famous Licensing Act of 1737 was the result of

official indignation at the freedom of satire that had been displayed on the stage, notable in Fielding's comedies and burlesques. It established the Censorship of Plays under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and definitely forbade the licensing of any more theatres in London than the two patent houses, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The King's Theatre was held to exist for Opera, and the Goodman's Fields house before very long closed its doors for ever; while the Haymarket managed to exist in defiance of the law, or by ingenious evasion of it, until its obtaining a partial patent (many years later) gave it an accredited status.

The last days of the Goodman's Fields house were rendered memorable by the appearance there, in October 1741, of David Garrick as Richard III. The Licensing Act, it may be mentioned, was evaded by plays being inserted in the programme as a nominally *gratis* "Interlude" between two parts of a "Vocal and Instrumental Concert" for which admission was paid. The playbill stated that the name-part in *Richard III.* would be played "by a young gentleman who never appeared on any stage." This was not exactly true; for Garrick, who was now twenty-four, had played there already as an amateur, and had performed professionally with its company at Ipswich under the *nom de guerre* of Lyddal. It was, however, his "official" *début*. He made an extraordinary impression upon the public and his critics, and played at Goodman's Fields till the theatre was finally closed in May 1742. After that he was at Drury Lane from 1742 to 1745, acted in Dublin in 1745 and 1746, and also at Covent Garden between 1745 and 1747. In the latter year he became joint manager of Drury Lane with Lacy.

To bring the history of the other theatres up to the point when the Garrick era at Drury Lane began—a period when the history of the English Stage centred for many years in the old house—it will be convenient to trace briefly here what was transpiring at the King's Theatre, where the history of opera in England was in the making, and at the newly-built Covent Garden theatre, for which John Rich had abandoned the old Lincoln's Inn Fields house.

Since the restriction of the King's Theatre to operatic performances, its fortunes had mainly depended upon the genius of Handel, who since 1710 had practically established himself in this country. His first opera, *Rinaldo*, was performed there in 1711 with such success that he followed it up with a series of similar works. Royal patronage was bestowed upon him, and permission given to establish at the King's Theatre a company of Italian opera singers under the strange title of the Royal Academy of Music. This enterprise proved a complete failure. It lasted some seven years with gradually waning fortunes, and collapsed in 1728 under the combined pressure of exhausted finances and the ridicule of the *Beggar's Opera*, which killed serious opera for the time being. After a short interval, however, Handel managed to carry on another operatic enterprise at the same house, and produced several new operas, as also his *Esther* and *Acis and Galatea* in 1732. A couple of years later this enterprise failed; largely on account of the vigorous opposition of the Italian composer Porpora, who managed, with another Italian operatic company, to make the moribund Lincoln's Inn house for a brief period the resort of fashion. Handel then threw in his lot with Rich at the new Covent Garden Theatre.

That was opened with great flourish in December

1732 with a revival of Congreve's *The Way of the World*, with Quin, Ryan, Pinkethman and others in the cast. It was a small house, well decorated and well equipped, but neither Congreve nor subsequent Shakesporean revivals seemed able to attract good fortune to it. Handel brought his operas to it in 1735, and for two years these alternated there with plays under Rich's direction, while Porpora took Handel's place at the King's Theatre with such success that Handel's connection with Covent Garden ended in 1737 with his bankruptcy.

Miscellaneous plays old and new, interspersed with Shakespeare, kept Covent Garden going in a modest way of merit for some years after this, without any particularly interesting features until the advent of the fascinating Peg Woffington. After her apprenticeship in a juvenile troupe which Madame Violante had taken from London to Dublin, where Peg had worked her way to popularity, the brilliant girl at the age of twenty-two induced Rich to engage her. She appeared at Covent Garden in 1740 as Sylvia in *The Recruiting Officer*, and subsequently in Wilks' old part of Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple*. During her brief career (for she was stricken down upon the stage in 1757 and died three years later) she oscillated between Covent Garden and Drury Lane. She played a wide range of characters, even undertaking Lady Macbeth, but is chiefly remembered for her impersonation of the gay, good-natured rake, Sir Harry Wildair. She was a jovial, witty, charitable woman, to whom for these qualities much may be forgiven, and an actress of remarkable charm and considerable native talent.

Rich had now a strong company at Covent Garden, including, besides the brilliant Woffington, Mrs. Horton, Ryan and Theophilus Cibber. Garrick was acting with

ever-increasing popularity at Drury Lane between 1742 and 1745, and to meet this opposition Rich engaged Quin and Mrs. Cibber. The latter, who was a charming singer and actress, was the sister of Thomas Augustine Arne, who had been latterly appointed "composer" to Drury Lane.

In 1743 Handel was again heard at Covent Garden, this time in Oratorio, his *Sampson* being first performed there in February and his *Messiah* in March of that year. On the triumph of *The Messiah* it is unnecessary to dilate; but it is curious to observe that an extra hundred were enabled to squeeze into the audience for its performance after an advertisement had been issued begging "ladies to come without their hoops and gentlemen without their swords."

From 1744 to 1745 Drury Lane had the best of it in the matter of actors. Garrick and Macklin were acting there, and Peg Woffington and Mrs. Cibber had gone over to them; to which powerful combination Rich could only offer Quin and Kitty Clive as a counter-attraction. For the succeeding two years better fortune attended Covent Garden, for Garrick joined its company and remained there, as fellow-player with Quin and Mrs. Cibber, until he joined Lacy in the management of Drury Lane in 1747. Garrick's natural and apparently unstudied method of acting was steadily making its way in the face of the "traditional" style of which Quin was still a vigorous exponent, and the contrast was admittedly instructive.

One more event of note remains to be recorded in the history of Covent Garden during these few years—namely, the production in 1747 of Handel's *Judas Maccabæus*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GARRICK PERIOD.

AFTER Fleetwood's collapse, the management of Drury Lane had passed into the hands of James Lacy, who from being an unsuccessful business man at Norwich had developed into a fairly able theatrical manager, owing a good deal to the experience he had gained at the new Covent Garden theatre as assistant to Rich. He was, at all events, honest ; and if his initial management at Drury Lane was none too successful, it was more from want of knowledge than want of pains. Garrick had acted at Covent Garden when Lacy was there, and had a respect for him, although Lacy had endangered that respect by making proposals to Garrick that the latter did not consider consonant with his rapidly improving position in public favour. When, however, Lacy now approached him with the offer of an equal share in the management of Drury Lane, Garrick accepted it, and henceforward their mutual relations were harmonious.

Drury Lane began the autumn season of 1746 under these auspices. Garrick had sole control of the stage, and was successful in enforcing discipline among the actors as well as decorum among the audience. The most significant of his reforms in the latter direction was his resolutely clearing the stage of spectators. It appears almost inconceivable to us that for so long,

even at an epoch of fine acting and sometimes elaborately staged plays, spectators should have been allowed to sit upon the stage, sometimes so encumbering the actors that these were obliged to shoulder their way through the fops to gain a clear space in which to perform. Rich had endeavoured to reform this abuse when he was at Lincoln's Inn Fields; but the only result at that time was a riot which led to the closing of the theatre, and was followed by a royal command that a guard of soldiers should attend during the performances at the patent houses. For many years after the presence of soldiers in the house ceased to be necessary the custom of stationing sentries outside the theatres in question was maintained.

Garrick's reputation was by this time assured. The striking triumph of his natural style of acting over the artificiality of the old school has already been adverted to. There was truth in Quin's saying, "If this young man is right, we are all wrong." A contemporary comment on Garrick's performance in *Richard III.* shows by implication where the difference lay. After paying a tribute to the easy naturalness of his voice, it goes on to say: "He is not less happy in his mien and gait, in which he is neither strutting nor mincing, neither stiff nor slouching. When three or four are on the stage with him, he is attentive to all that is spoke, and 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." Besides a number of fine Shakespearian impersonations, Garrick's record includes his appearance in a host of plays which can only appear to the reader of to-day as grandiloquent rubbish. We have, however, the testimony of his contemporaries as to the effect his genius

produced in such plays, transmuting their poor material into the semblance of something finer. Great actor as he was, it is quite possible that his superlative fame owed a little to his social success, for which he strove eagerly. Betterton, before him, was probably as fine an actor, if not finer; and his equals have no doubt been seen in some that followed him; but, when all is said, Garrick's is by far the most noteworthy figure in eighteenth century acting. In judging the histrionic successes of the period, it must be remembered that the sensibility of eighteenth century audiences was a very different thing from the comparative stolidity to which we are accustomed. For instance, Doran incidentally mentions in his account of a drama, now entirely forgotten, that at one pathetic passage "all the critics in the pit burst into tears, and then shook the house with repeated and unbounded applause,"—and all this caused merely by the attitude and touching voice of Spranger Barry in exclaiming the words, "Oh, look there!" as he pointed to Mrs. Cibber swooning in a pathetic part!

At the beginning of Garrick's management at Drury Lane there was no great opposition at the other houses. Quin soon acknowledged his inability to keep up a rivalry with the new star, and in a year or two left the stage altogether. As soon as he realized that Garrick was to be manager of Drury Lane, he abandoned Rich at Covent Garden and retired in a huff to Bath. Soberer reflection led him to wish that Rich would recall him, and there followed a terse correspondence: "I am at Bath. Yours, James Quin," wrote Quin to Rich; to which Rich replied: "Stay there and be damned. Yours, John Rich."

Quin returned, however, and played at Covent Garden till 1751, when he withdrew from the stage.

He died five years later, after a period of retirement as happy as it was brief. His society, as that of a man of taste and culture, was sought after ; old jealousies were forgotten, even between Garrick and himself, and new friendships were formed ; and after his death his personal kindness was as much in people's mouths as his excellence in some departments of acting.

Garrick had now command of a notable company. It included his old rival, Macklin, who after two years seceded to Covent Garden ; Spranger Barry and Mrs. Cibber, both much in favour with the public, their subsequent defection to Covent Garden (in 1750) being a serious blow to Drury Lane ; Mrs. Pritchard, "by nature for the stage designed, in person graceful and in sense refined," as Churchill sang ; the brilliant Peg Woffington, now at the zenith of her brief career ; Kitty Clive, matchless in certain kinds of comedy, who remained faithful to Drury Lane for the rest of her stage life, and survived that long enough to see the early triumphs of Mrs. Siddons, whose acting she enthusiastically described as "all truth and daylight" ; Delane, Barrington, Yates, Sparks, and other minor favourites.

Despite the praise that attended Garrick's acting as Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Benedick, Henry V., or in the low-comedy parts in which he showed an equal mastery, the competition of Covent Garden became formidable when the break-up of Garrick's company began and Spranger Barry and Mrs. Cibber enlisted under Rich. Barry appeared at Covent Garden as Othello, Julius Cæsar, Tamerlane, and King John ; Quin still held his own there, and appeared with Peg Woffington in *Macbeth* ; the versatile Peg and the charming Mrs. Cibber shone in everything they attempted ; and no sooner did one house mount an

attraction than the other followed suit. To Garrick's great disgust, even Rich's pantomimes drew the public away from Drury Lane; so much so, that Garrick acted Harlequin himself, and proved to be one of the best the stage had seen, surpassed only by the older Rich, whose inimitable Harlequin has already been mentioned. "If they won't come to *Lear* and *Hamlet*, I must give them this," said little Davy, and entered into the spirit of it as earnestly as into the portrayal of his finest parts. Doran tells us that "*Theobald's Harlequin Sorcerer*, which had often filled Lincoln's Inn Fields, was even more attractive at Covent Garden above a quarter of a century later. The company assembled at midday, and sometimes broke the doors open, unless they were opened to them, by three o'clock, and so took the house by storm. Those who could not gain admittance went over to Drury Lane, but Garrick found them without heart for tragedy;" the grown-up masters and misses had been deprived of their puppet show and rattle, and were sulky accordingly." And so it came about that Garrick played Harlequin in self-defence.

The most famous incident in the rivalry of this period was when, on the same night in September 1750, both houses put up *Romeo and Juliet*. Garrick played Romeo to the Juliet of Miss Bellamy and the Mercutio of Woodward; at Covent Garden Barry was the Romeo, Mrs. Cibber the Juliet, and Macklin the Mercutio. Garrick, though physically not the ideal Romeo, was the more ardent and impassioned, Barry the more tender and seductive; of the two Juliets, the natural style of the lovely Bellamy found champions as vigorous as those of the maturer beauty and tragic force of Mrs. Cibber. There is on record the remark of a fair critic of the rival Romeos, to the effect that if

she had been Juliet to Garrick's Romeo she would have expected him to climb up to her on the balcony, but that had Barry been the Romeo she would certainly have gone down to him! In this day of long "runs" one can hardly appreciate the sensation among the public when the play was performed for twelve consecutive nights at Covent Garden and thirteen at Drury Lane, where Garrick was not to be beaten! This constituted a grievance to a play-going public of limited numbers that was always at the theatre and so expected a constant change of bill. Epigrams resulted from the wits' sense of the grievance, one of the best known being—

" 'Well, what's to-night?' says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses;
'Romeo again!' he shakes his head:
'A plague on both your houses!'"

Barry's success as Romeo resulted in Garrick dropping it out of his repertory; but in another part in which they were contrasted—that of Lear, which was probably Garrick's finest effort—the tables were turned. In this part Garrick's finer intellectual equipment easily gave him the advantage. Another set of doggerel verses that took the town records this success:—

"The town has found out different ways
To praise its different Lears;
To Barry it gives loud huzzas,
To Garrick only tears.

A king, aye, every inch a king,
Such Barry doth appear;
But Garrick's quite another thing—
He's every inch King Lear."

And this despite the fact that Garrick dressed King Lear as an old gentleman of the eighteenth century, and used a crutch! Astonishment, however, at the illusion that was accomplished in spite of sublime anachronisms and incongruities in the way of dress need not be so great. The dresses worn were conventions, or at all events the distinguishing marks of certain characters were so; such as, for instance, the monstrous feathered turbans worn by "heroic" characters, a custom Garrick very properly abandoned. It is difficult for us to bear in mind, in these days of historical "accuracy" on the stage, that ever since the drama had emerged from its beginnings the actors had worn every-day dress, intensified in certain directions and made fanciful in others, but still without an attempt at synchronism. So that the sense of incongruity was not present; all was a matter of convention, down to such points as that of a comic character being denoted by the wearing of a red wig, and so forth. Garrick played Macbeth in a Hanoverian military uniform to a Lady Macbeth in hoops and feathers, but that fact disturbed no one's appreciation of their performances. This is further shown by the fact that later actors revived the feathered headgear for "heroes," without adverse comment until the day when a more fastidious taste for accuracy began to make itself felt.

To eighteenth century audiences the acting was everything, and was more thought of than the play, as we may fairly infer from the lamentably distorted and perverted shape in which the Shakespearean plays were produced even by Garrick. How little the matter of creating scenic illusion was considered, will be realized when we think of the crowd of spectators on the stage, and the edifice (like a "grand stand") that was customarily erected at the back of the stage to hold highly-

priced seats for patrons on "benefit" nights; though Garrick, to his credit, managed to do away with both abuses. It was the difficulty of providing compensation for the loss caused to "benefit-takers" by the abolition of the "building" on the stage that led Garrick to enlarge the auditorium of Drury Lane in 1762.

We need not pity eighteenth-century audiences, for what they had to put up with in those respects, for it did not trouble them in the least. Whether they lacked imagination, or had so much that it rose superior to such obstacles, need not be argued. We must also bear in mind the comparatively dim illumination of the stage, lit from above by some dozens of candles on two or three chandeliers; though Garrick established, later in his career, the custom of footlights, an innovation which he introduced after a visit to Paris.

Garrick undoubtedly, as far as his "acting versions" went, maltreated Shakespeare's plays sadly, as in his additions to *Macbeth*, or his retention of Tate's happy ending to *King Lear* and Howard's similar perversion of the end of *Romeo and Juliet*. Still, as Mrs. Parsons points out in her "Garrick and his Circle," he at all events acted the plays magnificently, and "nobody in his senses could think that Cibber and Garrick did Shakespeare as much harm as the poppy of oblivion," Garrick's own conviction that he was a purist in the matter of Shakespeare, and his claim that he "lost no drop of that immortal man," are significant testimony, *per contra*, of the condition into which appreciation of Shakespeare had fallen.

Besides the weighty rivalry of Covent Garden, Garrick had to contend with a smaller but very active opposition in the shape of the growing popularity of Foote at the Haymarket. Foote, who was an indifferent actor but a superb mimic, was drawing crowds

to the "little house" by his daring mimicry of public characters of all sorts. The entertainments (which were of a nondescript character, but always devised as a vehicle for showing off Foote's powers) at first existed on sufferance. They were not "stage plays," but Mr. Foote "inviting his friends to tea," or to an "auction of pictures," the pictures being the portraits his mimicry produced. In 1766, however, thanks to the sympathy aroused in certain quarters by an accident which deprived him of a leg, he was granted a patent, and it was to this accident that the Haymarket house owed the beginning of its life as a properly accredited theatre. Foote continued there till 1777, and died only a few months after his retirement in the latter year.

During the whole of the Garrick period at Drury Lane this merciless wit offered a powerful opposition to the "legitimate" actors. His success was not only one "of scandal" by reason of his mimicry and caustic wit. He was a dramatist of considerable merit, and wrote a number of plays and comedies that reflected contemporary manners with great spirit; but it is as a mimic that he will always be remembered. No one escaped his satire; and the town flocked to see him, every one eager to laugh at the reproduction of his friends' peculiarities while dreading an exhibition of his own. He is said to have been dowered with exactly the right physiognomy for a mimic—"a large, inexpressive apology for a face," one writer calls it—but a face which could take on any expression at its owner's will. His native wit was bitter, and knew little or no restraint by the bounds of decency or good feeling; and his recorded *bon-mots*, authentic and apocryphal, are legion. He bore the loss of his leg, and the tragic-comical result of the necessity for a false one, with considerable pluck. One of his best repartees was in this connec-

tion. Some one had the ill-taste to make fun of his misfortune, whereupon Foote snapped out, "Make no allusion to my weakest part; did I ever attack your head?"

Various other circumstances led to a drop in the fortunes of Drury Lane. There were riots in 1755, resulting from the importation of French dancers to grace a spectacular piece by means of which Garrick hoped to cope with the Covent Garden pantomimes, and riots again in 1763 on account of a change in prices. Moreover, Garrick had been deserted a year or two previously by Woodward, an accomplished light comedian, who was almost irreplaceable. Old favourites, such as *The Beggar's Opera*, were revived and enthusiastically received at Covent Garden, and the prestige of that house was still further increased by the success (in 1757) of the tragedy of *Douglas*, written by a young Presbyterian minister, John Home. With Barry as the Shepherd Norval (whom he dressed in a white satin suit!), supported by Peg Woffington, this drew the town, and Garrick had the mortification of seeing the triumph of a play which he had refused when it was, first of all, offered to him.

It was at this time that Garrick, relying on the old adage of the effect of absence on the heart, withdrew for more than a year and travelled with his wife in France and Italy. His progress abroad was a triumph. He was acclaimed everywhere, praised by men of distinction in all walks of life, and uniformly received with every sign of admiration. The happy result was that, on his return and reappearance at his own theatre in September 1765, the old enthusiasm was revived. He had made a pretence, on his return, of not intending to act any more, but it was probably never more than a pretence; and the rather embarrassing success of his

understudy in his absence was an additional spur to his desire to regain his ascendancy over his public. The latter in their turn realized, on Garrick's reappearance, how much they had missed during his absence (which was exactly what he intended) and welcomed him with exuberant warmth. His acting was pronounced finer than ever before, and until his retirement it was now "roses, roses all the way" so far as his personal reputation was concerned.

Lapse of years, however, was bringing about the inevitable break-up of his company. Only a few months after his return Mrs. Cibber died. In 1767 Powell, a capable young actor whom Garrick had trained till he was fitted to understudy him and to be his deputy while he was abroad, deserted him and went over to Covent Garden to share in the management. A year later Mrs. Pritchard retired, and her example was soon afterwards followed by Kitty Clive. As an offset to these defections, Barry returned to Drury Lane, but his best days were over; he did not carry his age in the wonderful way Garrick did, and his energies were failing. He reverted to Covent Garden two years before Garrick's retirement, played for the last time in the winter of 1776, and died a few months afterwards.

In spite of all this, and in spite of the fact that Garrick now no longer studied any new parts, the "great little man's" powers and popularity made Drury Lane the more important house; though it must be admitted that one event at Covent Garden, the production of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* in 1773, overshadowed it so far as the history of the drama is concerned.

Garrick determined to retire in 1776, being then in his sixty-ninth year. He gave a series of farewell

performances of his most famous parts, and at last in June 1776 made his final bow to the public. He survived his retirement but little more than two years, dying in January 1779, and was buried with every mark of respect in Westminster Abbey, not far from where Betterton, his great predecessor, slept. His widow survived him for many years and died a centenarian.

A notable incident of Garrick's later years, though one that at the time passed almost unnoticed, was the *début* of Miss Sarah Kemble, afterwards the renowned Mrs. Siddons, as Portia, in December 1775. She was helpless with nervousness when the critical moment came, completely failed to make any impression, and retired disappointed to the provinces to gain the further experience and confidence that were afterwards to make her the foremost actress of her time.

Garrick, as an actor, must have occupied a position in the public's regard very similar to that held by Henry Irving in our own day. He was ungrudgingly admitted to be at the head of his profession and accepted both at home and abroad as its representative. There were those who belittled his powers, but that was probably largely on account of the forcible contrast between his methods of acting and the stilted style that had become a beloved convention. Whereas (for instance) Quin, pompously declaiming heroic parts, had all the old stager's love for speeches "to dig his teeth into" (as Pinero has it in *Trelawny of the Wells*), Garrick was conspicuous for what was at all events a comparatively natural method of speech and acting; and whereas the actors of his day had in many cases come to regard their parts merely as vehicles for the display of declamatory powers, to the disregard of appropriateness, his great merit lay in his complete identification of himself with the character he represented, a point on which his

French critics (who were keen observers) laid great stress.

His literary taste was far from faultless, as his maltreatment of Shakespeare shows; but his acting was for the most part a triumph of realization of the author's intention. He was fond of insisting that to be a fine tragic actor a man must also be a fine comedian, and that comedy was the harder of the two branches of the art; and the equal excellence of his Abel Drugger and his King Lear proved that he was a practical example of the truth he maintained. His physical qualifications, in spite of some want of stature, were considerable; a well-shaped form, suppleness of limb and energy of gesture, a remarkably mobile face and particularly expressive eyes. Privately, he was a man worthy of esteem. He was accused by some of meanness, and of an over desire to cultivate the favours of the great; but the latter trait was probably the outcome of sagacity, and, as for the former, he was undoubtedly liberal-hearted, and was enabled to be generous in important matters by being careful in small, as is often the case with men who have had a hard struggle to win affluence. He was at least a gentleman, and as free from professional jealousy as human nature allowed.

His disappearance from Drury Lane synchronizes roughly with well-defined epochs in the histories of the other houses. The Haymarket lost Foote in 1777; the history of the King's Theatre, which was confined to operatic performances, offers at this time no very marked features, after Handel's abandonment of opera, save the production of Arne's *Artaxerxes* in 1762 and Gluck's *Orfeo* in 1770, and the house was burned down in 1789.

In 1789 Macklin, who was now over ninety, made his farewell to the stage at Covent Garden in the part

of Shylock. Rich's reign at Covent Garden had ended with his death in 1761, and before many years the want of a firm guiding hand made itself felt. The elder Colman, Powell, Rutherford and Thomas Harris had bought the patent in 1767 from Rich's successor, and this divided authority developed dissensions such as were to be expected. Powell died two years later, and Colman sold his share to Harris, who now became autocrat. Death was busy in the company. Spranger Barry (once Garrick's rival) and the popular Harry Woodward both died in 1777; and so the beginning of the Harris management at Covent Garden, with these old favourites gone and Macklin soon to disappear, meant the beginning of a new epoch at that house and the end of the epoch closed by Garrick's death.

A name famous in English literature is bound up with the history of Covent Garden in these years. Goldsmith's play, *The Good-natured Man*, which Garrick had rejected, was (through the offices of Goldsmith's friend Colman) produced at Covent Garden in 1768, but without any great success. The dramatic taste of the day had been too plentifully fed on tragedy and the sentimental drama to relish a play which deliberately ridiculed sentimentality. Five years later, however, backed again by Colman's friendly services and the enthusiastic support of Dr. Johnson and his adherents, Goldsmith's immortal *She Stoops to Conquer* saw the light at Covent Garden, in March 1773. The public now knew better what to expect from the author; the new comedy delighted them, and Goldsmith's triumph was complete.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM SHERIDAN TO THE KEMBLEs.

The first season of Thomas Harris's management at Covent Garden is memorable for the production, in January 1775, of Sheridan's comedy *The Rivals*. At first the play failed, but it was not long before it won its way into favour with the public. The reasons given for the initial failure are various. Sheridan is said to have attributed it at the time to the bad acting of one of the company; it is more likely, however, that it suffered at first (just as Goldsmith's plays had suffered) from the inability of a public accustomed to a sentimental pabulum to relish a work which ridiculed affectation and sentimentality. Besides this, the piece, as at first acted, suffered from hurried writing and excessive length. This Sheridan explicitly admits in his apologetic preface to the published version of the play. "Hurry in writing," he says, "has long been exploded as an excuse for an author; however, in the dramatic line, it may happen that both an author and a manager may wish to fill a chasm in the entertainment of the public with a hastiness not altogether culpable. The season was advanced when I first put the play into Mr. Harris's hands; it was at that time at least double the length of any acting comedy. I profited by his judg-

ment and experience in the curtailing of it, till, I believe, his feeling for the vanity of a young author got the better of his desire for correctness, and he left many excrescences remaining because he had assisted in pruning so many more."

Sheridan followed up this success quickly. *The Scheming Lieutenant* was produced in May and *The Duenna* in November of the same year. It is more than likely that Covent Garden would also have seen the production of *The School for Scandal*, had it not been that before the play was ripe for performance (and this time the author was devoting every care to the form and finish of his work) Sheridan became interested in Drury Lane. He had purchased part of Garrick's share of the patent and now assumed the management of the house, his partners in the venture being Thomas Linley (his father-in-law) and a certain Dr. Ford. Two years later Sheridan bought out Lacy from his share in the patent, and so became autocrat. How he ever managed to pay the large sums demanded for these shares (£5000 in Garrick's case and £45,000 in Lacy's) has puzzled his biographers; but the question has been illuminated by a quotation from Sir Walter Scott's "Journal," in which, referring to Moore's reference to the fact in his biography of Sheridan, Scott says "all the world knows he never paid it at all, and that Lacy was reduced to want by his breach of faith."

In his first season Sheridan made a brilliant start with an amended version of *The Rivals* and an adaptation from Vanbrugh's *Relapse* under the title of *A Trip to Scarborough*. He apologized for his treatment of Vanbrugh's comedy—Vanbrugh who, as Pope wrote, "wants grace, who never wanted wit"—in an entertaining rhymed prologue, in which he says :

"What various transformations we remark
From east Whitechapel to the west Hyde Park !
Men, women, children, houses, signs and fashions,
State, Stage, trade, taste, the humours and the passions ;
The Exchange, 'Change Alley, wheresoe'er you're ranging,
Court, City, Country, all are changed or changing ;
The streets, some time ago, were paved with stones
Which, aided by a hackney coach, half broke your bones.

But now weak nerves in hackney coaches roam,
And the cramm'd glutton snores, unjolted, home.

As change thus circulates throughout the nation,
Some plays may justly call for alteration ;
At least to draw some slender covering o'er
That *graceless wit* which was too bare before."

In May 1777 *The School for Scandal* was produced at Drury Lane, with immediate success. Mrs. Abington was the Lady Teazle; Thomas King, Sir Peter; William Smith, Charles Surface; and John Palmer, Joseph. The idea of the comedy had been germinating in Sheridan's mind for some years, and he had spent much labour on its writing. The two plots which run side by side in the play gave him considerable trouble; and tradition has it that the finishing of it, after his changing his mind several times as to its design, was a matter of such difficulty and caused so much suspense to his actors, that as an antiphon to the "Finished at last, thank God!" which Sheridan scribbled at the foot of the last sheet of his manuscript, the prompter added a fervent "Amen!" The brilliant wit of the comedy and its wealth of humorous incident more than covered up its structural weakness, and its triumph was complete.

A further attraction at the old house was now the popular John Henderson, an actor who, having won his spurs at Bath, had increased his reputation by his

Shylock at the Haymarket. He played at Drury Lane till 1779, and then went to Covent Garden. Besides inheriting, by the popular vote, the mantle of Garrick, he was a man of considerable general attainments, being an etcher of no mean skill and the author of some poems. He died, a comparatively young man, in 1785, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Towards the end of 1779 Sheridan produced his "dramatic piece" *The Critic*, one of the wittiest satirical farces ever penned; and in 1781 a well-deserved success was won by the veteran Macklin's comedy, *The Man of the World*, which is not only a wonderful effort from a man of over eighty but a really admirable comedy as well. Things went well with the Drury Lane management so far as public favour was concerned, and would have gone better in the matter of internal economy had Sheridan been less careless and unscrupulous in financial matters. The month of October 1782 was rendered memorable by the reappearance of Mrs. Siddons, now with her powers matured and her art established on the firm basis of experience, gained by some five years of hard work at Bath and Bristol. The play in which she appeared was Garrick's adaptation of Southerne's *Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage*, as the heroine of which she melted every heart and aroused such enthusiasm as had not been heard in Drury Lane since Garrick's retirement. She was joined there by her brother, John Philip Kemble, who had gained considerable reputation at the Edinburgh and Dublin theatres. He was accepted with satisfaction by the public as a more than adequate support to his gifted sister, but his personal successes were to come later.

In 1784 Sarah Siddons essayed Lady Macbeth, the part with which she is chiefly identified, her finely

impressive rendering of the character remaining for long the standard by which others who attempted the part were judged. "Power was seated on her brow ; passion radiated from her breast as from a shrine ; she was Tragedy personified," says the enthusiastic Hazlitt.

We find it noted in a contemporary newspaper that in February 1785 the Drury Lane stage was first lighted with "patent lamps." "The effect of this light . . . was brilliant beyond all expectation," says the journalist ; "we doubt not the very sensible advantages which the scenes, dresses and decorations of this theatre must derive from this improvement will instantly induce Covent Garden and the Opera House to follow so commendable an example."

Another paragraph in the same paper a few months later shows that the "matinée hat" nuisance is no new thing. Noting the fact as if it were a thing almost too good to be true, the paragraphist says : "The box-keepers at Drury Lane actually refuse permission to any lady in a hat to sit in the front boxes. Mr. Harris, it is to be hoped, will do the same at Covent Garden."

About the same time Dora Jordan, who had served her apprenticeship in Ireland and in Yorkshire, was charming her audiences at Drury Lane by her performance of Peggy in *The Country Girl*. She is always spoken of as the ideal "hoyden," an adorable incarnation of fun and mischief, but she had qualifications for more serious work as (according to Charles Lamb) her Ophelia, her Viola and her Rosalind showed.

The ravages of time had produced their effect so markedly on the Drury Lane house that, in consideration of its state of decay, it was decided to pull it down ; and so in the summer of 1791 Sir Christopher Wren's building, which had stood for more than a hundred years and had been the nursery of English

acting at its best, was given over to the house-breakers. The foundation-stone of the third Drury Lane Theatre was laid in December of the same year; and during the interval between that and the completion of the new building the company played at the King's Theatre, itself a new house which had been opened in March 1791. The old King's Theatre had been burned down in 1789, and its company had found a temporary home at the Pantheon.

On 12th March 1794 the new Drury Lane opened its doors and began its brief and chequered career. In spite of elaborate precautions against fire, it was burned to the ground fifteen years later; and while it stood, its fortunes were constantly imperilled by the reckless extravagance (and, occasionally, barefaced dishonesty) of Sheridan. It was quite the exception for him to meet his liabilities when he could possibly escape from them, and many were the ludicrous shifts to which he resorted to avoid his creditors. It is related that Holland, the architect of the theatre, could never get Sheridan to pay him for his work; and finally, tired of being put off with excuses, he resolved to call upon the manager at rehearsal time. Before Holland had time to speak, Sheridan seized his hand and exclaimed: "Dear Holland!—the very man I wished to see—you want a cheque, of course? Beautiful building! Everything one could desire, save a trifle, but important to me. My shilling-gallery customers can't hear a word that's spoken on the stage." "Impossible!" said Holland. "Is it? You shall judge. Remain at the footlights!" Running upstairs to the gallery, Sheridan began to gesticulate and apparently to declaim, but in reality without uttering a word. Descending to the stage, he asked, "Well, my boy, did you hear me?" "Not a word," replied the architect in confusion.

"Are you convinced?" said Sheridan; "no? Well, then, you go up and listen while I speak from here?" Holland climbed to the upper gallery, while Sheridan rushed out at the stage door, leaving the unfortunate architect to make the best of circumstances.

The new house, which fronted where the colonnaded side of the present theatre stands, held nearly twice as many spectators as its predecessor, and more than the present building. At the inauguration, we are told, "a huge iron curtain was let down and ostentatiously struck with a hammer. When this screen was raised, a lake of real water was discovered, on which a man rowed about in a boat, with a cascade tumbling down behind." This occurred after the delivery of an epilogue in which it was boasted that—

"The very ravages of fire we scout,
For we have wherewithal to put it out;
In ample reservoirs our firm reliance
Where streams set conflagrations at defiance."

And yet a few years later the fine building was a prey to the elements these words had so boldly defied. The house was, by its construction, better fitted for scenic display than for the subtler effects of acting; and epigrammatists were not behindhand in declaring that, though fire could not touch the audience, a little of it would do the actors no harm. "You are come to act in a wilderness of a place," Mrs. Siddons said to a newcomer whom she was welcoming there; and it was noticeable how of necessity her own methods of acting, as those of her fellows, broadened in consequence and lost in delicacy.

A year or two after the opening, Kemble began to act as Sheridan's manager; and a thankless and difficult part he found it. Not only was his own salary generally

in arrears, but he had to act as buffer between Sheridan and his creditors. Things went from bad to worse. Being only stage manager, Kemble could not control the finances of the theatre; he could only suffer under the disastrous effect of Sheridan's mismanagement. The latter seemed to look upon the theatre merely as a milch-cow to be drained for his own convenience. He was eager at pocketing the receipts, but not a penny would he disburse if he could help it. New and promised plays were either insufficiently equipped or not equipped at all and therefore shelved, while the scenery and dresses of the "repertory" plays were neglected. Clap-trap plays were mounted that were a disgrace to a theatre with Drury Lane's traditions, and the house fell more and more into discredit.

The general dissatisfaction with Sheridan's management, as well as with inroads of another nature, is reflected in a caustic note culled from a daily paper of January 1802. "Should Mr. Sheridan," it says, "find the future direction of Drury Lane Theatre incompatible with his avocations as a statesman, it is hoped . . . that the town will not be exposed by other management to a surfeit-sickness from what is called first-rate *family acting*; a little of the Jewish gabardine may be well enough, but that a National Theatre should be totally converted into a monotonous synagogue must be too great a public sacrifice to any race of actors whatever."

In 1802 Kemble and Mrs. Siddons severed their connection with Sheridan. A portion of the Covent Garden patent was for sale, and Kemble purchased it, with the proviso that he was to be stage-manager. Mrs. Siddons went with him from Drury Lane, and the fate of the old house was sealed. It is true that the order of the entertainments at Covent Garden was not always very high, though Kemble altered matters there when

he took up the management; but Drury Lane sank even lower in pandering to a depreciated taste instead of attempting to lead it.

In February 1809, Drury Lane was burned down. It was perhaps as well for the repute of the theatre, for it enabled the proprietors to decline the honour of Sheridan's participating in any way in the management of the new house. Sheridan, who had been elected Member for Stafford in 1780, and had held a ministerial post, was in the House of Commons when the fire broke out. As a mark of sympathy, the unprecedented suggestion was made that the House should adjourn, but this Sheridan had the grace to decline. Rushing to the burning theatre, he was forcing his way through the crowd when one of the soldiers who were keeping order, not recognizing him, endeavoured to keep him back. "Surely, my friend," Sheridan is said to have protested, "a man may warm himself by his own fire!"

During his nine years at Drury Lane, Kemble had played a very wide range of characters including most of the principal Shakespearean parts—Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Coriolanus, Henry V., Romeo, Macbeth, Petruchio, Wolsey—supported in most of them by Mrs. Siddons. He was in the cast of Ireland's notorious "Shakespearean" forgery *Vortigern* in 1796. Of contemporary plays those that were serious were of little worth, being mainly of the "fustian drama" type; showy, unreal, declamatory pieces, with but little except a certain effective theatricality to recommend them. In comedy and farce, however, the workmanship was better; the names of Colman, O'Keefe, Mrs. Inchbald, Cumberland and Morton, amongst others, bear witness to good work in this line.

This pause in the history of Drury Lane affords a convenient opportunity to turn back to that of Covent

Garden, which, by a curious parrallelism of fate, had also fallen a victim to the flames only a few months earlier than Drury Lane. We have seen how Thomas Harris had begun his management brilliantly with Sheridan's comedies. After that erratic author had gone to Drury Lane, Covent Garden dealt largely in pieces in which incidental music had a large share. Charles Dibdin's operas and musical farces were popular, and his sea-songs were in every one's mouth. Thomas Augustine Arne, immortal as the author of "Rule Britannia," had been "composer and musical-director" at Drury Lane for some sixteen years when he transferred his services to Covent Garden. Dibdin succeeded him in 1778, when Arne died. In the same year (1778) history repeated itself in the shape of a working arrangement between the managers of the two patent theatres, by which they occasionally "loaned" their actors to one another.

Death was making gaps in the Covent Garden ranks. Henry Woodward (an excellent comedian and a famous follower of Rich in "Harlequin" parts), who had alternated between the two houses for many years, but spent the last fourteen years of his life at Covent Garden, died in 1777. In the same year Spranger Barry, who had been one of Garrick's most serious rivals, died; not long after a farewell performance given at the age of fifty-seven; and in 1785 John Henderson, who had been a great attraction there—"a truly great actor," Samuel Rogers calls him—died at the early age of thirty-eight. On the other hand, there were two notable accessions to the Covent Garden company at this period in the persons of Mrs. Inchbald, who appeared there in 1780, and Mrs. Abington in 1782. Five years later a Jewish boy of the name of Abram, who afterwards became, as Henry Braham, the most

noted tenor singer of his day, was first heard there at the age of fifteen; and in the same year appeared the famous Mrs. Billington, a beautiful woman and accomplished singer, beloved of Haydn and immortalized as Saint Cecilia by Sir Joshua Reynolds' brush.

The year 1789 saw the retirement of the veteran Macklin, then nearly ninety. This remarkable man and remarkable actor is entitled to share to a considerable extent in the credit universally allowed to Garrick for a reform of the style of acting in his day. His technique was not always equal to the carrying out of his conceptions, but within certain limits he was an admirable actor. "Essentially manly," is the description Doran gives of his acting. He seems to have set his face against what he considered to be tricks of acting of any kind; even Garrick's wealth of gesture and variety of action displeased him. In him the "old school" of acting was probably at its best. He had what were then revolutionary theories as to the dressing of characters, and endeavoured to some extent to put them into practice. Doran states him to have been "an excellent teacher," and an honourable, generous and humane man. He was, moreover, a dramatist of no mean powers, and had a very proper objection to his actors "gagging," a vice which is as old as the drama itself. O'Keefe relates how at Covent Garden, at a rehearsal of Macklin's *Love à la Mode*, an actor of the name of Lewes interpolated into his part something that he thought very smart. "Ho! ho!" said Macklin, "what's that?" "Oh," replied 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."

From 1780 onwards, O'Keefe's name is a prominent one in the Covent Garden bills; amongst other of his

plays, his *Castle of Andalusia*, which was afterwards revived by Buckstone, was produced there in 1782, and his *Wild Oats*, which has kept the boards to the present day, in 1790. He was one of the most brilliant writers of his time in the domain of broad farce.

Of other notable names met with in Covent Garden's history before the beginning of Kemble's management, two more must be mentioned,—the famous tenor Charles Incledon, who first appeared there in 1790 and was connected with the house for some thirty years, and George Frederick Cooke, an able actor, who was considered the best Richard III. since Garrick, but was overcome by the fault of intemperance. It must be noted, too, that the spring of 1799 saw the first performance of Haydn's *Creation*. In 1792 the house had been almost entirely remodelled, at such expense that the management determined upon an advance of prices which was sternly resented and speedily abandoned. Further improvements were made in 1796.

Kemble's first appearance under his own management at Covent Garden was as Hamlet, in September 1803; a few days later Mrs. Siddons appeared there in her favourite *Isabella*. Kemble as a manager was as admirable as Sheridan had been the reverse. He was scrupulously honourable, and conducted his affairs in proper order. That he was tactful as well as generous was soon proved by his treatment of the popular actor Cooke, who seems to have anticipated an unpleasant rivalry with the new actor-manager. Kemble, however, showed him every consideration, and endeavoured good-naturedly to overlook and disguise Cooke's failings as a drunkard, until things became so bad in that respect that concealment was useless. In his first season Kemble produced eleven of Shakespeare's plays, as well as a host of new works, including Kenney's

entertaining farce of *Raising the Wind*, in which many an actor since those days has diverted audiences with the quaint figure of Jeremy Diddler.

The season that began in the winter of 1804 is remarkable for one of those unaccountable fits of hysterical enthusiasm which at times overtake the play-going public. The occasion was the appearance of William Betty, known as the "Infant Roscius," who as a boy of twelve had played Romeo and Hamlet in the provinces. His performances (which were merely the result of the careful and minute schooling of a clever boy's ability) aroused an insane enthusiasm; and, when he came to London, Drury Lane and Covent Garden eagerly competed to secure him. Drury Lane began by offering him £20 a night for his services, but Covent Garden offered him £50; and as the latter's engagement of him was not "exclusive" the lucky boy was able to act alternately at the two theatres. All the "great parts" were given him, and adult actors (even Kemble and Mrs. Siddons) were, for the time being, ignored in favour of this lad. Eventually, however, the town recovered its senses, and in his second season Master Betty fell to his proper level and by degrees was forgotten. When that took place, Fox must have been ashamed of having said, as Rogers records, that Betty's acting of Hamlet was "finer than Garrick's." There were, fortunately, saner contemporary judgments formed of him. Mrs. Inchbald said that he was a clever boy, and that "had she never seen boys act before, she might have thought him extraordinary"; and the poet Campbell pronounced that though he was "painted by Opie and Northcote, and his bust stuck up in marble by the best sculptors," while verses "in a style of idolatrous adulation were poured out upon him," still "the popularity of this 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."

The same year (1805) saw the first appearance at Covent Garden of the comedian Charles Mathews, afterwards designed for a great and deserved fame.

For the next three years Kemble and Mrs. Siddons appeared in a number of Shakespeare plays, varied with other plays good and bad, oratorio performances, and pantomimes, among the latter being the *Mother Goose* pantomime that for long was so great a favourite. Among the performers in this was the famous clown Giuseppe or "Joe" Grimaldi, whose name has given the generic title of "Joey" to all the race of clowns since his day. Things went prosperously with the Kemble management, and fairly smoothly, although there were occasional ebullitions of those riots among the audience which were a curious feature of the relations then existing between the public and their dramatic servants. Kemble met these outbreaks with spirited determination and no little tact, and, by so doing, further secured his position in the public's favour.

On 30th September 1808 Covent Garden was burned to the ground, to the pecuniary disaster of the proprietors, for their insurance did not cover more than a third of their loss. In less than a twelvemonth, however, thanks to the generous assistance prompted by the universal regard felt for Kemble, a new Covent Garden rose from the ashes. In the interim the company had performed at the King's Theatre. Before, however, we consider the fortunes of the new Covent Garden, as well as those of the new Drury Lane whose erection was being planned, it will be well to realize that by this time a crop of smaller theatres had sprung up, all existing more or less upon sufferance,

The oldest of these was that at Sadler's Wells, where the theatre which was destined to become historic as a home of the "legitimate drama" was built in 1765, in succession to the "musick house" that had been set up there at the end of the previous century by a surveyor of the name of Sadler, some years after his re-discovering the chalybeate spring there. The "musick house," where a miscellaneous entertainment had been in vogue, had become frankly disreputable. A builder of the name of Rosoman (who has given his name to a street in Clerkenwell) was responsible for the new theatre, whose arrangement and conduct were much the same as was found in the now almost extinct old-fashioned music-hall. At times dramatic performances were given there; Dibdin wrote for it, and Thomas King the actor (afterwards Sheridan's manager before Kemble undertook that post) managed it for ten years; tight-rope and acrobatic shows alternated with performing dogs; the young Braham sang there; and the theatre shared with Drury Lane the services of the great clown Grimaldi, he sometimes performing at both houses on the same day. William Siddons, the great Sarah's husband, managed it for a while, and under him Edmund Kean made his first appearance as a small boy. It was at the opening of the nineteenth century that Sadler's Wells began its wider popularity, with a form of entertainment reproduced of recent years at the Hippodrome. Its proximity to the New River giving the necessary facility, a huge reservoir was built under the stage; and with the help of this the management was able to produce the "nautical dramas" that gave it a long repute as the "Aquatic Theatre."

The building which was to become the predecessor of the Lyceum Theatre of our own day was erected in 1765. Originally designed for exhibitions of paintings

by a society of artists from which the Royal Academy sprung, it served this purpose for a few years. Following upon this, it was the home of a musical entertainment given by Charles Dibdin, and subsequently of a circus. In 1794 the interior was rebuilt as a theatre; but the lessee's efforts to obtain a licence failed, and it was by turns used as a chapel, a concert-room, the home of a "raree-show," and of a waxwork exhibition displayed by Madame Tussaud. The first licensed dramatic performances given in it were those of the Drury Lane company, who, after the burning of their house in 1809, used the Lyceum for three years.

The same period saw the beginning of three other houses which were afterwards to bear honoured names—the Surrey, the Olympic, and the Adelphi. The Surrey started its life in 1782, as the "Royal Circus," with equine and canine drama. After sharing the usual fate of theatres in being burned down, it was rebuilt for the same style of entertainment. In 1809 Elliston, who had won some popularity at the patent houses, became manager and rearranged the house suitably to a theatre. He remained there till 1814, when he transferred his energies to the Olympic, where again he had a circus to rearrange. The "Olympic Pavilion" as it was then called, had been built by Philip Astley (of "Amphitheatre" fame) out of the materials of a captured man-of-war, and opened in 1806 under a licence allowing equestrian performances, pantomimes and the like. This enterprise having failed, Elliston stepped in and acquired the building, and for five years managed it spiritedly and laid the foundation of its subsequent repute.

Astley, who had built the original "Olympic Pavilion," had begun his managerial career as proprietor of a circus tent on a piece of waste ground near Westminster Bridge. A fortunate service rendered to

the King by quieting an unmanageable horse that the monarch was riding gained him a licence as a reward; and in 1780 he built the first Astley's Amphitheatre, which was called (on account of its scheme of interior decoration) the "Royal Grove," and set to work to produce circus entertainments and pantomimes at very humble charges. Twice within a dozen years it was burned down, but each time Astley courageously rebuilt, and in 1804 opened an Amphitheatre which stood for nearly forty years, and was the predecessor of the building famous from Ducro to Sanger as the home of circus.

The Adelphi was built in 1806 by a colour-merchant of the name of Scott, who for twelve years industriously produced miscellaneous entertainments and burlettas there. The house was originally christened the Sans Pareil Theatre; but in 1819, when Scott sold it—and sold it well, for he had made it popular—its name was changed to the Adelphi.

One other theatre of this period may be mentioned here, the Royalty Theatre in Wellclose Square. Built in 1787, it was managed in defiance of the Patent Act by John Palmer (a well-known Drury Lane actor) until it ruined him; then for a short time by Macready, the father of the famous actor. It was later re-named the East London Theatre, and burned down in 1826. Two years later it was rebuilt, and was about to be opened as the Brunswick Theatre when, owing to faulty construction, the building collapsed during a rehearsal, killing and injuring a number of the company, and this was the end of it.

To bring the theatrical history of London up to the point at which the burning of the two great houses marks a period, it only remains to trace the history of the Haymarket Theatre from the time of Foote's death.

After that event George Colman the elder, who had disposed of his interest in Covent Garden Theatre, became manager of the Haymarket under an annual licence. At first his management was not a conspicuous success, for he made the mistake of attempting to compete with the two older theatres on their own lines. Ultimately he came to see that his "little house" might be very valuable as a sort of *dependence* to the others. When they closed their doors (as in the summer months) his opportunity began; and by using opportunities, by exercising an unmistakable judgment in the matter of his actors, and by making his theatre more comfortable than it had been, he gradually made it popular. The house was small and its staircases and galleries narrow; but at the same time its smallness gave it obvious advantages over the comparatively vast proportions of the other theatres, where the audiences used to complain that they could neither see nor hear, and where half Thalia's fire was apt to fizzle out like a damp squib before it got over the footlights. Colman managed the house till 1789, when he handed it over to his son, and died five years later. Amongst a respectable number of actors, afterwards famous, who had made their first appearance under his management, was the popular John Henderson, whose brief career (most of it passed at Drury Lane) was brilliant.

The younger Colman's management, though it should have been prosperous, considering his own powers as a dramatist and the able company he kept together, ended disastrously. He was reckless in his methods, and became involved in disputes and litigation with his brother-in-law, whom he had taken into partnership with him, till at last his finances became hopelessly involved and he was obliged to give up the management altogether. Some twelve years later he was

appointed Examiner of Plays, and filled the post with more zeal than discretion till his death in 1836; but debt and lawsuits always dogged him, and, except for his fame as a dramatist and a wit, his career was a failure.

The company at the Haymarket during the younger Colman's fourteen years of management had included many who then were or afterwards became famous. Amongst these were Charles Kemble, brother of the illustrious manager of Covent Garden and father of Fanny Kemble, both of them destined to carry on the Kemble tradition at Covent Garden; John Liston, long remembered as an excellent low comedian; John Emery (grandfather of Winifred Emery), an actor pre-eminent in "loutish" parts where a mingling of humour and pathos was required; John Bannister, son of a comedian and singer who had been popular in the elder Colman's time, himself a fine comedian and subsequently for many years a valuable member of the Drury Lane company; Elliston, future manager of Drury Lane, one of the finest Falstaffs on record, an accomplished actor who (from all accounts) was as anxious to shine off the stage as on it; and the elder Charles Mathews, an admirable comedian and Foote's only rival as a mimic, who came from York to the Haymarket, quitted it for Drury Lane, and left that house to start as an entertainer on his own account. It was during the younger Colman's reign, too, that the egregious Robert Coates—"Romeo" Coates, as he was known—insisted on exhibiting himself upon the stage. He was the son of a wealthy Antigua planter, and was incurably bitten with the desire of acting in public, a task for which he had no qualifications. The ridicule which he incurred seemed to have little effect upon his determination, and it was not until he was actually hissed off the stage that

he desisted. We are told that he appeared as Romeo dressed in "a sky-blue spangled cloak, red pantaloons, muslin vest, a full-bottomed wig, and an opera-hat!" The public's derision at his efforts was not lessened when the seams of his over-tight pantaloons gave way under the stress of his histrionic endeavours.

Two other incidents, one tragic and the other tragi-comic, marked the younger Colman's management. A short time after he succeeded his father a "Royal command" was given for a play at the Haymarket, while Drury Lane was in the builder's hands. The result of this was an enormous crowd at the theatre, resulting in a shocking catastrophe when the doors at the head of a flight of stairs down to the pit were opened. There was a mad rush down the steps; one or two at the head of the crowd missed their footing and fell, the rest surged down on to them, with the result that fifteen persons were killed and many injured.

The other incident was the absurd "Tailors'" Riot in 1805, when hundreds of tailors, outraged in their most sensitive feelings, assembled to hiss down a revival of Foote's satire, *The Tailors*. The rioters became quite unmanageable by the ordinary guardians of law and order, and eventually troops had to be called in to disperse the infuriated "snips."

CHAPTER X.

THE KEMBLE AND KEAN.

THE present Drury Lane Theatre opened its doors, in October 1812, with much ceremony and considerable pretensions. The company was strong, but, as we shall see, not strong enough to hold its own against Covent Garden; and the management was weak. In an account of the opening performance, a contemporary newspaper mentions that the crowds who waited at the doors from "as early as two o'clock in the afternoon" were rudely visited by a pitiless storm of wind and rain, for the present portico was not added until some years later. The house is said to have been modelled upon the design of the fine theatre at Bordeaux. Some three weeks before the formal opening, there was a "private view" of the new theatre, at which (to quote a newspaper of 17th September 1812) after the company had sufficiently admired the interior of the house, "the curtain drew up, and gave them a charming display of scenery, which they rapturously applauded in succession as a just tribute to the animated pencil of the artist (Mr. Greenwood) which produced them. There were seven or eight exhibited; of which a perspective Landscape with water, a Piazza, a Seaport, a Prison scene, and the Market Cross of Glastonbury were the most striking. The Drawing-room scenes were also much admired; but perhaps an objection may lie against

their being all fitted up with the same rouge-coloured hangings."

On the opening night "God save the King" and "Rule Britannia" were sung by the "entire strength" of a company which included Elliston, Pyne, Bannister, Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Glover. Elliston then recited an address which Byron had been induced to write after open competition had failed to elicit a suitable one. Over a hundred addresses had been sent in by competitors, but not one was adjudged to be good enough for use, despite the excited protests of the unsuccessful. The incident was made memorable by the publication, by the brothers James and Horace Smith, of the supposititious "Rejected Addresses," which are among the wittiest collections of *vers d'occasion* in the language.

Judging by the letters and articles contributed to the press at the time, the new house gave satisfaction on the whole. To see and hear in it, was, in spite of its size, fairly easy, and the auditorium was considered to be well arranged. Faults were found with details, of course. For example, instead of the doors which traditionally flanked the proscenium in all theatres, the new Drury had at either side a Corinthian pillar with gilded capital, and beside each pillar a gilt tripod lamp in place of the usual door. This change was resented (not unreasonably) by those who pointed out how incongruous, for instance, must be the effect of a domestic scene framed by "massy columns at whose pedestals there are two tripods illuminated with gas-lights!" Another critic, however, highly approves of the innovation, on the ground that "these lamps completely exclude the possibility of having side-doors to knock at on every occasion that a witless actor wishes to excite the noise of the upper galleries." Subsequently, two years later, the columns and tripods

were removed, "in compliance with the taste and desire of theatrical criticism."

The management was in the hands of a committee, a notoriously bad form of management for theatrical enterprises, where a single guiding hand is indispensable. The lack of good management was combined with a lack of good plays; Byron, who was on the committee of managers, has left it on record that he could scarcely find one play that could be tolerated out of some five hundred that were upon the shelves of the theatre. Thus the old house had but little chance against the popularity of the Kemble family and their supporters at Covent Garden, until Edmund Kean's appearance (to which we shall presently revert) in 1814. "It is really very good fun," Byron wrote, "as far as the daily and nightly stir of these strutters and fretters go; and if the concern could be brought to pay a shilling in the pound, would do much credit to the management."

The opening of the new Covent Garden Theatre, in September 1809, had been marked by the famous "O.P." (Old Price) riots. The expense of some necessary alterations in the arrangement of the seating, added to the enormous outlay incurred by the building of the house, had led to an increase in the prices of admission to the pit and boxes. This fact, together with a real or simulated indignation at the engagement of a foreign actress, had aroused keen resentment amongst the "pittites"; and a disturbance was organized in the most ingenious manner; without any hint of its intention being allowed to leak out. As soon as Kemble appeared to speak the poetical address customary on an opening night, the storm broke. A hubbub was raised which rendered the address inaudible, and, as soon as the play began, it was evident that it would only be conducted in dumb show. The other actors were greeted with

applause, Dibdin tells us, to show that the resentment was not directed at them personally but at the management; but "the instant they attempted to speak, 'Off! off!' overpowering hisses, appalling hoots, and the 'O.P. Dance' commenced, in which the whole audience joined. The 'dance' was performed with deliberate and ludicrous gravity, each person pronouncing the letters 'O.P.' as loud as he could, and accompanying the pronunciation of each with a beat or blow on the floor or seat beneath him with his feet, a stick or a bludgeon; and as the numerous performers kept in strict time and unison with each other, it was one of the most whimsically tantalizing banters or torments that could be conceived." Leaflets and placards, voicing their grievance, were distributed broadcast by the organizers of the riot, and the ringleaders stood in serried ranks with their hats on and their backs ostentatiously turned to the stage. It was a disgraceful scene, repeated night after night to the accompaniment of horns blown and watchmen's rattles sprung. Kemble kept his temper well. He published statements of the reasons which had caused the rise of price, and did all in his power to justify it, but it was of no avail. He took the extreme step of an appeal to the law, and had certain of the ringleaders charged before the magistrate with incitement to riot; but the charge (incredible as it may appear) was dismissed, and the terrorized management was forced to capitulate, apologize to its cowardly tormentors, and reinstate the old prices.

In these days of decorum, we can with difficulty realize what a constant danger riots were in the theatres of a century ago. The actors were then indeed "servants of the public"; though some performers were, as now, spoilt favourites, they were never allowed to forget their masters. Indeed, the manners of the

audience (and that by no means always in the cheapest parts of the house) were often outrageous and always uncertain. Actual rioting usually began in the "upper galleries." It needed some definite grievance, such as that of the "old prices," to make them pervade the whole audience; but disturbances in the cheaper seats were frequent.

Not many years before the "O.P." riots, the newspapers tell us of hubbubs occurring, "occasioned by the gentry in the upper gallery calling for a *hornpipe*, though nothing of the kind was expressed in the bills." These gentry went, on this occasion, to the length of bombarding the unfortunate actors with bottles, and this because *Hamlet* or *Richard III.* was not followed by a hornpipe to divert them!

Again, we have read that "on Thursday night, at the acting of *The Maid of the Mill*, a riot began in the upper gallery, which upon inquiry proved to be owing to a knot of barbers, who had taken it into their heads to be offended at a certain actor's *appearing in his own hair!*" Interruptions of all kinds occurred: angry colloquies with a performer who had offended, loud protests against some individual whose private life offered some weak spot for attack, the hissing down of one who appeared in place of one expected, and so forth. In fact the audiences, though generous to those who pleased them, had but little compassion or even decency of behaviour towards those they imagined to have offended.

The Covent Garden company at this time was a remarkable one, but the plays produced were about as poor as those that Byron complained of at Drury Lane. The public taste had become vitiated, and sensationalism, sandwiched between opera and oratorio, was more applauded than anything else. Horses and elephants

brought upon the stage, scenes with real water flowing, and the like, attracted the public when the "legitimate drama" would not. This was probably in no small measure due to the exigencies of the two great theatres in the matter of size. They were too vast for subtleties of acting; the "grand style," which was rendered imperative by this spaciousness, had become a thoroughly unreal mannerism; and the public was growing tired of the pompous methods of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, who now were nearing the end of their career.

Still, Covent Garden was, for the time being, the popular house, and continued so until Kean drew all London to Drury Lane. Mrs. Siddons retired in 1812, her mantle falling upon Eliza O'Neill, one of the most famous of Juliets, who, after a brief career, married and retired in 1819. Charles Mathews was at Covent Garden, where his abilities were not realized, from 1812 to 1816; Macready first appeared there, but without creating any great stir, in 1816; and in the following year Kemble retired, in circumstances full of every mark of honour and appreciation. He handed over his interest in the house to his brother Charles, who, with his daughter Fanny, was destined to carry on the great traditions of this remarkable family.

Mrs. Siddons lived for nearly twenty years in dignified privacy after her retirement, appearing in public on very exceptional occasions, and then usually for a charitable purpose. She is credited with feeling considerable resentment at the sensation caused by her brother's retirement compared with what took place at her own. It must, however, be remembered that, though her talents were as great as his, or greater, her brother's position as manager of Covent Garden was the more conspicuous. Kemble, whose health was failing, went abroad when he retired and died at Lausanne six years

afterwards. This famous pair, brother and sister, will probably always be remembered as embodiments of the "grand style" of acting,—a style that was far removed from reality, but at the same time had (both in declamation and gesture) the merit of fine technique; a style, nevertheless, bound to lead, as it did in their case, to undue deliberation and pomposity.

There is, of course, another side to the picture. Mrs. Siddons, whom imagination identifies with the Tragic Muse, played Rosalind with no small success; and no less an authority than Charles Lamb is responsible for the surprising statement that no man could better deliver brilliant dialogue than John Kemble, because none understood it half so well. Compared with many actors of his day, Kemble took some pains with the dressing of his parts; and, though contemporary prints show his Lear appearing to the eye like a Polish nobleman, and his Hamlet like an affected schoolmaster, the good intention is obvious. The outward seeming of Mrs. Siddon's Lady Macbeth appears, to our ideas, like a fashionable portrait by Sir Joshua, save for the crest of feathers which still lingered as the traditional wear for "heroic" parts. It may be mentioned, in passing, that the prices of seats at Covent Garden at this time were: Boxes, seven shillings; Pit, three and sixpence; Gallery, two shillings and one shilling; and the play usually began at 6.30.

By this time the periodical revolution in theatrical matters had taken place. Just as Garrick's had done in previous years, so at this juncture Edmund Kean's appearance at Drury Lane altered every one's point of view and sounded the knell of many conventions. Kean had played childish parts both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden in his earliest days, had subsequently been a circus acrobat, and, later, had acted in small

parts at the Haymarket, and then gone through years of struggle in provincial theatres. He knew his powers, and had a worthy ambition, but an unknown strolling player in the provinces could make only a scanty livelihood. He was acting at Dorchester, after two years of growing popularity at Exeter, when the Drury Lane stage-manager was in the audience and was struck by his performance. The fortunes of Drury Lane were at a very low ebb; some new blood was absolutely essential; and the magnate from London ventured to offer this earnest stripling of five and twenty an engagement to play at the great house. The result is a matter of history. Kean was given permission to appear (on 26th January 1814) as Shylock; and at the one rehearsal that was allowed him he, as Doran tells us, "fluttered his fellow-actors, and scared the manager, by his independence and originality. 'Sir, this will never do,' cried the acting manager. 'It is quite an innovation, it cannot be permitted.' 'Sir,' said the poor, proud man, 'I wish it to be so'; and the players smiled, and Kean went home . . . calm, hopeful, and hungry. 'To-day,' he said, 'I must *dine*.'" Having enjoyed that rare luxury, he went, confident in his powers, to the theatre. Looked at askance at first by the other actors, he found that, as each scene in which he appeared ended amidst louder and louder applause, their demeanour altered with that of the audience; and when at last his triumph was complete and overwhelming, all barriers were overcome and he was loaded with praises behind the curtain as well as before it. He had saved the fortunes of Drury Lane, and insured his own; and his certainty of his powers made his happiness complete, for he knew he could keep the position into which he had stepped.

That position was secured to him by his next part, that of Richard III., in which he successfully challenged comparison with Kemble and Garrick, just as in *The Merchant of Venice* he had shaken the allegiance of those who spoke of Macklin as the only Shylock. His acting was a revelation to a generation accustomed to the Kemble manner. "Life, nature, truth, without exaggeration or diminution," wrote Byron in his diary after seeing Kean as Richard III. It was Kean's unerring instinct in seizing upon the essentials of a character that gave its truth to Coleridge's oft-quoted remark that to see him act was "like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." He would seem suddenly to lay bare to the spectator the character he was representing, whether by some facial expression, some intonation or gesture, that was instinctively felt to be inevitable to the character. How unsuited the size of Drury Lane was to such delicacy of acting is revealed by a contemporary newspaper critic, who objected to Kean's placing too much reliance "on the expression of the countenance, which is a language intelligible only to a part of the house." Neither his figure nor his voice was heroic, but his genius overcame all disadvantages, and in certain lines of tragedy—particularly as Shylock, Richard, or Iago—he has probably had no equal on our stage. That he was unequal throughout the wide range of parts he was now called upon to assume, is not surprising. The big, broad style, in which Kemble excelled, did not suit Kean so well as parts where a cynical humour, contrasts of passion, or subtleties of method were called for. He was an Iago, a Shylock, or a Sir Giles Overreach more perfectly than a Macbeth or a Romeo; and in saying this there leaps to the mind a comparison of him with Henry Irving, whose

greatness and limitations as an actor had much in common with Kean's.

For the remaining years of the existence of the Committee of Management at Drury Lane, Kean bore the burden of the day on his shoulders; but the management had been too bad for even his restorative powers. The Committee gave it up in 1819 and the house passed into the hands of Elliston, who had already tasted the sweets of management at the Surrey Theatre and the Olympic. Four years of it sufficed to bankrupt Elliston. With a fine company at his command, headed by Kean and reinforced in 1823 by Macready and Liston, who seceded from Covent Garden to Drury Lane, Elliston was not content to rely on their powers, but spent money lavishly on spectacular scenic effects and on a complete remodelling of the interior of the house. He had, moreover, taken over the house on ruinous terms; and as, in addition to this, his personal tastes were extravagant, the result was inevitable disaster.

After the fortunes of two more managers had rapidly gone the same way, a new lessee was found in Alfred Bunn, who had been Elliston's stage-manager and subsequently manager of the Birmingham theatre. From 1834 to 1839 Drury Lane was under his control.

Bunn, who was a kind of theatrical Barnum and tempted the public with every sort of miscellaneous show, was by this time also manager of Covent Garden. At that house Charles Kemble, who had succeeded to his brother's share in the patent and from 1823 had exercised sole control of the theatre, had met with the common experience of misfortune in management. He endeavoured to attract the public (which, after the defection of Liston and Macready from his company, was flocking to Drury Lane) by means of Shakespearean

productions that were for the first time carefully considered in the matter of appropriate costume and scenic effects. But despite these efforts and his own popularity as an actor, his affairs went from bad to worse; and the striking success of his daughter Fanny's brief stage career was not sufficient to rehabilitate him. Among the few incidents of note in the history of Covent Garden at this period were the production of Weber's *Oberon* (which had been specially written for the theatre) in 1826, Kean's appearance there in 1827 and his last performance there six years later. After his first Drury Lane triumphs Kean had twice acted in America; the first time in 1820, when he was in the flush of his new success; the second time five years later, when the violence of public opinion against him, in consequence of his entanglement in a divorce case, drove him for a while from the English stage.

By this time he was beginning to ruin his powers and his fortunes by drunkenness; he had estranged his wife and quarrelled with his son, the latter having become an actor in the face of his father's strong disapproval. Still, by degrees, in Kean's absence, the rancour against him began to be forgotten; he had been sadly missed as an actor, and when in January 1827 he reappeared at Drury Lane as Shylock the public enthusiasm was unbounded. He rallied all his powers for the occasion, and acted splendidly; but the effort proved a heavy drain on nervous resources that were sapped by intemperance. For some years he managed to act with more or less of his old ability, but the mischief was done; at a little over forty he was a wreck, the splendid powers gave more and more unmistakable evidence of decay, and the great actor was losing his hold on himself and on his audience. Doran relates his having for the last of many times seen Kean play Richard III. at

the Haymarket in 1832, when "the sight," says Doran, "was pitiable. Genius was not traceable in that bloated face; intellect was all but quenched in those once matchless eyes; and the power seemed gone, despite the will that would recall it. I noted in a diary that night the above facts, and, in addition, that by bursts he was as grand as he had ever been." Soon the last scene came, when he was acting *Othello* at Covent Garden on 25th March 1833. By a pathetic coincidence the Iago was his son Charles, to whom he had become reconciled after a painful period when the son was struggling to make his fortunes at one of the rival houses while his father sought vainly to recover his at another. Kean had scarcely strength to dress, and was so pitifully shattered in nerves that even brandy failed to give him confidence. He begged his son to keep near him on the stage lest he should collapse. Once he was on the scene, excitement carried him along and he was almost able to struggle through the play; but, as an eye-witness of the scene tells us, when he endeavoured to abandon himself to *Othello's* overwhelming storm of passion in the final scenes, he stopped and trembled, tottered, and reeled insensible into his son's arms. Moaning, "I am dying—speak to them for me," he was carried from the stage as the curtain fell on him for ever. He died at his cottage at Richmond two months later.

Bunn's attempt to combine the management of the two great houses (even to the extent of running some of the performers across from one to the other in the course of an evening) had a very short life. He gave up Covent Garden after two years of it, and retired from Drury Lane, heavily in debt, in 1839. He had tried to attract audiences with drama, opera, concerts, even tight-rope dancing and lion-taming shows, a fact that is

eloquent of the esteem in which the drama was held at the time; but he failed to make anything but heavy losses. Opera was the vogue, and, as Scott tell us in his Diary, the "young men about town" would affect not to know even the whereabouts of Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatres, thinking the drama "too low," whereas they "would faint away if it were thought they had not been to the Italian Opera."

Two names, honourable in the history of the stage, occur more and more prominently in the bills at this period, those of Phelps and Macready,—the former destined to rule long and prosperously at Sadler's Wells; the latter, a man of older experience, to follow the egregious Bunn in the control of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. The fortunes of these two will be best considered in a separate chapter; meanwhile, leaving the two great houses for a while, it will be well to look round at the other theatres now rapidly increasing in number. Though till the middle of the nineteenth century the stream of interest in theatrical matters flowed mainly towards Drury Lane and Covent Garden, it was diverted here and there into smaller channels. Such houses as the Haymarket, the Olympic, the Adelphi and the Lyceum began to have their part in dramatic history; names that were becoming popular occur in connection with now one and now another of them, and the fortunes of great and small theatres became more interwoven than had been the case before; while beside them and apart stood the brilliant vogue of opera at the King's Theatre.

The present Haymarket Theatre, built on a site adjoining that of the old one, was built by Morris, who had succeeded Colman in the management in 1820. It was opened in July 1825; and, except for the popularity of Liston (an inimitable comedian and the

Toole of his day), William Farren and Madame Vestris, its history offers nothing of any great moment until Benjamin Webster succeeded in 1837 to a management which he retained for sixteen years. Webster, however, belongs to the next chapter. A contemporary account of the new house states it to have been "in point of architectural beauty the most elegant in London," but, at the same time, "for convenience of seeing and hearing, the worst contrived." Remodelling of the interior has long since remedied all that. The company at the beginning of Morris' reign included also Vining, Elliston, Mrs. Glover, and Charles Kemble, the latter "starring" there in 1822. Liston's great triumph was in *Paul Pry*, in which his follower Toole made a success in our own day, "a part," as Hazlitt wrote, "in which there is really nothing beyond the mere outline of an officious, inquisitive gentleman, which is droll, as it reminds every one of acquaintances, but Liston fills it with a thousand nameless absurdities." It was produced in 1825, with Madame Vestris and Farren also in the cast, and enjoyed the surprising run of 114 performances. Liston was blessed with a face that in itself was a fortune to a comedian, and his gravity of demeanour amidst the quaintest drolleries lent them an irresistible piquancy. Farren was superlatively good in old men's parts, one of his greatest successes being Sir Peter Teazle, in which part his son William has delighted so many of our own generation. Of others who played under Morris may be mentioned Vandenhoff, famed for his *Coriolanus*; Mrs. Honey, an agreeable "romp"; and Ellen Tree, an Irish girl of considerable talent, who afterwards married Charles Kean. She and Vandenhoff appeared in Talfourd's *Ion* in 1836. There were few new plays of any note produced during this period at the Haymarket, the audience appearing

pleased with variations on a fairly extensive repertory with which they were more or less familiar.

When Elliston in 1819 went to Drury Lane as manager, he left the Olympic Theatre started on the road to popularity. It was the first of the smaller houses to offer an entertainment of any merit, and only needed good management to secure good audiences, especially during the summer months when the patent theatres were closed. Unfortunately, after Elliston left it, the Olympic was in very indifferent hands for about ten years. Amongst others Oxberry, Egerton, Vining—actors with the lust of management upon them—successively took command of its fortunes, only to ruin their own. In spite of all this, the house was popular. Melodramas and vaudevilles alternated with pantomime and tight-rope performances; and a public that appreciated the advantages of a smaller theatre, in the important matters of seeing and hearing, was none too difficult to please.

Thus it was that when Madame Vestris, full of enterprise and of determination to win over the public (full, too, of capability for the task), took over the management of the house in 1831, it was soon apparent that, given the right qualifications in the manager, it need be by no means impossible to manage a smaller theatre profitably in rivalry to the great ones. This "first of all dramatic Joans of Arc," as she called herself in her opening address, was already an established favourite. She was blessed with a beautiful face and figure, a pleasing vivacity of disposition, and a fine contralto voice. With these advantages she appeared first in Italian Opera, and might have gone far in that province had her voice been better cultivated. As it was, her natural ability for the stage, coupled with the charm of her singing, suited her to the "burlettas" and light

operas in which in her early days she appeared at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and even better to the extravaganzas or burlesques which (thanks to Planché's genius) brought fortune to the Olympic.

She was fortunate in her company. Liston was a tower of strength, and he was well seconded by Keeley, Mrs. Orger (famous in broad farce), Miss Goward (who was to become Mrs Keeley), and, later, the younger Charles Mathews and William Farren.

The lightest of comedies and farces, pieces often so rubbishing that even the very tolerant criticism of the day could find no good word for them, were carried through by sheer brilliancy on the part of the performers. Planché's long series of burlesques (whose success was as remarkable as, and in many respects similar to, that of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in our own day), began with the *Olympic Revels*, which was played on Madame Vestris' opening night. Planché hit upon the then novel idea of travesties on classical or mythical subjects, in which the characters should be accurately dressed as their serious prototypes and yet be concerned with the most ridiculous dialogue and situations. It having been, as Planché himself tells us, "previously the practice to dress a burlesque in the most *outré* and ridiculous fashion," he found that the effect of "persons picturesquely attired speaking absurd doggerel" took the fancy of the audience at once. "Madame," moreover, paid far more attention than was usual to the matter of dresses and scenery, a fact which brought its own reward. Nor was she less admirable in her management of the internal economy of her theatre, for she insisted on as careful a decorum behind the curtain as before it. The following *enconium*, taken from a newspaper of 1833, represents the general satisfaction and reflects the Olympic's popularity:—

“Madame Vestris is as charming as ever; she is an astonishing person, and trips about, with her cordial sweetness of smile and glad breathing tones, as if, like Sidney’s piping shepherd-boy, she would never grow old. Liston, it is true, has little marks of mortality about him, but his humour flows forth in a stream as rich, unctuous, and insinuating as ever. Keeley is here, too, with his quaint helplessness, his irresistible comicality of look and manner, his quiet air of humorous vacancy.”

In 1838 Madame Vestris married the younger Charles Mathews, who had made his *début* at the Adelphi three years previously, and had even attempted management there, but very soon transferred his services to the Olympic. Beginning with a kindly reception at the audiences’ hands for his father’s sake, he had, as he acquired confidence, rapidly discovered his exceptional powers as a light comedian, and it was not long before he was as popular as any member of the company. The happy pair went off to America after their marriage, but their tour there was a failure. In the following year (1839) they undertook the management of Covent Garden and left the Olympic, whose fortunes, robbed of Vestris’ guiding hand, soon showed a change. As a contemporary newspaper said: “When the house stood alone for the peculiar perfection it attained in scenic and general effect, it secured a certain audience; but since the Haymarket and others have followed in the same style, there has been an evident falling off.” Moreover, there was now serious competition on the part of other of the smaller houses, who, having modelled their management to some extent upon the Olympic’s, were reaping the benefit. Indeed, the ten years that succeeded “Madame’s” rule at the Olympic were as unfortunate as the ten that had preceded it. One

manager succeeded another with steady persistence, only to retire bankrupt, and the entertainments deteriorated proportionately. There is nothing, save the meteoric appearance of Gustavus Brooke, famous for his *Othello*, to make Astley's Olympic in any way remarkable for the rest of an existence which was terminated by its being burned to the ground in 1849.

The Olympic's most active rival on its own ground was the Adelphi, which had been opened under that name in October 1819. Melodrama of a lurid description was the attraction at first, varied with miscellaneous entertainments presenting an astonishing hotch-potch of delights. For instance, on one evening's programme the audience was promised a Conjuring Entertainment, Dissolving Views, *Airs upon the Musical Glasses*, a Farce with "curious mechanical and optical effects," and, to cap all, "in the course of the evening Mr. Henry will administer the Nitrous Oxide, or Laughing Gas, the extraordinary effects of which it is impossible to describe." A little later the performance of a "Talented and Stupendous Elephant" was the main attraction of the entertainment offered.

A lucky chance, in 1821, enabled the Adelphi to leap into sudden notoriety. Pierce Egan's "*Life in London*" had captured the town, and, as its popularity grew and grew, dramatic versions of this queer farrago of cleverness and vulgarity were inevitable. The Royal Amphitheatre had produced one, the Olympic another; but success waited for the Adelphi version, thanks largely to the cleverness of the actors there. It was advertised as "an entirely new classic, comic, operatic, didactic, moralistic, aristophanic, localic, analytic, terpsichoric, panoramic, Camera-Obscura-ic, Extravaganza Burletta of Fun, Frolic, Fashion and Flash, replete with prime Chaunts, rum Glees and Kiddy catches." Wrench,

Wilkinson, Reeve and Robert Keeley were voted inimitable in their parts; and, as Corinthian Tom and Jerry were the rage of the town, the Adelphi became suddenly the fashion. An attempt to follow up this success with others on the same lines failed, but the Adelphi had secured sufficient popular favour for its initial management to last out some six years. Subsequently its guiding hand for about sixteen years was that of Frederick Henry Yates (father of Edmund Yates of the *World*), who had as partners successively Daniel Terry, who came from the Haymarket, and the elder and younger Mathews.

Melodrama of a straightforward type (in many instances written by the actor Buckstone) well acted by a company that included, besides those mentioned above, such capable performers as Tyrone Power and T. P. Cooke—the latter famous in nautical parts—drew constant audiences to the little house for some years. It was varied, in his time, by the clever single-handed entertainments of the elder Mathews, the “At Homes” with which he had already made a success at the Lyceum. These were sometimes expanded at the Adelphi into a composite entertainment with Yates, who had himself succeeded with sketches of the same kind. By the beginning of Macready’s reign at Drury Lane—that is to say, about 1840—the Adelphi had reached a high position in public favour. The plays produced there were not distinguished, but the acting was on a higher level of general excellence than anywhere else in London; and at this time, with the appearance of the comedians Wright and Bedford on its boards, under a capable management, the Adelphi entered into a phase more nearly allied to the theatrical history of our own day.

The predecessor of Irving’s Lyceum Theatre had been

opened by Samuel Arnold in 1816, under the inspiring title of the English Opera House, with ballad operas, musical farces, pantomimes, and miscellaneous entertainments, including the elder Mathews' "At Homes." Except by special licence for special occasions, the "legitimate" drama was still not allowed except at the patent theatres, or only allowed by the legal fiction of the payment of fines. Musical pieces, however, were feasible. Provided a certain number of songs were included in a piece, it might be played; thus, from necessity, arose the taste for "burlettas" and "vaudevilles," many a play which deserved a better fate being mangled by the inclusion of entirely incongruous songs to qualify it for performance. Other devices of various descriptions were resorted to, in order to dodge the "patent" monopoly, until in 1843 free-trade in dramatic entertainments was legalized and all properly accredited theatres were enabled to produce what they pleased. The vogue for opera had spread downwards from the King's Theatre, and this enabled the struggling smaller theatres to tempt the public with all sorts of entertainments under the guise of opera and "plays with music." Arnold's Lyceum was burned down in 1830, and the present building opened in 1834 as the Theatre Royal Lyceum and English Opera House. Opera and miscellaneous shows again filled the bill until, in 1844, under the new conditions possible owing to the new charter of liberty, the Keeleys began to play "domestic drama" there in the shape of adaptations from Dickens' novels.

In a Lyceum playbill of June 1835 (evidently a hot summer) a tempting offer is made. "In an endeavour," it says, "to add to the comfort of visitors, the manager proposes during the continuance of the warm weather, to offer to all ladies and gentlemen on payment of their

seats at First Price to the Boxes, Private Boxes, Balcony or Pit, the refreshment of an Excellent Iced Cream, GRATIS. 'To reside in thrilling regions Of thick-ribbed Ice.'—SHAKESPEARE."

When Thomas Dibdin in an ill-fated moment took over the management of the Royal Circus after Elliston had given it up, he re-named it the Surrey Theatre. He was laudably ambitious in his efforts, but was bankrupt in seven years. Buckstone played at the Surrey under him, and he was responsible for the production of the first version of Milman's *Fazio*, under the title of *The Italian Wife*. After him a series of managers failed in turn until, in 1827, Elliston tried his fortunes once more as manager. To Elliston's credit is his discovery of Douglas Jerrold as a writer for the stage. Jerrold's *Black-eye'd Susan*, with the immensely popular T. P. Cooke as the hero, was an enormous success. The patent theatres competed with the Surrey for the actor and the play; at one period Cooke played it every evening at Covent Garden as well as at the Surrey, and the piece was revived several years later at Drury Lane. Elliston was still lessee of the Surrey when he died, and with him died the interest of the house as far as dramatic history is concerned. It was burned down in 1865, and rebuilt on a larger plan. Melodrama and pantomime have been its mainstays since then, the only notable management being that of George Conquest, a rousing melodramatic actor and an admirable pantomimist, from 1880 to 1901.

The Strand Theatre already existed at this time, and offered many kinds of entertainment with the usual shifts to evade the law before it gained a licence. As no money might legally be taken at the doors, it was attempted on one occasion to take it at a window! At another time the purchase of an ounce of lozenges for

four shillings at a neighbouring confectioner's shop gave the right of entry. It is not, however, until after the "freedom of the theatres" that its history begins to be of any account.

Braham the singer had built and opened the St. James's Theatre in 1835; but neither opera with his own singing, nor the domestic drama, could save him from ruin. Italian opera being the fashion at the time, theatrical entertainments, save in exceptional cases, were given the cold shoulder. Burlesques, wild-beast shows, operettas, farces, were of no avail against such indifference, and after five years the theatre was tenantless. At last, under the management of Mr. Mitchell (of Bond Street), a succession of brilliant seasons of French plays brought audiences to the house. Dejazet and Rachel, Lemaitre and Levasseur became the objects of that hysterical admiration to which an English public is prone when it loses its head. The vogue lasted until Rachel's last appearances here in 1853, and then the house again relapsed into its then traditional ill-luck.

Saddler's Wells Theatre was gradually emerging from the "Aquatic Theatre" stage to melodrama; but it is not until Phelps' reign there that it acquires much interest.

As has been said, the resort *par excellence* of fashion during the period dealt with in this chapter was the King's Theatre, Haymarket, by this time known as Her Majesty's, where grand opera and ballet furnished the standing dish. The history of opera is, however, outside the scope of this book; it must be sufficient merely to indicate the memorable record of this splendid house until its destruction by fire in 1867, a record embellished by such names as those of Catalani, Taglioni, Elssler, Cerito, Tamburini, Grisi, Mario, Sontag, Malibran,

Lablache, Jenny Lind, Sims Reeves, and Grahn. Its successor, which was completed in 1872, had to face the very serious competition of opera at Covent Garden and occasionally at Drury Lane, and enjoyed a chequered career (which was inaugurated by the Moody and Sankey "revival meetings") until its demolition in 1892. Its site is occupied partly by the Carlton Hotel and partly by the beautiful theatre opened by Beerbohm Tree in 1897.

Other theatres that were popular in the first quarter of the nineteenth century were the Cobourg, the West London, and Astley's. The Cobourg (which eventually was re-named the Victoria Theatre, Westminster) lay close to the Surrey, and was opened in 1818. Melodrama, adapted to the palate of transpontine audiences, was its staple fare. The plays were well mounted and, in their own way, well acted. Stars such as Edmund Kean occasionally appeared there, and many actors who afterwards gained a wide reputation acted there in their early days—amongst them Buckstone, Wallack, Henry Kemble and "Brayvo" Hicks. The house was considered very fine, and boasted of a wonderful looking-glass curtain. A contemporary critic (in the "British Stage") pays the Cobourg a somewhat doubtful compliment. "This is," he says, "the prettiest theatre in the metropolis; the dresses astonish us by their splendour, and the scenes are painted in a masterly style; but having said this much, our stock of commendation is exhausted. As literary compositions the pieces produced are utterly contemptible, and the performers for the most part are suited to the pieces." The "Vic," as the house latterly became familiarly known to its frequenters, ceased to exist as an active theatre in the early 'seventies. For some time in the 'thirties the City Theatre (afterwards the City Pantheon)

was run in conjunction with the Cobourg, under the same management and with much the same company.

Astley's Theatre has been dealt with in the preceding chapter; and the West London was the little theatre off Tottenham Court Road which, after fifty years of farce and melodrama played to audiences of gradually diminishing quality, and after having been known in the interval as the Queen's Theatre and the Fitzroy Theatre (and irreverently to the "profession" as the "Dust Hole") had a brilliant new birth, under the historic Bancroft management, as the Prince of Wales's Theatre in 1865.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MACREADY AND PHELPS ERA.

AFTER the disappearance of Bunn, the management of Covent Garden Theatre continued to be very indifferent, and the fortunes of the house were sadly in need of the fillip that was given to them in 1836 by the appearance of the gifted Helen Faucit. Personally attractive, she was an actress of uncommon intelligence, and, as she acquired certainty in the technique of her art, went on from one success to another, first as the heroines of Sheridan Knowles' plays, and subsequently in Shakespearean parts.

Her early triumphs took place during the last of the "palmy days" of Covent Garden as a home of the drama,—that is to say, during the two years of Macready's management there. Macready had by this time gained his popularity and was at the height of his powers. Some twenty years before this, after a provincial apprenticeship in the course of which he had acted with Mrs. Siddons and Dora Jordan, he had saved the situation at Covent Garden by a brilliant performance as Richard III., followed by another as the hero of Knowles' *Virginus*, which had raised him to the top of his profession. Subsequently he had played at Drury Lane, in America, and in Paris. He undertook the Covent Garden management in 1837, and, though two years of it crippled him financially, he "made history" there by a series of fine Shakespearean

revivals (in which Helen Faucit and Phelps were his coadjutors) and by the production of Lytton's *Lady of Lyons* in 1838 and *Richelieu* in 1839. These two plays owed a great deal to their interpreters, Helen Faucit's Pauline in the former and Macready's impersonation of the Cardinal in the latter making their fortunes. They had the faults of most of the verse plays of their time, but the fact remains that they held the stage for half a century. Until quite recently Pauline was quite a favourite part for aspiring *débutantes*, and Irving's *Richelieu* is still fresh in the memory of playgoers. Lytton's earlier verse drama, *The Duchess de la Vallière*, had been produced at Drury Lane in 1836, but with little success; at that time Lytton had yet to learn what was theatrically effective, and the play was much too long. "Far too tedious," said a newspaper criticism on its first performance, "the longest drama we have sat out for many a night." His last play, *Money*, a prose comedy, which enjoyed a long life with frequent revivals, was produced at the Haymarket under Webster's management in 1840.

Macready is to be credited with the laudable though financially dangerous ambition to lead the public taste instead of conforming to it, a fact which to a great extent explains the collapse of his two years' management at Covent Garden, as it does that of a subsequent two years' management at Drury Lane. When he left Covent Garden in 1839 his duties there were taken over by Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews, who exchanged an assured success at the Olympic for the doubtful honour of managing the larger house. Their management was excellent, but they were not good financiers. Shakespeare was alternated with modern comedy and the airy trifles of Planché; opera was tried, in an attempt to compete with what was then the over-

whelmingly popular form of entertainment; but despite the efforts of well-meaning managers and a brilliant company, the theatre could not be made to pay, and after two years (that is to say, by the end of 1842) the attempt was abandoned.

This is practically the end of the dramatic history of Covent Garden. Music hereafter took the place of the drama there. The fortunes of the house had fallen lower and lower, when it was burned down in 1856; the present house was opened in 1858, and its subsequent history belongs to that of opera.

After playing at the Haymarket under Webster from 1839 to 1841, Macready in the latter year made his second attempt at managership by taking over the control of Drury Lane. It was a brave attempt, for he had a high purpose and was an admirable stage-manager; but a couple of years of it were again enough to bring disaster to his pocket and his health. He was too anxious to fulfil literally his pledge to give the public variety, and to pose as the leader of public taste. When, for instance, "business" was languishing and he gave in so far to the prevailing fashion as to mount Gay's *Acis and Galatea* with Handel's music and superb scenery by Stanfield, he held a trump card; but he deliberately threw it away by refusing to admit it to be performed more than a limited number of times, though he was immensely proud of the production. His stage-manager, Anderson, has left it on record that in his opinion "it ought to have run two hundred nights and brought thousands of pounds to the treasury, had the manager been so inclined." But, contrary to all advice, Macready would not hear of its being given more than three times a week, with the result that its powers of attraction dwindled to nothing.

Some of the scenic effects in this production would

challenge comparison with anything seen in later days. Particularly, a scene of the Sicilian coast by moonlight aroused the greatest enthusiasm, presenting as it did (according to the critic of the "Examiner") "the seas swelling towards us, the waves breaking as they come; the last billow actually tumbling over and over with spray and foam upon the shore, and then receding with the noise of water over stones and shells, to show the hard wet sand, and, in its due time, roll and break again."

Another circumstance which militated against Macready's Drury Lane management was the formidable competition of the other theatres, which were now on the verge of emancipation from the old monopoly fetters. Macready made the mistake of trying to carry matters with too high a hand. He failed to realize that the days of Drury Lane monopoly were over, and that a public enjoying considerable scope for choice in its dramatic fare must be treated with consideration rather than with authority. The Haymarket, the Olympic, the Adelphi, and Sadler's Wells were by this time all popular houses, and he was too indifferent to the fact. Artistically, his management was laudable. He believed in the older traditions and tried to carry them on; his work was all done conscientiously, though in too unbending a spirit, and he cleared away a good many abuses. But his general lack of amenity was his undoing as a manager, and his obstinate opposition to long "runs" emptied his purse.

Of his productions at Drury Lane the most notable were his revivals of *King John* and *As You Like It*, the latter with a cast that included what the playbills of the time would have termed "such a galaxy of talent" as Mrs. Nisbett, Mrs. Stirling, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Anderson, Phelps, Ryder, and, of course, Macready

himself. He did service to the contemporary drama by producing Westland Marston's *Patrician's Daughter* and Browning's *Blot on the 'Scutcheon*; and, yielding unwillingly to the taste for music and spectacle, mounted Dryden's *King Arthur* and Milton's *Comus* handsomely. The *King Arthur* performances are memorable from the fact that in them Sims Reeves, then an unknown member of the chorus, had his first solos to sing and made an immediate impression.

After his disappointment at Drury Lane, Macready made a successful tour in America, where he had already acted twenty years before; on his return to Europe he acted in Paris with Helen Faucit, to the great admiration of the French critics. Five years later a third American tour was brought to an untimely end by riots which arose from a quarrel between him and the American tragedian Edwin Forrest, ending in Macready's having to be hurriedly smuggled out of the country. The rights of the quarrel are not very clear, but undoubtedly Macready's uncompromising demeanour (which was sadly lacking in tact) did not tend to pacification. For the rest of his stage life he was principally seen in London at the Haymarket and the Princess's, and made his farewell to the public at Drury Lane in February 1851 as Macbeth. His retirement was made the occasion for much fêting and laudation, a great deal of the latter being thoroughly deserved. He lived to enjoy twenty years of private life, dying at Cheltenham in April 1873.

He appears to have been an ideal actor of highly coloured parts, where abrupt transitions of manner and strongly marked contrasts were called for. Talfourd, who was no mean judge, classifies him as the "most romantic" of actors, just as Kean was the "most human" and Kemble the "most classical." He was an

extremely upright man and could be very generous; on the other hand, as his diary shows, he was extremely vain and very quarrelsome. His characteristic pomposity peeps out in such diary entries as this: "It had always been," he says, "in direct contrariety to my disposition and my taste . . . to adopt the 'hail-fellow-well-met' familiarity of the green-rooms, into which (when I entered them, which was not often) I carried the manners and address habitual with me in general society." Whatever his shortcomings, however, he was always thoroughly in earnest, and, as an artist, conscientious almost to a fault. We may remember the words in Tennyson's sonnet to "Macready, moral, grave, sublime":

"Thine is it that the drama did not die,
Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime
And those gilt gauds men-children swarm to see."

With the end of the Macready management the lustre departs from the annals of "Old Drury." Henceforward its chequered career, though offering isolated moments of interest, has not much bearing on dramatic history. Its size was inappropriate to the newer style of histrionics; and, though one or two were foolhardy enough to make the attempt, prudent managers shrank from the difficulty of filling so vast a house in the face of the opposition of half a dozen popular theatres, after the preliminary difficulty of paying so large a rental as was demanded. Buckstone with his fine company at the Haymarket, Robson and Wigan at the Olympic, Webster with Dion Boucicault and Toole at the Adelphi, Phelps at Sadler's Wells, Charles Kean at the Princess's—these formed an opposition that it would have needed a Garrick or an Edmund Kean to withstand. Unde-

tered by this, however, Bunn succeeded Macready in the management, and for some seven years tried in vain to tempt the public with opera and the performances of a French circus. Drury Lane ruined him, just as it ruined his successor James Anderson, a capable actor who had been under Macready both at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Two years of it sufficed for Anderson, who had the added bitterness of seeing an American "equestrian entertainment" subsequently fill the house which his efforts had left half empty.

Manager succeeded manager with dreary frequency; opera alternated with circus performances, and melodrama with the feats of acrobats. The only outstanding feature in the twenty-eight years that elapse between Anderson and the rule of Augustus Harris (who is identified with the present-day Drury Lane), is the Chatterton management, that lasted from 1863 to 1879, at the close of which Chatterton's debts are said to have amounted to more than thirty-five thousand pounds! His aims, however, had been laudably higher than those of his immediate predecessors. He called together as able a company as circumstances permitted, including Phelps (who had retired from the management of Sadler's Wells in 1862), Helen Faucit, Barry Sullivan, and Adelaide Neilson; and for five years he struggled manfully against the inevitable, with revivals of Shakespearean and other poetic dramas. To him, also, the public owed the appearance of Salvini as Othello in 1875; but, finding in the words of the trite epigram, that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy," he tried to retrieve his fortunes with spectacular "modern life" plays of the type that was to prove so profitable to his successor. He was beaten, nevertheless, partly by the circumstances of public taste and partly owing to his attempting too much, for

latterly he had the Adelphi and the Princess's on his hands as well as Drury Lane.

With Augustus Harris, a new era of prosperity began for the old house. Lavishly staged pantomime (how many of us have delicious recollections of our earliest pantomimes there, and the inimitable Vokes family!) and elaborate spectacular melodramas, teeming with up-to-date incidents and mechanical effects, were his trump cards, as they have proved those of Arthur Collins who has carried on the Harris tradition since the latter's death in 1896. It is only fair to remember that to Harris we owed the visit of the Saxe-Meiningen company in 1881, and of the great Italian actress Adelaide Ristori in 1882. But, to all intents and purposes, the history of Drury Lane for the last forty years has meant spectacular melodrama and pantomime. And so, though its boards have since been the scene of many interesting appearances and are connected incidentally with the careers of many distinguished performers, Drury Lane's long and honourable importance in dramatic history practically comes to a close with that of Macready.

With the disappearance of monopoly in stage matters, the centre of interest shifts to newer theatres. Of these, the Haymarket claims first consideration, as the oldest established. The management of Benjamin Webster, which lasted from 1837 to 1853, initiated the prosperity of a house which has enjoyed an almost unbroken tradition for good luck, which means good management. He improved the comfort of the house, lighting it by gas, and interposing "orchestra stalls" between the pit and the orchestra; opinion at the time was divided as to whether the latter innovation were an improvement or no. What was more important, he gathered together a fine company, and gave by his

encouragement a considerable lift to the dramatic output of his day.

Samuel Phelps and Madame Celeste made their first London appearance at the Haymarket during Webster's first season; Macready and Helen Faucit were there from 1839 to 1841; Buckstone, who succeeded Webster as manager of the theatre, was one of its leading comedians from the beginning of Webster's rule; Charles Kean and his wife, the elder Farren, Mathews and Madame Vestris, Mrs. Nisbett, Mrs. Stirling, Tyrone Power,—all these supported Webster, who, besides being an able comedian, was responsible for nearly a hundred comedies and farces which he wrote or adapted from the French. At the same time, always on the alert to encourage native talent, he produced Lytton's *Money* in 1840, and some of the best work of Sheridan Knowles, Douglas Jerrold, and Westland Marston. His management was generous and honourable, and he reaped a suitable and well-deserved reward. He is recorded to have paid no less a sum than £2000 annually for the copyright of British plays, and on one occasion offered a prize of £500 in open competition for a comedy.

An interesting fact that Mr. Maude notes in his book on the Haymarket Theatre is that Webster's was the first London company to go on tour. "Whenever the theatre closed, the members of the company went off in a body and rented a small provincial theatre for five nights at a time (they never played on Saturdays), all sharing equally. Any one who happened to be out of the bill made himself useful in the front of the house, and no one objected to playing small parts or insisted on 'fat' ones." Finances were arranged on the sharing system, and often each member netted quite a nice little sum. Occasionally they had disconcerting experiences;

as when, in a midland town, the magistrate unexpectedly refused them permission to use the theatre and a relentless landlady refused to let them have any food or to leave without some payment in advance. Eventually a plan of flight was decided on ; and "in the middle of the night the actors and actresses, with their spare clothing and properties disposed as best could be managed about their persons, silently climbed out of the window, looking like nothing more than a series of fat men and women from a 'penny gaff.' The moment they reached the street, off they ran, never stopping till they reached a cornfield some two miles off."

In 1844 Webster had become, in partnership with Madame Celeste, part lessee of the Adelphi ; and in 1853 he retired from the Haymarket and devoted himself entirely to the Adelphi. Buckstone, who was now at the height of his popularity, took up the management of the Haymarket and remained there till 1876. He had been on the stage since he was a boy, having deserted an office stool for the boards of the theatre ; and, after the usual strolling apprenticeship and appearances at the Surrey Theatre, Sadler's Wells, the Adelphi and Drury Lane, he had joined Webster's Haymarket company in 1837. He was the most irresistible low-comedian of modern days, excelling in parts where broad humour and a sense of the grotesque were called for. His Tony Lumpkin and his Bob Acres have remained unchallenged for excellence, save perhaps by Lionel Brough. He was also author or adapter of a host of comedies and farces.

He was fond of telling how he came to take up the managerial responsibilities, and that at a reduced rent. Mrs. Morris, the proprietress of the Haymarket (with whom, as with every one, Buckstone was a prime favourite), was anxious that he should become manager

when Webster went to the Adelphi. A friend offered to find the necessary capital for him; and so (to quote again from Mr. Maude's chronicle), "his capital acquired, Buckstone went off to arrange terms with Mrs. Morris. They soon came to an agreement, and, having talked over the question of repairs, etc., Buckstone rose to take his leave. 'Good-bye, Mr. Buckstone,' said Mrs. Morris; 'good-bye. There's nothing more I can do for you, is there?' 'No,' laughed Buckstone, 'except to knock the odd £500 off the rent!' 'With pleasure,' replied Mrs. Morris, to Buckstone's intense surprise and delight."

Amongst the fine company of comedians at Buckstone's Haymarket was Henry Compton, ablest of Shakespearean "clowns," whose Touchstone was incomparable. The American actor Edwin Booth (who, many years later, was seen at the Lyceum in Irving's day) appeared under Buckstone in the early 'sixties; and in 1863 Ellen Terry, then a girl of fifteen but possessed already of six or seven years' experience of the stage, took part (as Britannia) in an extraordinary medley billed as "Buckstone At Home; or, the Manager and his Friends. Designed to introduce a splendid panorama of the tour of the Prince of Wales in the East"; and Miss Terry has confessed that she behaved somewhat mischievously on the occasion, in tossing a professedly immovable "property" rock into the air with her hand! In 1865 (in a summer season undertaken by Walter Montgomery) Mrs. Kendal, then Madge Robertson, made her first London appearance at the Haymarket; or rather, to be strictly accurate, this was her second London appearance; for, as her biographer, Mr. Pemberton, tells us, she had appeared when little more than a baby at the Marylebone Theatre in 1854 in children's parts. "A Robertson family story,"

says Mr. Pemberton, "records the fact that when *The Stranger* was being performed and little Madge, very proud of her new costume, was sent on to the stage to soften the heart of Kotzebue's sorely depressed (and depressing) hero, she caught sight of her nurse in the pit, and, forgetful of the footlight barrier that divided them, gleefully called out, 'Oh! nurse, look at my new shoes!'"

The Haymarket bill was usually long and varied, including domestic drama, comedies and farces, the curtain rising at seven o'clock and often not falling until well after midnight. At nine o'clock "half-price" began, an opportunity of which many busy people availed themselves; and the audience of the "little theatre" was often reinforced at a late hour by unsated playgoers from the opera-house opposite, who would wind up the night by a glimpse of "Bucky" in some favourite farce. One or two of the many Buckstone anecdotes on record are too good not to be quoted. An encounter of his with a very tipsy stranger whom he found affectionately embracing one of the pillars in the portico of the theatre shows how widely familiar his face and manner were. "'How dare you, sir?' said Buckstone; 'how dare you defile this temple of classic comedy? You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Go home, sir; go home at once.' The bibulous stranger turned a lack-lustre eye on his adviser and steadied himself with some difficulty against the pillar. 'Go home yourself,' he hiccupped, 'you damned bad imitation of Buckstone!'" Later in Buckstone's career, when deafness troubled him gravely, and he had great difficulty, when in the "wings," to hear his "cues" from the stage, he used to arrange with the prompter to tap him on the shoulder when the moment arrived for him to go on to the scene. On one

occasion, when he had to go on at the end of a love scene between the hero and heroine of the piece, a friend, who had failed to find him in his dressing-room, came up behind him and, to attract his attention without being heard, tapped him on the shoulder. Mistaking this for the prompter's signal, Buckstone jumped up and walked on to the stage, to the amazement of the pair of lovers, who stared at him in confusion and embarrassment as to how to proceed. Grasping the situation in a moment, Buckstone winked hard at the lady, and exclaimed with a chuckle, "Aha, I saw you!" as he made a rapid exit. The unfortunate actors had to finish their love scene as best they might amidst the roar of laughter that followed this unlooked-for interruption.

In spite, however, of his popularity and the constant patronage of the Court, Buckstone's Haymarket had its ups and downs of fortune, for he was an extravagant man and an unbusinesslike manager. It was during a very serious "down" that the theatre's fortunes were saved by the extraordinary and entirely unexpected hit made by Edward Sothorn as Lord Dundreary in Tom Taylor's play *Our American Cousin*, in 1861. Sothorn, who had appeared in the piece in America three years before, had been disgusted with the poorness of the part when he was originally cast for it, and only accepted it on condition he were allowed to "gag" and exaggerate as much as he pleased. To his amazement as much as any one else's, his portrait of the idiotic fop, with his lisp and the ridiculous little hop in his walk, became the overwhelming attraction of the piece and made his fame and fortune. Buckstone was half afraid of the piece and of the part, as likely to offend the "swells" in the audience; but he produced and pushed it, and had reason to be thankful he had done so. By

degrees the "Dundreary" fever infected the whole town, and the management was saved. Sothorn, who was a first-rate light comedian, made a further success at the Haymarket in Tom Robertson's *David Garrick*, which first saw the light in 1864 and has in more recent years been kept green by Sir Charles Wyndham's popular rendering of the title-rôle.

The only other great success of Buckstone's later days was that enjoyed by Gilbert's "fairy plays," whose novelty of conception and execution (though indebted in some measure to the idea that Planché had hit upon for his "classical extravaganzas") caught the popular fancy. In them Madge Robertson (by this time Mrs. Kendal) and her husband did yeoman's service. *The Palace of Truth* was produced in 1870; *Pygmalion and Galatea*, in which Mrs. Kendal "came into her own" with a faultless performance as the animated statue, in 1871; and *The Wicked World* in 1873. In the latter, however, this particular vein of humour showed signs of exhaustion; mistakes were made in the cast, and, saddest of all, Buckstone was getting too old and his hearing and memory were deserting him. Despite the attractions of a clever company, a temporary spell of ill-luck settled upon the house in the late 'seventies. Buckstone retired in 1876, to die three years later, and was succeeded by J. S. Clarke, an amusing actor whose grotesque comedy had made him a favourite; but the company began to break up after Buckstone's disappearance, and there is practically nothing more of note to record in the Haymarket's history until the beginning of the Bancroft management in 1880. That, however, belongs to a different era and another chapter. It should be noted that Buckstone, in 1873, instituted "morning performances" at two o'clock, at the Haymarket; though, as Mr. Clement Scott points out, he

was not the first to try the experiment, having been anticipated by E. T. Smith, who was one of the various short-lived managers of Drury Lane in the early 'fifties.

When Webster removed in 1853 from the Haymarket to the Adelphi, it was to take up the sole management of the latter house, in which he had since 1844 had a share in partnership with Madame Celeste. Thanks to the popularity of Wright and Bedford, two excellent comedians, the Adelphi had become a favourite house. Bedford was a good singer as well as actor, and his Blueskin in *Jack Sheppard* (to Mrs. Keeley's Jack) was a remarkable enough performance to become a tradition. With the advent of Webster the type of "Adelphi drama" improved; but the recipe for it had already become firmly fixed, and, though varying in merit according to the deftness with which it was concocted, continued to consist of much the same ingredients up to the moment when it disappeared with William Terriss's death. It was an honest mixture of sensation, pathos and humour, of love, mystery, villainy, hair-breadth escapes and comic "business"; written, perhaps, with no great sense of style, but with an unerring eye to effect and to the exploiting of the talents of the company. The evening's bill almost always included one or two farces as well,—“Adelphi Screamers,” as they came to be called. Mark Lemon, Buckstone and Webster himself provided many a “screamer” to show off Wright, Bedford and the Keeleys, the solidier fare coming from the hands of such writers as Charles Reade and Tom Taylor, Watts Phillips and, subsequently, Boucicault.

In 1858 it was realized that the house had been allowed to fall into incurable disrepair; it was pulled down, and at the end of the same year a new Adelphi was opened. Watts Phillips' *The Dead Heart*, with its

sensational scene of the taking of the Bastille, was one of Webster's first managerial successes in his new house; but, as can be gathered from contemporary criticism, the success was somewhat forced by lavish stage expenditure and the effect of Webster's personality in the leading part. Genuine popular success came later with the Boucicault plays *The Colleen Bawn* and *The Octoroon*, Miss Bateman's famous performance in *Leah*, and Jefferson's inimitable *Rip van Winkle*. Toole, though he had only been six or seven years on the stage, was chosen by Webster to succeed Wright as one of the chief comedians in his company, on Wright's retirement in 1858. After at first appearing only in the "screamers," he was soon given parts that enabled him to show his mettle. Thus in a contemporary account of *The Dead Heart* in 1859, we read that "Mr. Toole has a comic part sketched out for him, which as a written part would amuse nobody, but which he knows how to make amusing." Again, in January 1860, "at the Adelphi Mr. Dickens's *Christmas Carol* has introduced Mr. Toole for the first time as an actor capable of more than amusing extravagance."

Webster wisely paid great attention to the comfort of the audience in the new house, and it is interesting to note, on Adelphi playbills of the early 'sixties (in the height of the Boucicault successes), that not only was there no fee for "booking in advance," but that "no fees to servants or for bills of performance" were permitted. The prices of admission were: Gallery, sixpence; Amphitheatre Stalls "with elbows and cushions secured the whole evening," one shilling; Pit, one and sixpence; Pit Stalls, "with elbows and cushions," two shillings; First Circle Stalls, three shillings; Dress Circle Stalls, four shillings; Orchestra Stalls, "two feet wide, and secured the whole evening," five shillings;

and Family Boxes and Private Boxes ranging from one guinea to four. The performances began at seven; and "second price," when that was allowed, usually at nine.

From 1870 to 1872 Chatterton shared in the management with Webster, and from 1872 until his collapse in 1879 had sole control of the house. The Webster traditions were fairly well kept up for a time, but the newer theatres were elbowing the older out of place, and it needed an entirely new management, and one more capable than Chatterton's, to enable the Adelphi ultimately to regain its former prestige. Even in Webster's own day the opposition of Wigan, Robson, and Liston at the Olympic, of Charles Kean at the Princess's and his great rival Phelps at Sadler's Wells, of Marie Wilton and the Byron burlesques at the Strand, had been formidable; the Olympic, in particular, challenging the Adelphi with its own weapons of farce and romantic or sensational drama.

The new house at the Olympic, after the destruction of the old by fire in March 1849, had been opened at the end of the same year; but it seemed at first as if the good fortune of the old house had been consumed with its timbers. William Farren, famous for his "old men," migrated to it from the Strand Theatre and took a capital company with him; but he could present no sufficient attraction to draw good audiences until, in the autumn of 1853, he happened to engage a grotesque little low-comedian whose acting he had observed when on a visit to Dublin. This was Frederick Robson, and before many weeks were over Robson had made himself and the Olympic famous. His farcical acting was of a grotesqueness that was weird and abounded in surprising contrasts, a leap being made in a moment from irresponsible buffoonery to tragedy or irresistible pathos.

"No one can have witnessed his performance," says a critic in the *Quarterly Review*, "without being struck with the narrowness 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 laughter." Another critic, in "Blackwood," says: "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 this with the most marvellous flexibility of voice and feature. It was in a burlesque of *Macbeth*, and subsequently in *Shylock, or the Merchant of Venice preserved*, that Robson obtained his first chances of exhibiting this tragic-comic power; his performance drew the town, and G. H. Lewes could write in the *Leader* of October 1853 that, "on Monday the Olympic opened its doors with by far the greatest prospect of success since the days when Madame Vestris made it the most novel, the most elegant, and the most attractive theatre in London."

Alfred Wigan succeeded Farren as manager, and Robson still continued to be the attraction of the theatre. His success in almost every part he undertook, and particularly in burlesque parts, resulted, as Henry Morley aptly points out (in his "Journal of a Playgoer"), from his being so desperately in earnest. "It is odd enough," says Morley, "that at a time when all serious acting is tending to the burlesque and unreal, a burlesque actor should start up with a real and very serious power in him." Any mention of Robson would be incomplete without a reference to the extraordinary vogue enjoyed by the song, "Villikins and his Dinah," which he sang in the course of a worthless

farce called *The Wandering Minstrel*. He appeared for the last time in 1862, his powers by that time failing him terribly, and died two years later. During the last five years of his theatrical life he was joint manager of the Olympic with Emden, who had been acting-manager under Alfred Wigan.

Apart from the Robson successes, Wigan's management included the production of Tom Taylor's *Still Waters run Deep* in 1855, in which Wigan (who was a very capable actor) was much praised as Mr. Mildmay; and, during the Robson and Emden management, the same author's *Ticket-of-Leave Man* enjoyed a sensational success. Of the names that appear on the Olympic bills during the latter management, those of Lydia Foote and Henry Neville are familiar to a later generation.

A few years afterwards Kate Terry (who in 1865 "doubled" the parts of Viola and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*) and Henry Neville were the "stars" in romantic drama at the Olympic. Later again, during a season of Webster's, it is interesting to note the name of "Miss E. Farren" on its bills. Sir W. S. Gilbert's *The Princess* (in after years adapted into the libretto for the Savoy opera *Princess Ida*) was produced there in 1870, and his *Gretchen* in 1879; there were moments of popularity for the theatre with adaptations of favourite novels of Dickens and Wilkie Collins; and Wilkie Collins' play *The New Magdalen* (in 1873) gave importance to the brief management of Miss Ada Cavendish, an actress of considerable melodramatic power, who had made her *début* at the Royalty some ten years previously. But, though a succession of managers, some of them able and astute men, tried during the remaining five and twenty years of its life to retrieve the fortunes of the house, it never recovered its old

position. Its prestige disappeared with Robson, and after that it ceases to count seriously in stage history. It was badly situated, in a street that had become disreputable, and it would have needed an irresistible attraction to get the public to go there again. In spite of these facts, when the old house was finally closed in 1890, a new Olympic was planned and built on the site, a fine house and one much larger than the former.

Fortune, however, was not to be tempted and kept sternly aloof. Neither the efforts of the popular Wilson Barrett with melodrama, of Signor Lago with opera, nor the attractions of various strange entertainments that were subsequently offered there, were of any avail; and in 1899 the Olympic finally ceased to exist.

The most remarkable manager since Macready, and the one on whom his mantle fell, was to be found (at the period dealt with in this chapter) at Sadler's Wells, a theatre that up to this time had been regarded as utterly "suburban," but was now to take the lead in intelligent dramatic entertainment. Samuel Phelps, a sound and earnest actor, who had graduated at the Haymarket under Webster and at Covent Garden under Macready, as a man of forty acquired a share of the management of Sadler's Wells in 1844, and controlled its destinies (making both the theatre and himself famous) for eighteen years. He recognized that, despite the deplorable condition of the native drama of his day, there was, nevertheless, even in so unfashionable a quarter, a public to appreciate performances of Shakespeare intelligently given and adequately staged, and moreover that it was possible for a manager to present such performances without such extravagant outlay on scenery and accessories as Charles Kean was lavishing at the Princess's. The disappearance of monopoly in theatrical matters gave

Phelps his opportunity. He had inherited what was good in the Macready tradition from his old chief, and, having plenty of courage and being very much in earnest, he set about the difficult task of transforming a rather rowdy suburban theatre, where for many years sensationalism had been the constant attraction, into a house that became the resort of those who loved Shakespeare and what was best in the drama. During his eighteen years of management he produced thirty-two of Shakespeare's plays, and, at a rough calculation, played Shakespeare on four nights out of every six. When Shakespeare was not in the bill, the staple piece of the evening was always a play at least worthy of intelligent consideration. Massinger, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, Colman, Sheridan, Macklin, Lytton, Knowles, Milman, Byron, Marston, Browning—these are names we find on Phelps' playbills. The managerial announcement issued at the commencement of the enterprise stated that it was undertaken at a time "when the stages which have been exclusively called 'National' are closed, or devoted to very indifferent objects from that of presenting the real drama of England," and "in the hope of eventually rendering Sadler's Wells Theatre what a theatre ought to be, a place for justly representing the works of our great dramatic poets." Phelps honestly fulfilled that hope, so far as in him lay, and his career is a very worthy close to the line of managers of the old school. For he belonged to them, and not to the newer school, whose ridicule he lived to incur for his adherence to the methods of acting in which he had been trained. Shakespeare-lovers in the 'fifties were divided into two camps,—the adherents of Phelps and his intelligent and reverent treatment of the plays at Sadler's Wells, and the admirers of Charles Kean's sumptuous "revivals"

at the Princess's. Charles Kean was the first of the lengthening line of extravagant producers of Shakespeare, who, to say the least of it, are in danger of obscuring the jewel by the elaboration of its setting; Phelps was the last upholder of a tradition that is seldom reverted to now, a tradition that had the merit of a juster sense of proportion and of sensitiveness to the intrinsic beauty of the plays. "A main cause of the success of Mr. Phelps in his Shakespearean revivals," says Morley in his "Journal," "is that he shows in his author above all things the poet." Again, "the scenery (at Sadler's Wells) is very beautiful, but wholly free from the meretricious glitter now in favour." But Phelps has his revenge; for while his spirited and artistic management of Sadler's Wells occupies a prominent and honourable place in the history of the drama, Charles Kean's productions are forgotten save for the appeal they made to the eye.

It must have been bitter to Phelps, after his retirement, to see Sadler's Wells drop gradually into disrepute again; for so it did. Of its succeeding managers, none had his personal prestige; theatres were multiplying in the centre of London, and theatrical taste was changing. Phelps died (in 1878) before he could see the one managerial effort—that of Mrs. Bateman after she left the Lyceum—that had any chance of reviving his old theatre's fortunes. The Bateman management, however, came to nothing; and with the end of Phelps' day the history of Sadler's Wells practically comes to an end. The house stands still, but put to baser uses; its interior has been from time to time remodelled, but the shell of the fabric is still that built by Rosoman in 1765.

Phelps was a sound and conscientious actor,—not particularly distinguished in tragic parts, but rather in comedy, and there chiefly in what a contemporary critic

calls his "dry and intellectual" comedy. His Falstaff was good, but his Christopher Sly, his Bottom, and, above all, his Malvolio were excellent.

The Princess's Theatre, where Phelps' rival, Charles Kean, displayed his conception of Shakespeare, had been opened in 1840 with operatic performances. The first ten years of its life, previous to Kean's becoming manager, offer few points of interest. Opera, melodrama and farce filled the bill, but not always the theatre; and not even spasmodic appearances of "stars" such as the American actress Charlotte Cushman (remembered by her Meg Merrilies) and Edwin Forrest in 1845, Mathews and Madame Vestris in 1846, and Macready in 1848, followed by a relapse into opera for a year or two, could make the theatre popular.

In 1850 Charles Kean became manager, in partnership with Keeley; in the following year Keeley retired from the management, and Kean reigned alone till 1859. The company was from the first an excellent one for the task Kean had proposed to himself; a company of actors for the most part able and experienced, including Kean and his wife (already fairly advanced in public favour as Ellen Tree), the two Keeleys, Vining, Lacy, Ryder, Alfred Wigan, Meadows, Hermann Vezin, Carlotta Leclercq and, later, her sister Rose, and the members of a family whose names have a peculiar appeal to us at the present day, to wit, Benjamin Terry and his daughters Kate and Ellen.

Charles Kean's bid for fame was frankly made as "producer of plays" (as we should nowadays say) rather than as actor. He was not a particularly good actor. His friend Albert Smith wrote of him: "Let not Charles Kean deceive himself as to his position as an actor; he has none beyond that which appliances of

mise-en-scène assist him to"; but by hard work he had made himself efficient. It must be borne in mind that he took to the stage from no overmastering impulse, as in his father's case, or even from any desire of his own, but as a means of gaining a livelihood for his mother and himself when his father's fortunes began to fail in consequence of his mode of life. He was, however, a Shakespearean enthusiast, mainly from the "commentator's" standpoint; and he was a fervent archæologist, very proud of his designation as "Charles Kean, F.S.A."

He mounted fifteen or sixteen of the more prominent of Shakespeare's plays during his time at the Princess's, setting great store by the "historical accuracy" of his productions. The plays were gorgeously staged, and authorities of all kinds were ransacked to ensure a faithful reproduction of what were often unessential details in elaborating the pictures of past ages. It was certainly well that he should remove, once and for all, certain obvious incongruities that convention had grafted upon the representation of the plays; but in his tendency to over-estimate archæological exactitude and to "paint the lily" by improving upon Shakespeare's stage-craft, his influence was not good and has had ill results in our own day.

His point of view was, as he said in his speech on the last night of his management, that "historical accuracy might be so blended with pictorial effect that instruction and amusement would go hand in hand; . . . in fact, to make the theatre a school as well as a recreation," and he is entitled to all the credit he deserves for carrying out his theory enthusiastically. That it may seem wanting in the imagination that marks the true artist, as well as in respect for the imagination of his audience, is another matter.

It is interesting to note how closely in some respects Beerbohm Tree, in producing Shakespeare, has followed Kean. The interpolation, for instance, into *Richard II.* of a scenic representation of Bolingbroke's triumphal entry into London (an event that Shakespeare was content to describe by the mouth of one of his characters) was Kean's idea. Kean interpolated into *Henry V.* a similar scene of the King's return after the French expedition. He initiated, too, the custom (also followed by Tree) of publishing with his playbill a leaflet descriptive of the play and its history, in his case including exhaustive details of his archæological researches. It is possible to defend his attitude; but it is equally permissible to regret what a critic in "Blackwood" called "this magnifying of historical truth, this drifting from the open trackless sea of fiction to the terra firma and unalterable landmarks of fact," and to regard it as oblivious of the fact that Shakespeare busied himself but little with petty accuracy of detail, choosing a picturesque *locale* for his drama and then concerning himself only with the development of the dramatic side of his theme and the human nature of his characters. In his "leaflet" respecting *Macbeth* Kean quotes Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Strabo, Xiphilin, Snorre, Adomnan, and the Eyrbyggja Saga—a formidable list of authorities! In his production of *The Winter's Tale* he boggled at Bohemia and transformed it into Bithynia, to get a sea coast, gravely stating in his preliminary leaflet that, amongst other accuracies, the scenes include "vegetation peculiar to Bithynia, from private drawings taken on the spot"! This is surely the very ecstasy of accuracy.

It is interesting to note the appreciation that greeted the childish performances of the sisters Kate and Ellen Terry under his management. Kate Terry appeared as Arthur in *King John* in 1852, Fleance in *Macbeth* in 1853,

the Duke of York in *Richard III.* in 1854, Cordelia in *King Lear* in 1858; Ellen Terry as Mamilius in *A Winter's Tale* and Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1856, and as Arthur in *King John* in 1858; and both in the "Christmas pieces" that almost every theatre presented in their winter seasons.

Ellen Terry's *début* as Mamilius (she was then eight years old) caused her intense gratification and some bitter tears. She was very proud of her dress, her part, and a little toy "go-cart" which it was her duty to drag about the stage; but, when carrying out her instructions, she tripped over the handle and came down on her back. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* A delightful photograph of Charles Kean with her (including the fateful "go-cart") is reproduced in Clement Scott's "Drama of Yesterday and To-day."

Kean retired from the Princess's in 1859, the worse in pocket but the richer in a great popular reputation. Whatever one may think of his artistic merits as a stage-manager, there can be no two opinions as to his personal merits in his treatment of his company and the management of his theatre. He and his wife were highly and deservedly esteemed both before and behind the curtain, and public evidences of this esteem were not wanting. He continued, after leaving the Princess's, to act until 1867, visiting Australia, America and Jamaica between 1863 and 1866, and died in 1868.

By a coincidence the Princess's, besides being the scene of Ellen Terry's theatrical beginnings, also saw the London *début* of Henry Irving, who played there for a season in 1859, under the management of the elder Augustus Harris. Irving was at the time a member of the stock company in Edinburgh, to which he speedily returned on finding himself cast for parts very inferior to those he had played in the North.

Except for a season (in 1872) when Phelps appeared there in a round of his best known parts, the Princess's was given over for the remainder of its career to melodrama, with George Vining, Webster, Chatterton and Wilson Barrett as its successive managers. Such sensational pieces as Boucicault's *The Streets of London* (1864), *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1865) and *After Dark* (1868), Reade's *Never Too Late to Mend* (1865) and *Drink* (1879), and Watts Phillips' *Lost in London* (1867), were typical of what pleased its audiences. They were capital plays of their class, and excellently acted. The two Boucicaults and Patty Oliver in *Arrah-na-Pogue*, and Charles Warner's forcible acting in *Drink* and *Never Too Late to Mend* are vivid memories to those who saw them. At the end of the 'seventies the house was reconstructed, reopening in November 1880. Its subsequent history, notable only for Wilson Barrett's five years of management, will be dealt with later.

To complete our survey of the London theatres up to the period which may be taken as the beginning of the "present day," when the interest shifts from the history of theatres to the history of individuals, it only remains to glance at the contemporary fortunes of the Lyceum, the St. James's, the Strand and the Royalty theatres.

After its somewhat inchoate beginnings, the Lyceum settled down to what was for some time a successful and popular management, from 1844 to 1847, under the Keeleys, and from 1847 under the control of Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews. The Keeleys, with Mr. and Mrs. Wigan, Sam Emery and Miss Woolgar, made a great hit with adaptations of Dickens's novels, which were then in every one's mouth. As in former days at the Olympic, Mathews and Madame Vestris made extravaganza their trump card. They turned

again to Planché, whose burlesques had done so much for them at the Olympic, and alternated his work with other extravaganzas, burlesques and Christmas pieces. But, in spite of the wit of their authors and the fertility and ingenuity of their clever scene-painter, William Beverley, they could not repeat their earlier success. Madame Vestris was no longer young, nor was their company in any way the equal of that at the old Olympic. Buckstone was in it, also Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Murray, and Miss Fairbrother (who was subsequently married to the Duke of Cambridge). * Still, the entertainment they offered to the public was too slight to be enduring under these conditions; and farce and pantomime, unrelieved by anything more intelligent, became wearisome. So in 1855, when Madame Vestris had been for two years out of the bill in consequence of illness, Mathews retired from the management, bankrupt. In the following year Madame Vestris died.

After harbouring the "Wizard of the North," the burnt-out Italian Opera Company from Covent Garden, and the celebrated Italian actress Adelaide Ristori, the Lyceum enjoyed a short spell of better days under the direction of the actor Charles Dillon, whose management, though thriftless and therefore disastrous to himself, was alive to what the public wanted, and is at any rate notable for having provided the first London appearance of Lady Bancroft (then Marie Wilton).

She appeared, billed as "Miss Maria Wilton," at the Lyceum in September 1856 as the boy Henri in *Belphegor*. The *Morning Post* in its notice of the performance said of her: "Miss M. Wilton is a young (apparently *very* young) lady quite new to us, but her natural and pathetic acting . . . showed her to possess powers of no ordinary character." And to complete

her success, the vivacious charm of her singing, acting and dancing in the burlesque *Perdita* which followed, was no less admired. In both pieces she had as a fellow-player Toole, who was then at the beginning of his popularity. He had been at the St. James's, but joined the Lyceum company for the *Belphegor* production.

From 1859 to 1871, when Henry Irving's association with it began, the Lyceum had a variety of managers and many vicissitudes. Madame Celeste and Edmund Falconer (remembered by his melodrama *Peep o' Day*) tried their fortunes; Italian Opera seasons were sandwiched between casual seasons of melodrama and comedy; Fechter, whose merits and demerits as an actor were as hotly discussed in his day as were Irving's in his, occupied the house for the best part of four years, chiefly with melodrama; and, it may be noted in passing, Sir W. S. Gilbert made in 1867 an early appearance at the Lyceum as a burlesque-writer with *Harlequin Cock Robin and Jenny Wren*. This was not his first dramatic effort, however, for his *Dulcamara* had been produced at the St. James's in the previous year.

The history of the St. James's Theatre, from the days of Mitchell's lesseeship (when French plays occupied its boards for the best part of twelve years) until the beginning of the Kendal management—that is to say, from 1854 to 1879—is a tale of almost unrelieved misfortune. Toole acted there for a short time and then, as has been mentioned above, joined Dillon's company at the Lyceum. In succession to various short-lived managements, Webster took over the house in 1863; but, though he mustered a good company, no success attended him, and, as he had the Adelphi also on his hands, he soon gave up the St. James's. Under the

short and equally unfortunate management of Miss Herbert, Henry Irving appeared in 1866 in *The Belle's Stratagem*. Mrs. John Wood was manager from 1869 to 1873, with a company that included William Farren the younger, Lionel Brough, John Clayton and Lydia Foote, and was more fortunate than most of her predecessors. The production of *She Stoops to Conquer*, with which she began her campaign, was a success; and later again, when she was manager for a short time in 1876 and 1877, she made a hit with *The Danisheffs* (an adaptation from the French) for which her company was reinforced by Hermann Vezin and Charles Warner. The year 1879 saw the accession of the Kendals to the management, and a new and prosperous era for the St. James's.

The first management of any account in the history of the Strand Theatre was that of the elder Farren, who made it fairly popular, with comedy and sentimental drama, for two years from 1848 to 1850. Mrs. Stirling, Compton, and the two Leigh Murrays were among his company. After Farren, the Strand fell upon evil days until in 1858 it entered upon a career of merry success with burlesque. Just as Planché had been the saviour of the Olympic with his extravaganzas, so H. J. Byron saved the fortunes of the Strand with burlesques of a different nature. These were, as often as not, parodies of the exaggerated melodrama that still found favour in some quarters. Marie Wilton was the "bright particular star" of these burlesques, with a style of delicious impudence that charmed every one as much by its finish as its piquancy. "I call her the cleverest girl I have ever seen on the stage in my time, and the most singularly original," Dickens says of her in one of his letters at this date. The vogue of these burlesques lasted on well into the early 'seventies; and, a few years

later, comic opera, with the brilliant success of Florence St. John in *Madame Favart* in 1879 and *Olivette* in 1880, held the boards until the remodelling of the little house in 1882. After that, John S. Clarke, a versatile actor who shone as much in farce as in the old comedies he revived, managed the Strand for some time; the Daly company (with Ada Rehan, John Drew, James Lewis and Mrs. Gilbert) made their first London appearance there in 1884, to come there again two years later and finally take their place in the affections of London playgoers. Later again, miscellaneous enterprises found a home at the Strand; Willie Edouin with the amazingly successful farce *Our Flat*, Harry Paulton with *Niobe*, other farces and plays of very varying merit, and finally "musical comedy," until its demolition early in 1906.

The Royalty has had a career somewhat similar to that of the Strand, but less prosperous. After dismal beginnings it was reconstructed in 1861 and opened with burlesque of the kind that was filling the Strand. Ada Cavendish appeared in 1863 in Burnand's excellent burlesque *Ixion*, and a year or two later several successful pieces of the same kind and from the same pen were produced by Pattie Oliver, who had graduated in burlesque at the Strand. Except for such items of interest as the fact that Sir Charles Wyndham made his first London appearance at the Royalty in 1866, and that Arthur Bourchier made an early essay of managership there in 1895, followed by George Alexander, the subsequent history of the house is not of much importance. Kate Santley has been lessee since 1883 (when the interior was again remodelled), and, after tempting fortune there with comic opera for a short time, has for many years let it to a varied succession of managers. The phenomenally successful farce *Charley's Aunt* was first

produced at the Royalty in 1892, though it was soon transferred to the Globe, where its long run took place. French plays, German plays, Ibsen, English serious and frivolous plays, have held its boards at various times; but it has been the home of temporary enterprises, rather than a house with a coherent history of its own.

Mention may be made, in passing, of the brief ten years' life of the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, which was opened in 1867. Phelps, Wyndham, Lionel Brough, Toole, Hermann Vezin, Sam Emery, Henrietta Hodson, Nellie Farren, Clayton, the Wigans and the beautiful Mrs. Rousby acted on its boards; and it was here that (in 1867) Henry Irving and Ellen Terry first acted together.

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY IRVING AND ELLEN TERRY: THE LYCEUM.

IRVING's earliest appearances in London, at the Princess's in 1859 and the St. James's in 1866, have already been mentioned. During the ten years that followed his first engagement at a Sunderland theatre (which, curiously enough, bore the name of the Lyceum) he had been through the mill in stock companies in Edinburgh, Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester; so that by the time he reached his St. James's engagement he had acquired a useful stock of experience and a considerable provincial reputation. Only five years more were to elapse before the beginning of his connection with the theatre whose fame will always be bound up with his own; and in those five years we find him acting a variety of parts, usually in comedy, at various theatres.

From 1867 to 1869 he was stage-manager as well as actor at the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre; and it was during his engagement there that he first acted with Ellen Terry, playing Petruchio to her Catharine in Garrick's abridgment of *The Taming of the Shrew* in December 1867. The two never acted together again until Irving engaged Ellen Terry as his "leading lady" at the Lyceum when he became manager there eleven years later. Ellen Terry has left it on record, in allusion to the event, that she noticed that Irving worked with more concentration than all the other actors put

together. "There is an old story," she says, "of Irving being struck with my talent at this time, and promising that if he ever had a theatre of his own he'd give me an engagement! But that is all moonshine. As a matter of fact I'm sure he never thought of me at all at that time. I was just then acting very badly, and feeling ill, caring scarcely at all for my work or a theatre or anybody belonging to a theatre." The critics were divided as to the merits of her Catharine and of Irving's Petruchio, but the performance was considered of sufficient interest to be noticed at some length.

During the next two years Irving acted at the Haymarket, at the Gaiety (where he made something of a hit as Mr. Chevenix in *Uncle Dick's Darling*, a piece in which his friend Toole, to whom he was in great measure indebted for the engagement, also appeared), and at the Vaudeville, where he made a still more distinct impression as Digby Grant in *The Two Roses*. In 1871 his connection with the Lyceum began. That house—unlucky, unpopular, and in bad repair—had been taken over by "Colonel" Bateman, a shrewd American manager, who, having heard Irving recite "The Dream of Eugene Aram," was impressed with the actor's obvious capability for work of a more ambitious kind than he had hitherto been allowed to attempt. He rushed home to tell his family that he had found the greatest English actor of the age, and that he intended to take the Lyceum and "run" him there. Irving's friends were amazed at his leaving the prosperity of the Vaudeville for the disaster they prophesied at the unlucky Lyceum; but he knew his powers and had faith in himself, and welcomed the opportunity which Bateman had promised him of appearing in rôles of a more romantic nature than those in which he had so far made his London reputation.

The beginning of Bateman's management was not promising. His first production, a romantic adaptation from the French, was a failure; and he was obliged to turn to his "star's" talents in comedy in an endeavour to avert misfortune by putting on an adaptation from "Pickwick," with Irving as Jingle. This, however, was not enough to attract the public to an unpopular theatre. That feat was reserved for Irving's memorable performance in *The Bells*, which was first given in November 1871. Irving had acquired the play some little while before, had seen its possibilities, and had steeped himself in a realization of the character of the conscience-stricken burgomaster. Bateman saw nothing in the play, but, with an impulse to try anything to get a success, allowed Irving a free hand to make his attempt. The result is a matter of history. The tragic force with which the actor imbued his part, the weirdness of the whole thing, the spell which his acting seemed to cast on the audience, while he passed unhesitatingly over the most difficult passages and precluded the ever-present danger of a momentary lapse that might entail ridicule—all this combined to produce an extraordinary effect. *The Bells* ran for months, the Lyceum was saved and Irving was a made man.

Still further to give the lie to those critics who had denied the possibility of tragic power in the ideal impersonator of a Digby Grant, and now denied his possession of the simple dignity and distinction of manner necessary to portray the "Royal Martyr," Irving next appeared (in 1872) as Charles I. in a drama of that name by W. G. Wills. The play may falsify history, but it is theatrically effective; the central figure is well conceived and was portrayed by Irving with nobility and pathos. In *Charles I.*, as in all the chief plays in which he appeared at the

Lyceum under the Bateman management, he was supported by Isabel Bateman, the manager's daughter, an actress of respectable gifts.

Charles I. was followed, after a run of more than six months, by a drama founded on the poem of "Eugene Aram," and that, in September 1873, by a revival of Lytton's *Richelieu*, in which Irving had to contend with memories of Macready. It may be noted, in passing, that it was in *Richelieu* (in the small part of the Duke of Orleans) that Irving had, seventeen years previously, spoken his first words on the stage at the Sunderland Lyceum.

It was in October 1874 that he set the seal on his reputation by his performance of Hamlet, a performance that subsequently ripened with each revival till it became one of the most remarkable of our day and one to which subsequent Hamlets have owed much. His astute manager had done all he could to arouse anticipation of the event, and it justified his efforts. Discussion raged furiously around the merits and demerits of the new Hamlet; but, whatever else was thought, it was agreed that it was a scholarly effort and the result of intelligent study coupled with great technical gifts. Bateman died during the two hundred nights' run that the play enjoyed, and the management of the Lyceum was carried on for three years more by his widow. She eventually resigned the control of the theatre to Irving in 1878.

During those three years Irving was seen as Macbeth in 1875 and Othello in 1876, neither of them parts well suited to his physique or methods; as Philip of Spain in Tennyson's *Queen Mary* in 1876, a part which gave his powers little scope and is now chiefly remembered as having inspired Whistler's remarkable portrait; as Richard III. in 1877, thereby re-establishing, by a very

subtle and finished performance, his position as a Shakespearean actor; in the dual parts of Lesurques and Dubosc in *The Lyons Mail* in the same year; and in *Louis XI.* in the early part of 1878.

When Mrs. Bateman withdrew from the management, Irving was left, at the age of forty, in sole control of the theatre with which his name was to be associated for another five-and-twenty years. His first act as manager was to engage Ellen Terry for his theatre, and so begin an artistic partnership that gave a long period of delight to playgoers.

Ellen Terry was then thirty, and had trod the boards since she was eight. Mention has already been made of her *début* at that age at the Princess's in 1856, the same year in which Irving, as a boy of eighteen, was first trying his fortunes as an actor at Sunderland. She has handsomely acknowledged the value of her early training at the Princess's, a training gained largely at the hands of Mrs. Charles Kean, who, though something of a "dragon," took unselfish pains in helping and advising the youthful aspirant. After the Princess's, there came a tour with a kind of drawing-room entertainment with her sister Kate, under their father's management; and then, after a short engagement in London at the Royalty in "juvenile" parts, two years' serious schooling in the stock-companies at the Bristol and Bath theatres, which were among the best nurseries of dramatic art. In these years she played all kinds of parts, from fairies of burlesque (with "song and dance") to such ambitious efforts as Nerissa and Hero to her sister Kate's Portia and Beatrice. Among her comrades was Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal) who possessed a beautiful singing voice. We find her in the bill at Bath in 1863 as one of the "singing fairies" in *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream. Ellen Terry was the Titania, and is described as being in those days as "of tall figure, with a round, dimpled, laughing, mischievous face, a pair of merry saucy grey eyes, and an aureole of golden hair,—a gay, mercurial child." She was always billed then as "Miss Nelly Terry"; and Titania was a promotion (as she increased in stature) from Puck, in which elfish part she had excelled as a small child. There is extant a delightfully roguish photograph of her as Puck, seated cross-legged on a mushroom, and clad in a quaint little frock with her arms and legs bare.

In 1863, well equipped with experience for one of her years, she achieved the goal of an actress's ambition in the shape of a serious London engagement, and this at the popular Haymarket theatre. Appearing at first in *ingénue* parts, in which the critics praised her "joyous spirit and deep feeling," she afterwards played such parts as Julia in *The Rivals*, Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing* (in which she anticipated a triumph of her later days), and Lady Touchwood in *The Belle's Stratagem*.

After a retirement of a year or two, broken only by an appearance at the Olympic in 1866 when she played Helen in *The Hunchback* to her sister Kate's Julia at the latter's benefit, she came back to the stage in 1867 at the opening of the Queen's Theatre, Longacre. In the course of a brief engagement there, besides acting in *Catharine and Petruchio* with Irving, she played with Charles Wyndham, Alfred Wigan, Lionel Brough and John Clayton. In 1874, after a second retirement of some years, she returned to the Queen's Theatre, to play there (and subsequently at Astley's) in *The Wandering Heir* and *Never Too Late to Mend* of Charles Reade.

In the following year came the turning-point of her artistic life. The Bancrofts were at the height of the success of their spirited management at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre in Tottenham Street, and, ambitious beyond the Robertsonian comedy that had brought them fortune, determined to attempt a Shakespearean production. This was to be *The Merchant of Venice*. Failing to obtain the services of Mrs. Kendal (then acting with Hare at the Court Theatre) whom they had first thought of as the Portia for their production, they offered the part to Ellen Terry. She accepted it enthusiastically, and played it with such insight and grace as to win unstinted praise from the critics. The production, in spite of its many beauties, did not attract the public. Killed by an entirely inadequate Shylock, it was withdrawn after thirty-six performances; but the new Portia's triumph was incontestable. She was with the Bancrofts till the spring of 1876, appearing with them in revivals of *Money* and *Ours*, and as Mabel Vane in their memorable production of *Masks and Faces*. She must have been keenly disappointed at the *Much Ado* fiasco; but with characteristic loyalty she remained with the Bancrofts as long as they required her, good-naturedly ready to play any part that would be of service to them. From their management she passed to that of John Hare at the Court Theatre, going there in the autumn of 1876 to replace Mrs. Kendal who had gone to the Bancrofts.

At the Court she appeared in a variety of parts, but in nothing that was a very marked success (except, perhaps, a revival of *New Men and Old Acres*), until W. G. Wills' *Olivia* was produced in March 1878. Her Olivia was from the first what it always remained, her most beautiful impersonation outside of Shakespeare. The homely charm and tender sentiment of the character

were realized with rare skill, and her acting raised what was not a great play to a very high level in performance. She was admirably seconded by William Terriss as Thornhill and Hermann Vezin as Dr. Primrose. It was while *Olivia* was at the height of its popularity that she received Irving's invitation to the Lyceum.

His selection of her as his "leading lady" was as creditable to his perspicacity as it was agreeable to her. She was devoted to her art and took her work seriously, as he did; she had as strong a leaning towards the romantic as he, and an inextinguishable enthusiasm for Shakespeare; she had youth, beauty, intelligence and experience to help her; but, above all, she was as an actress of exactly the temperament to match with his. His own triumphs had been (as, indeed, had hers) largely triumphs of personality and temperament; and here was the indispensable thing, an artistic temperament that matched his so well that each would stimulate and react upon the other. Her unselfishness and loyalty, too, throughout their joint career, were invaluable, and none acknowledged it more generously than he.

The Lyceum, rearranged and redecorated, opened under Irving's management on December 1878, with *Hamlet*. Irving's acting of the Prince of Denmark had a popularity recent enough to make its welcome sure, and there was eager anticipation of the new Ophelia. The girlish beauty and unforced pathos of Ellen Terry's acting met with the highest praise at every hand; and it was thought by many that the tenderness of the new Ophelia had its effect on Irving's conception of Hamlet, to the greater beautifying of the scenes where the Prince and Ophelia are together. Otherwise his Hamlet remained what it had been before, save that the conception was ripper and more thoughtful.

The next year (1879) was marked by the production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Here anticipation was again eager, but with a difference. This time it was Ellen Terry's portrayal of her part that was already known, by her Portia at the Prince of Wales's, while Irving's Shylock was the unknown quantity. It was rumoured that his conception of the part was to break away from tradition, and rumour was right. The new Shylock, instead of appearing merely a vindictive usurer, was an almost dignified figure who dominated the stage and extorted sympathy for his eventual humiliation.

Shylock always remained one of Irving's most remarkable performances, especially at some of its revivals in later years, when the actor's conception seemed to come nearer to what one imagines was Shakespeare's and was not lifted on to so high a plane of dignity, almost of refinement, as at first. When it was first seen, the "old school" was up in arms against such an interpretation of the part, and the new Shylock was everywhere a fruitful theme of discussion, obviously not without advantage to the coffers of the Lyceum. Apart, too, from this particular piece of acting, the Irvingites and the anti-Irvingites were already ranged in hostile camps. The latter, forgetful or ignorant of the extent to which his greatest predecessors had been marked by individual peculiarities, could see little in the actor beyond his obvious mannerisms of speech and gait; the former would hear of nothing against their idol. Both, however, agreed as to what was undeniable, that he was an admirable manager. The play was beautifully mounted, and at this period Irving kept in check his tendency, which afterwards grew out of due bounds, to over-elaborate the frame and so obscure the picture. Ellen Terry's Portia was one of her three matchless performances, her Beatrice and her

Olivia being the other two. Nowhere was the beauty of her elocution better enjoyed than in the Trial scene, nor her roguish witchery more conspicuous than in the scenes at Belmont. Towards the end of the first run of *The Merchant of Venice* she appeared also in Sir Theodore Martin's *King René's Daughter*, giving a very touching performance as the blind girl Iolanthe.

The season of 1880-81 included two plays of a very different nature, *The Corsican Brothers* in which Irving "doubled" the parts of the Dei Franchi brothers, and Tennyson's verse play *The Cup* in which Ellen Terry and Irving both appeared. The lurid melodrama of the former of these was well contrasted with the poetic glamour of the latter. Ellen Terry's beautiful acting and Hawes Craven's wonderful scene of the Temple of Artemis are what linger in one's memory of *The Cup*. In *The Corsican Brothers* Irving (who always had a weakness for superior melodrama and often seemed at his best when his material was poorest) revelled in the weirdness of the play and its spectacular possibilities.

Following on these there came the production of *Othello* in 1881, when Irving, with generous kindness, proposed to the American actor Edwin Booth, who had met with ill-fortune in a venture at the Princess's, that he should act with him in the tragedy. The two appeared alternately in the parts of Othello and Iago. Irving's Othello was not a success; the part of Iago, with its intellectual subtlety, suited him much better. Ellen Terry's Desdemona was a touching performance, though the part presented more difficulties to her than its straightforward character usually does to its exponent, from the fact of her having to adapt her methods to those of the different Othellos on alternate nights.

Early in 1882, Irving revived Albery's *The Two Roses*. In this he repeated a former success; and the revival

was the means of introducing George Alexander (who played the part of the blind Caleb Deecie) to London audiences. After this came a gorgeous production of *Romeo and Juliet*. This was one of Irving's mistakes. He was not meant by nature to play Romeo, and Ellen Terry's Juliet was not one of her triumphs. "The fact remains," as Mr. Pemberton tells us she wrote in a letter to a friend at the time, "that Juliet was a horrid failure. And I meant so well!" The wonderful scene in the ball-room, the management of the crowds and Mrs. Stirling's sound performances of the part of the nurse, are what stand out memorably amongst the features of the production.

Happily, the same year saw all memories of failure wiped out by the triumphant production of *Much Ado about Nothing*, in which both Irving and Ellen Terry reached their highest point of excellence in poetical comedy. Both played their parts in the happiest vein; the piece was magnificently staged, and the accessories were then still secondary to the acting; the cast was admirable throughout; and, while Irving surpassed the expectation of his most fervent admirers as Benedick, Ellen Terry's Beatrice was one of the most flawless impersonations that the modern stage has seen. Temperamentally, she seemed to have been born to play the part, and her keen intelligence was whetted on Irving's with such a result as to make their joint performance a complete triumph. It may be noted that she had first played Beatrice two years previously at Leeds, when on a tour with her husband Charles Kelly, who played Benedick.

A visit of the Lyceum company to America from the autumn of 1883 to the summer of 1884, preceded by a remarkable "send-off" banquet at which the Lord Chief Justice presided, was followed on their return by

Twelfth Night at the Lyceum in July 1884. This has not been counted one of Irving's successes, and yet it is difficult to say why. His Malvolio was perhaps too seriously conceived, yet it was not sullied by the low-comedy devices that have marred some subsequent Malvolios; and the play was not mangled, nor was the significance of its shorter scenes weakened by their being placed in impossible surroundings to gratify the desire for elaborately built-up scenes, as has been done in some recent revivals. Ellen Terry's Viola, too, was a charming performance, and its effect was heightened by the fact that the Sebastian was her brother Fred Terry, whose facial resemblance to her was then very striking. Thus the imbroglio supposed to arise from the likeness between them was much more credible than is usually the case. Unfortunately, after the first few nights of the revival, Ellen Terry fell ill, and her place was taken by her sister Marion. The comedy element provided by Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria and the Clown was rather inadequately presented; this no doubt had something to do with the comparatively small favour with which the whole was received.

Again, fortunately, another triumph was to wipe out memories of failure, when, after a second successful American tour, *Olivia* was revived at the Lyceum in 1885. Ellen Terry's *Olivia* remained the beautiful performance that it had been seven years before at the Court Theatre, with an added surety of touch. Irving, as Dr. Primrose, gave the lie to those who had prophesied that simple pathos was beyond his powers. His Vicar was a very real and very lovable personality; even those critics who habitually threw "mannerisms" in his teeth were forced to admit that here they had no cause for complaint, for it was a piece of excellent straightforward acting.

The theatre was in this year largely reconstructed; and Irving made the experiment of booking the seats in the pit, but was obliged to restore the old order of things in deference to unmistakable public opinion.

Wills' *Faust* followed in 1886. This was one of Irving's most conspicuous and most legitimate triumphs as a stage-manager. As dramatic literature the piece was not of much account; but it provided good acting parts for those chiefly concerned, and the scenic setting was beyond all praise. Irving was duly saturnine and ironical as Mephistopheles, an easy and effective part of which he made the most, rising at moments to a considerable height of weird power; and Ellen Terry's Margaret was a very tender realization of the character. The production was an enormous popular success. H. B. Conway was the original Faust, but was soon succeeded by George Alexander; Ellen Terry fell ill during the run, and was replaced by Winifred Emery, who for some time "understudied" her at the Lyceum.

After various revivals of former successes and the production of a pretty little verse play, *The Amber Heart*, by A. C. Calmour, in which Ellen Terry was provided with a graceful part, *Macbeth* was produced in December 1888. This, as was to be expected, was not altogether a success. Before the production, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth was a thing unthinkable, in the face of memories of the Siddons tradition. She, however, worked boldly on the only lines that were possible to her, conceiving Lady Macbeth as a fascinating woman whose feminine charm (rather than masculine power) persuaded Macbeth against his will; and on these lines she achieved more success than could ever have been expected. Irving summed up the situation adequately when he said in the speech that was extorted from him at the fall of the curtain that "our dear friend

Ellen Terry, in appearing as Lady Macbeth for the first time, has undertaken, as you may suppose, a desperate task, but I think no true lover of art could have witnessed it without being deeply interested." His Macbeth was scarcely a success, though he presented a fairly consistent figure of a Macbeth who was swayed as much by his sense of subjection to the supernatural as by his wife's ambition. The staging of the opening scene on the "blasted heath" was one of Irving's happiest inspirations; absolute blackness at first, when the curtain went up amid the turmoil of a thunderstorm, broken by fitful flashes of lightning that gradually revealed the weird figures of the three witches at their grisly work.

Neither Watts Phillips' *The Dead Heart*, which followed in 1889, nor Hermann Merivale's *Ravenswood* in 1890 were of any account except scenically. The next prominent production, that of *Henry VIII.* in January 1892, gave Irving a fine opportunity as Wolsey, his natural distinction of manner investing the part with great dignity, while Ellen Terry's Queen Katharine was an astonishing effort considering her limitations. Forbes Robertson's Buckingham was in many ways one of the most conspicuous features of a production that was marked by lavish gorgeousness. In November of the same year *King Lear* was produced. Here for once Irving's execution of his part did not seem equal to his undoubtedly fine conception of it, though his final scene with Cordelia (acted with rare pathos by Ellen Terry) almost made amends.

A conspicuous success as far as Irving was concerned (for in this Ellen Terry's part was small and colourless) was Tennyson's *Becket*, which was produced in February 1893. Irving's powers were now at their maturest, and his quiet dignity made a finely

impressive figure of the martyred prelate. To the end of his career this remained one of his most effective parts, and its closing words were the last he ever spoke on any stage. Comyns Carr's *King Arthur*, also in 1893, was not of much account; but the close of that year saw the production of a little play of Conan Doyle's, *A Story of Waterloo*, which gave Irving one of his most telling parts in that of the veteran Corporal Brewster.

In 1895 Irving received the honour of knighthood; and the honour was rightly hailed as one paid to the profession of which he was the acknowledged head, as much as to the man who had so steadily enforced its claims by the earnestness of his efforts and the dignity and generosity of his public life. It was an open secret, as Mr. Brereton tells us in his *Life of Irving*, that some ten or twelve years previously Irving had been offered, but had then declined, a knighthood.

This was the climax of his career, as subsequent events showed. The next two productions at the Lyceum—*Cymbeline* in September 1896, and an English version of Sardou's *Madame Sans-Gêne* in April 1897—gave opportunity rather to Ellen Terry than to Irving. Her Imogen in *Cymbeline* was a beautiful performance which inevitably suggested regret that circumstances had never allowed her to be seen as Rosalind. But the "star" system was too firmly established at the Lyceum for that, and there is only one "star" part in *As you Like It*.

Ellen Terry's *Madame Sans-Gêne* was a praiseworthy attempt, but her comedy was not broad enough to comprehend the part satisfactorily. Irving's Napoleon was a veritable *tour-de-force* in the way of "make-up." His dress was specially designed to disguise his height; to the same end the furniture and accessories of the

scene were exaggerated in size, and he was purposely surrounded by actors of tall stature.

A revival of *Richard III.* in the same year once more offered suitable opportunity for the exercise of his intellectual powers. His acting here, in its subtlety and ironic humour, was admirable; unfortunately an untoward accident obliged him to throw up the part after the first night.

In the following January (1898) Irving produced a play by his son Laurence, entitled *Peter the Great*. It proved ambitious rather than satisfactory, and was withdrawn before long. Irving was now rather "gravelled" for want of new material. He had fully exploited the familiar Shakespeare plays which provided a part suitable for him, and the reception of *Cymbeline* had shown that unfamiliar Shakespeare would not draw sufficient audiences. It was impossible to go on for long with nothing but revivals from the Lyceum repertory, and Irving made a vain effort to combat the reproach that he had done nothing for the contemporary drama. Unfortunately his choice fell upon a play, by Messrs. Traill and Hichens, which proved a complete disappointment. *The Medicine Man*, as it was called, was not a good play, nor had a long career in the romantic drama fitted either of the talented Lyceum "stars" to undertake a play of modern days.

Ill fortune now seemed to have laid hold on Irving. On the top of a long and weakening illness came a disaster in the shape of the destruction by fire of the scenery and properties for forty-four of his stock plays, of which twenty-two were big productions. Elaborate revivals were thus put out of the question. He had always been recklessly lavish in expenditure upon his plays; and this, coupled with a magnificent generosity in money matters, resulted in an accumulation of

financial embarrassments. It was evident that he could no longer conduct the Lyceum on the old lines. In 1899 the management passed into the hands of a company, in whose interests Irving held a large share, with the arrangement that he was to act in the Lyceum for a season every year, while for the rest of the year the theatre should be let to whoever would take it. The disastrous result of this is recent history; and after four years the Lyceum Theatre practically ceased to exist. Within that time Irving had been responsible for two big productions. *Robespierre* (in 1899) was an adaptation by Laurence Irving from the French of Sardou, and proved to be an uninspired play bolstered up by vivid scenic display; while a finely staged revival of *Coriolanus* in 1901 was histrionically a disappointment, as might have been expected. The part of *Coriolanus* did not suit Irving, whose subtler methods did not make him apt for the big style, and Ellen Terry's *Volumnia* was rather a courageous effort than a success. Their last appearance at the Lyceum was in *The Merchant of Venice* in July 1902, and in that year their artistic partnership was dissolved. It had lasted for four and twenty years, and its dissolution was due alone to the inevitable march of time and the stern necessity of facts.

Mr. Bram Stoker, in his book on Irving, has given a reasonable explanation of the necessity of this. He points out that in nineteen out of the twenty-seven important productions in which she and Irving had acted together, Ellen Terry had played youthful parts. For these she was now obviously unsuited. Of the remaining eight, the entire scenery and properties of *Macbeth* and *Henry VIII.* had been burned, and were too costly to replace; *Peter the Great* and *Coriolanus* were neither of them popular; *Robespierre* and *Madame*

Sans-Gêne had had as long runs as could be expected of them; *Charles I.* was too sad a piece to be suited for more than occasional performances; and only *The Merchant of Venice* remained. Ellen Terry could still have played Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*, but Irving was too old for Benedick. Naturally enough, Ellen Terry did not care for the prospect of programmes consisting of "one-part" plays for each (she to play such trivialities as *Nance Oldfield* while he played in *The Bells* or *A Story of Waterloo*), while there was other suitable work, in which Irving could not take part, to be done by her. Thus it was inevitable that, unless he were to undertake a series of new productions, which was physically impossible for him, Irving should have a younger "leading lady" for his repertory of plays. The necessity of severing their artistic partnership had no effect on their loyal friendship, which was terminated only by Irving's death.

The history of the old Lyceum ends with 1902. The interior was pulled down and reconstructed, and the house was used for a time as a "variety theatre," but with small success. Latterly it has become the home of the "popular" drama, and, at wisely reduced prices, has found an enthusiastic audience of its own.

Between 1883 and 1901 various other actors occupied the Lyceum boards for short seasons while Irving and his company were on tour or vacation. America sent Mary Anderson, the Daly Company, Richard Mansfield and William Gillette; France, Sarah Bernhardt and Coquelin; Italy, Eleanor Duse and Verdi's *Otello*.

Of English actors, Forbes Robertson's was the most important tenancy. His first season lasted from September 1895 to June 1896, beginning with *Romeo and Juliet*. His somewhat ascetic Romeo was played to the Juliet of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, a talented actress

better suited to the modernity of a Mrs. Tanqueray than to the classical simplicity of Shakespeare's heroine. This was followed by *Michael and his Lost Angel*, an ambitious but unsuccessful play by Henry Arthur Jones, in which Marion Terry acted a difficult part admirably; an adaptation by John Davidson from the French of Coppée, under the title of *For the Crown*, a poetical drama with one fine scene in it; a translation of Sudermann's *Magda*, in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell made a great impression, and a revival of *The School for Scandal*, in which she did not. The climax of Forbes Robertson's career came with his revival of *Hamlet* in 1897. The whole production was good, but his Hamlet stands out as one of the very few first-rate Hamlets of modern days—if, indeed, it be not the best. Owing a great deal, as far as its conception went, to the new traditions that Irving had created in the part, Forbes Robertson's Hamlet surpassed his in grace and courtliness of execution, if occasionally falling short of it in forcibleness. It was a scholarly, sensitive, and in every way markedly interesting rendering of the part. He was not so happy in *Macbeth*, but both productions were excellent object lessons in what can be done in the way of scenic effect without exaggerating the importance of the scenery and properties. It was all adequate and all appropriate; but it was never allowed to divert the audiences' attention from the figures of the drama itself.

The same excellence belonged to a season of the Benson Company, early in 1900; and still more markedly to Lewis Waller's production of *Henry V.* later in the same year. This last may unhesitatingly be pronounced the most satisfactory Shakespearean performance, both to eye and ear, that has been seen on the English Stage in recent years. The play (whose fine

acting qualities were a revelation to those who knew it only as readers) was admirably interpreted from the top to the bottom of the long cast; dresses and scenery were alike beautiful and suitable; and we were allowed the enormous advantage of painted "cloths" instead of built-up scenes, thereby gaining a far better illusion and the possibility of that frequent change of scene by which Shakespeare knew so well how to give the right feeling of movement. Moreover, though everything was duly "in the period," the stage was never allowed to be encumbered by the painstaking but futile archæology which had accompanied many of the sumptuous revivals on the same boards. Charles Kean's tradition of an "accuracy" that is regardless of whether it miss its mark or no, dies very hard, as we still see every day. The truth is that, though audiences do not care a rap about it, it ministers agreeably to the vanity of managers, who look upon it as evidence of culture on their part and are prone to overlook the important question of whether it have any dramatic significance or no.

Martin Harvey, who had graduated at the Lyceum under Irving, played a season there, producing *The Only Way*, in the spring of 1899, to be followed later in the year by Wilson Barrett.

The last three years of Irving's life, after his severance from the Lyceum, were given up to the toil of constant touring, with growing ill-health and weakening powers. The courageous old man went on unflinchingly, hiding from the world his sickness of body and heart, and setting a brave face against his difficulties. He even undertook, in the last year of his life, a new production—that of Sardou's entirely unworthy *Dante* at Drury Lane—but it was only too obvious that he was no more than a wreck of his former self. The

end came at Bradford on 13th October 1905, when he died barely an hour after having spoken, as his last words on the stage, the dying Becket's prayer, "Into thy hands, O Lord—into thy hands."

However divided opinion may be as to his greatness as an actor—and there are those who hold that the magnetism of his personality hypnotized his audiences into thinking him a finer actor than he really was—it may safely be asserted that he was at his worst as an emotional actor and at his best in parts where his keen intellect had most to do. It was for this reason that he was excellent in the interpretation of characters that required subtlety rather than directness of style or simplicity of emotion, as well as in comedy, which we have Garrick's authority for believing to be far harder to act than tragedy.

The Lyceum productions were frankly conducted on "star" lines—that is to say, Irving's and Ellen Terry's parts must unquestionably dominate the rest, and to that end individuality was practically suppressed among the rest of the company. Within these limitations, Irving was an admirable manager. He was autocratic in his stage-management, because he knew that an artistic production must be pitched in one key throughout and be controlled by one mind. He had an unerring instinct for stage effect, and went to rehearsals knowing exactly what he wanted and determined to get it, whether it were in details of acting, scenery, costume, or music.

The theatre has for the last thirty years occupied in the estimation of intelligent persons a position so different from what it did in the years immediately preceding Irving's day, that it is necessary to remind ourselves of the considerable nature of his achievement in attracting cultured audiences to the Lyceum to

witness romantic and tragic drama. Thanks to the Bancrofts and the Kendals, comedy had come into its own, but it needed an Irving to restore the other side of the drama to its proper place. The aim of his life as an actor was well summed up by him in one of his many speeches during his farewell tour, when he claimed (with justifiable pride) to have won and kept the regard of the public "by the faithful, if imperfect, practice of a rare and difficult art. There has been," he continued, "a purpose steadfastly pursued, whatever the shortcomings of achievement—a purpose which has always aimed at the highest standard of the theatre."

Of Irving's personal relations with them, his colleagues and his staff have always spoken most warmly; of his unvarying kindness and forbearance, and his great generosity. The adulation he received, the social attentions that poured in upon him, the public distinction conferred upon him (for, besides his knighthood, he was the recipient of honorary degrees from Cambridge, Dublin, and Glasgow), all this might well have turned the head of a smaller man. Irving, however, managed to retain his simplicity of disposition; and, though he lived somewhat *en prince* and accepted without question his position as head of his profession, he never lost his sweetness of character or his compassion for less fortunate comrades.

Since her severance from the Lyceum company, Ellen Terry has occupied herself mainly with touring at home and in America, except for a brief period of management at the Imperial Theatre in 1903, when she produced an adaptation of an early play of Ibsen's under the title of *The Vikings*, but with little success. Her most conspicuous appearances in London have been at His Majesty's Theatre under Beerbohm Tree's

management. There, in June 1902 and at subsequent revivals, she played Mrs. Page to the Mrs. Ford of Mrs. Kendal and Tree's Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; and it may safely be said that succeeding generations will be fortunate if they ever see the parts of the two "wives" played as they were played then. It was the perfection of comedy. In the autumn of 1906, again, Ellen Terry appeared at His Majesty's as Hermione in *A Winter's Tale*, the play in which, as the child Mamilius, she had made her first appearance on the stage just fifty years before. Her Hermione was a touching and dignified performance, and it was a pleasure to hear her once more speaking Shakespeare's lines. The actual "jubilee" anniversary of her first appearance was celebrated with the greatest enthusiasm at a monster performance at Drury Lane to the accompaniment of the utmost enthusiasm both among the audience and on the stage. Her other noteworthy London appearances since 1902 have been in Barrie's *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* at the Duke of York's in 1905, and as Lady Cicely Waynflete in Bernard Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* at the Court Theatre in the spring of 1906.

Of the other three sisters of the Terry family—Kate, Florence, and Marion—Kate, the eldest of them, gained her earliest stage experience with Charles Kean at the Princess's, as Ellen did. At the age of eight she was playing Arthur in *King John*, and at the age of fourteen played Cordelia to Kean's *Lear*. Her first London engagement was at the St. James's in 1862, when the lucky chance of her having understudied her manageress, and that lady having fallen suddenly ill, brought her to the front at one stride. Her popularity during her brief theatrical career was fully as great as that afterwards won by her sister Ellen. Youth and

beauty coupled with so marked a talent were irresistible, and she went from success to success until her early retirement. She was with Fechter at the Lyceum, where her Ophelia was unreservedly praised; after that, at the Olympic with Henry Neville she distinguished herself as the heroines of Tom Taylor's dramas, and, in Shakespeare, incidentally achieved the feat of doubling the parts of Viola and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. In 1866 she acted at the St. James's in the production of Boucicault's *Hunted Down* that gave Irving his first London chance. In the following year, at the Adelphi, she delighted the town with an exquisite performance in Charles Reade's *Dora*. This is to name but very few of the triumphs of her brief career, which came to a close by her retirement (on her marriage) in August 1867. Her farewell performance at the Adelphi ended in a scene of extraordinary popular enthusiasm, perhaps the more remarkable as her acting had always been conspicuously restrained and delicate in its method and far removed from the less artistic style that in those days so often proved more popular. She has made one brief reappearance, with John Hare at the Garrick in 1898, acting in a play that also served to introduce her daughter, Mabel Terry-Lewis, to the public.

Florence Terry's stage career was still briefer; and, though she was a very capable actress, especially in parts requiring tender and pathetic handling, she never achieved any great fame. She appeared first in 1870, and retired on her marriage in 1882, having acted more in the provinces than in London. The programme at her last performance concluded with the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice*, in which, to Irving's Shylock, she played Nerissa, Marion Terry the Clerk, and Ellen Terry Portia. She died in 1896.

Marion Terry has enjoyed, at the hands of playgoers of the last thirty years, a renown only second to that of her sister Ellen. After a successful *début* in 1873, she acted in melodrama and Shakespeare with Neville at the Olympic, and then went to the Strand Theatre, where she brought success to the author and to herself in Gilbert's *Dan'l Druce*. In that play she had Forbes Robertson and Hermann Vezin as fellow-actors. Her association with Gilbert at this point was of great value to both. She had a demure sense of fun that ran side by side with a command of delicate pathos; and while she owed much to the possibilities of some of Gilbert's characters, he in his turn owed much to the perfection with which she caught and interpreted his meaning—conspicuously so in two parts of so widely different a nature as Belinda Treherne in *Engaged* and Gretchen in Gilbert's play of that name. After supporting Sothorn at the Haymarket she joined the Bancrofts' company at the Prince of Wales's, and there took up several of her sister Ellen's parts, including Olivia. At the Lyceum, during Ellen's temporary illness, Marion Terry took her place as Viola in 1884 and as Margaret in 1888. Of recent years she has been seen in a variety of parts at a variety of theatres, and never to disadvantage. In a certain line of acting, where tender pathos and deep feeling are required, and especially when these characteristics are salted by an admixture of quiet humour, she is unrivalled; she has great natural advantages of feature and voice, and is a complete mistress of the technique of her art. When so much of her work has been so charming, it is almost invidious to select; but probably most playgoers would be agreed that she reached the highest point in her artistic career at the time when, between 1890 and 1892, she was playing at the St. James's in *Lady Windermere's*

Fan, Liberty Hall, Sunlight and Shadow and *The Idler*. Among the most striking of her more recent performances are those in *Captain Drew on Leave* and *Peter's Mother*.

There are Terrys of a still younger generation upon the stage, and it seems as though the hereditary talent of this brilliant family were inexhaustible.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BANCROFTS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS AT THE OLD PRINCE OF WALES'S AND THE HAYMARKET.

THE old Prince of Wales's Theatre, which came under the Bancroft management in 1865, had been built as the King's Concert Rooms in 1790, and had been known subsequently as the Queen's Theatre, the Regency Theatre, the West London Theatre, the Fitzroy Theatre, and again as the Queen's Theatre. When the courageous Marie Wilton (afterwards Mrs. and now Lady Bancroft) undertook its management in partnership with H. J. Byron, it had been the favourite haunt of an audience very different from those the new managers hoped to attract. Lady Bancroft has described how, when she went with Mr. and Mrs. Byron to look on at a performance shortly before their tenancy began, the occupants of the shilling stalls "were engaged between the acts in devouring oranges (their faces being buried in them), and drinking ginger-beer. Babies were being rocked to sleep, or smacked to be quiet, which proceeding in many cases had an opposite effect! A woman looked up to our box, and seeing us staring aghast with, I suppose, an expression of horror upon my face, first of all 'took a sight' at us, and then shouted, 'Now then, you three stuck-up ones, come out o' that, or I'll send this 'ere orange at your 'eds.' . . . I think, if I could, I would have at

that moment retired from my bargain, but the deed was done, and there was no going back from it." By permission of the Prince of Wales the house was re-christened after him, and, renovated and well appointed, was opened in April 1865 with a burlesque extravaganza of Byron's, preceded by a comedy and followed by a farce. Bancroft played in the opening comedietta (this being his first London appearance) and Marie Wilton in the burlesque.

The success of the bold venture is a matter of history. Marie Wilton was already a great favourite with the public, who gladly travelled to Tottenham Street to see her in burlesque; and later, when she gave up appearing in burlesque, returned in increased numbers to watch the development of her powers and those of her clever company in the new style of comedy they were inaugurating at the Prince of Wales's. It is difficult for us to realize what an innovation it was, to playgoers of the day, that the characters in a comedy should give an impression of actuality and not of caricature, that they should move and behave as such folk might in real life; that actors in modern dress plays should be carefully dressed, instead of appearing "like waiters at a penny-ice shop," as Clement Scott says, with ill-fitting wigs and impossible clothes; that attention should be paid to such details as, for instance, that rooms should have ceilings and doors have locks and handles to them. It was, in fact, a revolution in the staging of comedy that was brought about by these clever pioneers.

Marie Wilton only continued to play in burlesque for a short time, for very soon she and her company "found themselves" in the presentation of Tom Robertson's comedies. Robertson, who was a brother of Mrs. Kendal's, was a struggling dramatist whose

David Garrick, as played by Sothern at the Haymarket, had attracted attention to his work. His first success was due to Marie Wilton's belief in his comedy *Society*, which she produced, with Bancroft, Hare and herself in the cast, in November 1865. This was followed up by the success of *Ours* in the autumn of the next year, both plays running on for a hundred and fifty nights; and the climax of success was reached with the production of *Caste*, in April 1867, with Bancroft as Captain Hawtree, Hare as Sam Gerridge, George Honey as Eccles, and the clever manageress as Polly. The little theatre had by this time become not only popular but fashionable, and its company had deservedly acquired a unique reputation. So much was this the case that, with the triumph of *Caste*, the hitherto inevitable "burlesque" (in which latterly Lydia Thompson had taken Marie Wilton's place) disappeared from the bills for good and all, and Byron's connection with the Prince of Wales's ceased. In the same year (1867) Marie Wilton became Mrs. Bancroft.

Robertson's *Play* was produced in February 1868, and was succeeded by revivals of *Society* and *Caste* till his new comedy, *School*, should be ready. *School*, which proved only second to *Caste* in popularity, was played for a long run in 1869. The vogue of these plays was now such that, as Mrs. Bancroft recalls with pardonable pride, the "Times" could say that "the production of a new comedy by Mr. T. W. Robertson at the theatre which, once obscure, has become, under the direction of Miss Marie Wilton, the most fashionable in London, is now to be regarded as one of the most important events of the dramatic year." *School* marked the high-water mark of Robertson's powers. *M.P.*, which followed in 1870, showed a distinct falling off and was withdrawn in favour of a revival of *Ours*; and early in

the following year Robertson died. After this, revivals of *Caste* and *School* and a number of successful performances of Lytton's *Money* contrasted with solidier fare in the shape of Wilkie Collins' *Man and Wife* (1873) and such delicate comedy as Gilbert's *Sweethearts* (1874). After that, encouraged by the success of an elaborate revival of *The School for Scandal*, in which Hare, who played Sir Peter, was seen for the last time at the Prince of Wales's, the Bancrofts' ambitions unfortunately turned towards Shakespeare. The result of this was the ill-starred production of *The Merchant of Venice* that has been recorded in the preceding chapter. Better fortune attended *Masks and Faces* (1875), which enabled both the Bancrofts to exhibit their powers in a new light. Of the productions during the remaining four years of this management, which came to an end on the Bancrofts taking the Haymarket Theatre in 1879, two stand out conspicuously: *Peril* in 1876, and *Diplomacy* in 1878. Both were adaptations from the French of Sardou. For *Peril* the Kendals and Arthur Cecil joined the company; for *Diplomacy* (which, with its masterly "three-men scene," proved one of the best trump cards of the Bancrofts' twenty years' management) John Clayton and Miss Le Thiere were added to an already powerful cast.

The subsequent history of the "little house in Tottenham Street" is brief, for in 1882 it ceased to exist as a theatre. Between 1879 and 1882 various plays were produced by the new manager, Mr. Edgar Bruce; but his tenancy is only remembered by Burnand's *The Colonel*. In this amusing satire on the æsthetic craze Beerbolm Tree made his first London appearance, in 1881. The building, after serving various uses, was pulled down, and in its place arose the handsome Scala Theatre which was opened by Lady Bancroft in

December 1904. So far, however, it has proved a difficult task to induce the stream of playgoers to flow once more in the unaccustomed channel leading to Tottenham Street.

The Bancroft management at the Haymarket lasted from January 1880 to July 1885. On its first night it seemed as if fate would be anything but propitious. Outside the theatre there was a dense fog, and inside there was a small riot (which delayed the raising of the curtain for nearly half an hour) owing to the new managers having abolished the Pit, which had been one of the best in London. Anticipating the unpopularity of such a step, they had issued a preliminary statement explaining what seemed, in their judgment, unanswerable reasons for making the change; but the public did not agree, at any rate at first, and made its opinion heard with no uncertain voice. And whereas Cyril Maude (in his "Reminiscences" of the Haymarket published in 1903), applauds the Bancrofts' courage in taking such a step, and points out that, considering the expenses of running such a house in the way the Bancrofts wished, it was impossible to retain a Pit that occupied so much floor space in a theatre that enjoyed a good "Stalls" audience, it is interesting on the other hand to note that the Pit was restored to the Haymarket early in 1905, while Cyril Maude was still part-manager.

The Bancrofts' six years at the Haymarket were productive of much material success to them; the theatre was as popular with fashionable audiences as was the clever couple that managed it; nevertheless in the matter of artistic interest this management never equalled that at the old Prince of Wales's. There the Bancrofts had broken new ground and done a definite work; at the Haymarket they did little more than

repeat previous successes, and that on a more lavish (and consequently sometimes less artistic) scale than before. The Robertson comedies which they revived did not gain by performance on a larger stage; and this same access of space, and its consequent possibilities, induced a tendency to over-elaboration which did no good to the other plays produced. The desire for "sumptuous production" seems to lie in wait for all successful directors of theatres; the Bancrofts were infected with it, and their most conspicuous successes at the Haymarket were made in elaborately staged adaptations from Sardou.

They retired from management in July 1885, to the accompaniment of every mark of public appreciation and regret. Their Haymarket management had been notable and in certain respects brilliantly successful; but their great and deserved claim to honour is the feat they achieved at the old Prince of Wales's, where they inaugurated a new school of comedy-acting, and advanced that department of their art in a degree that is difficult of appreciation except by those who are old enough to have lived through the change. The knighthood subsequently conferred on Bancroft was a tangible recognition of this memorable achievement. After giving up the cares of management, Bancroft appeared with Irving at the Lyceum in *The Dead Heart* in 1889, and, with his wife, in a revival of *Diplomacy* in 1893 and *Money* in 1894, under Hare's management at the Garrick.

Two years after their retirement Beerbohm Tree succeeded the Bancrofts in the management of the Haymarket. Coming from *The Private Secretary* (in which he was the original exponent of the part afterwards so popular in W. S. Penley's hands) Tree had made an unmistakable hit, in a part of a very different

nature, as the villain Macari in a dramatization of Hugh Conway's book "Called Back." This was at the Prince's Theatre in 1884. He had also acted at the Haymarket, during the two years' management (1885-87) of Messrs. Russell and Bashford, in *Nadjesda* and in *Jim the Penman*. Early in 1887 his finished impersonation of the wily old diplomat Demetrius in *The Red Lamp* was first seen at the Comedy Theatre; and in the autumn of the same year he became manager of the Haymarket. His spirited management there was very interesting. He encouraged home talent—Henry Arthur Jones, Sydney Grundy, Oscar Wilde, Haddon Chambers, Stuart Ogilvie are names on the Haymarket bills at this time—he gathered a fine company of actors round him, produced his plays with great care and without disproportionate opulence, and himself "created" a remarkable series of well contrasted characters. Except for such excursions into pure comedy as Wilde's *A Woman of no Importance* and Ibsen's *The Enemy of the People* (both in 1893), his most conspicuous successes at the Haymarket were in romantic dramas such as *The Ballad Monger* (1887), *Captain Swift* (1888), *A Man's Shadow* (1889), *A Village Priest* (1890), *The Dancing Girl* (1891), *Hypatia* (1893), and *Trilby* (1895). His Shakespearean productions at the Haymarket were *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry VI.* (in which he first of all played Hotspur, and subsequently Falstaff to the Hotspur of Lewis Waller), and *Hamlet*. During a temporary tenancy of Lewis Waller's, Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* was produced at the Haymarket in 1895.

Being by instinct a lover of elaborate spectacle in his productions, and thirsting to distinguish himself (as he has done) in Shakespeare, Tree's ambition took him across the road from the Haymarket to the beautiful His Majesty's Theatre that was built on part of the site

of the old opera house; and in the autumn of 1896 the Haymarket passed into the joint hands of Frederick Harrison and Cyril Maude. This was an ideal combination for managerial purposes, Harrison being an admirable business manager and a good judge of plays, and Cyril Maude a versatile, accomplished and very popular actor. The combination was at first reinforced by the charm and popularity of the acting of Mrs. Cyril Maude (Winifred Emery), whom unfortunately illness was destined to keep for a long time out of the bills.

Cyril Maude had only been about a dozen years upon the stage when he attained to managerial dignity, but had by that time established a well-deserved popularity. He had been especially successful in "old men" parts, which he played with a finish that proved him to be a worthy follower of John Hare. His methods have much in common with the old actor's, and he is a master of the art of "make-up." Among the most notable of his previous performances had been his Lord Fellamar in *Joseph's Sweetheart* at the Vaudeville in 1888, Colonel Cazenove in *The New Woman* at the Comedy in 1894, and Sir Fletcher Portwood in Pinero's *The Benefit of the Doubt* at the Comedy in 1895, when his wife played the heroine's part. She had made early appearances in London—at the Princess's in pantomime in 1875, with Miss Litton at the Imperial in 1879, subsequently with Wilson Barrett at the Court for a couple of years, and then for a considerable time in the 'eighties under Irving at the Lyceum, where she "understudied" Ellen Terry and played several of her parts on occasion, notably those of Marguerite and Olivia. In the early 'nineties she had been seen at various theatres.

The new management chose their plays well, acted

them well, and varied them judiciously, with the well-deserved result of good-fortune. Opening in October 1896, in accordance with a temporary craze for "cloak and rapier" plays, with a romantic drama *Under the Red Robe*, they soon settled to a series of delightful comedies better suited to the house and the actors. *A Marriage of Convenience*, *The Little Minister* (mainly remembered by its charming "Babbie"), *The Manœuvres of Jane*, *The Black Tulip*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Rivals*, these were among the plays to which Winifred Emery lent the assistance of her art until illness obliged her to desist for a time. Her clever husband, however, continued to be a pillar of strength to the Haymarket, and was the central figure of a number of successes before he severed his partnership with Harrison in July 1905. Among the chief of these may be mentioned *The Second in Command*, *Cousin Kate*, *The Beauty and the Barge* (who that saw it will ever forget Cyril Maude's inimitable Captain Barley?), *Everybody's Secret*, and a revival of Pinero's *The Cabinet Minister*, in which Winifred Emery reappeared.

When Cyril Maude left the Haymarket in 1905, still determined to be a manager, his choice fell upon the Avenue Theatre, an ill-built house close under Charing Cross Station. This he proceeded to rebuild and remodel almost entirely. By an untoward stroke of fate, the disastrous fall of the roof at Charing Cross Station in 1905 brought with it the destruction of the newly rebuilt theatre, a mass of wall falling down from the station on to it and practically wrecking it. This of course delayed or upset all previous plans; but after a time affairs were righted, and The Playhouse (as the Avenue was now to be called) was opened early in 1907 with a farce called *Toddles*, in which Cyril Maude played with admirable *verve* a part quite unworthy of him.

After *Toddles* had run its course, Eva Anstruther's *Fido* was seen at The Playhouse in 1907; and in 1908 Esmond's *The O'Grindles*, Mason's *Margery Strobe*, Cosmo Hamilton's *Pro Tem.*, and Drury and Trevor's *The Flag Lieutenant*. During the interval that elapsed before The Playhouse was ready for occupation, Maude was seen at the newly-built Waldorf Theatre, which was opened in 1903.

At The Playhouse there has been adopted the plan of allowing every seat in the house to be booked in advance if desired. Irving had tried this at the Lyceum a good many years previously. At that time the innovation was not approved of; but now it seems to be meeting with success, for the example thus set has been followed at the Kingsway Theatre.

Frederick Harrison now continues manager of the Haymarket, and evidently intends (and that wisely) to carry on its tradition of high-class comedy. His most conspicuous success so far has been the revival of Anstey's entertaining satire *The Man from Blankley's*, with the assistance of a brilliant cast that included Charles Hawtrey, Weedon Grossmith, Henry Kemble and Fanny Brough. Other of his recent productions have been *The Palace of Puck*, *His Wife*, and *Sweet Kitty Bellairs*, all in 1907; *Her Father*, and Bernard Shaw's *Getting Married*, in 1908.

It should be mentioned that there is a ghost at the Haymarket; at least, the fact is vouched for by Cyril Maude in his history of that house.

Beerbohm Tree opened his magnificent new theatre in the spring of 1897. Known then as Her Majesty's, it was renamed His Majesty's in 1902. The opening play was one adapted from Sir Gilbert Parker's novel "The Seats of the Mighty," but the dramatized version was not a success. Almost immediately, however, Tree

started upon his rapidly lengthening series of elaborate Shakespearean revivals. Almost every year since then has had its fresh Shakespearean attraction: *Julius Cæsar* in 1898, *King John* in 1899, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1900, *Twelfth Night* in 1901, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1902, *Richard II.* in 1903, *The Tempest* in 1904, *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1905, *The Winter's Tale* and *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1906, *The Merchant of Venice* in 1908; and, thus furnished with a repertory, His Majesty's has of late years held an annual "Shakespeare Festival" during the week that centres in the poet's anniversary.

Tree is, as is natural, an enthusiastic and eloquent defender of the "sumptuous revival" theory of Shakespearean production; but, while allowing him all credit for artistic earnestness of purpose and all praise for the thoroughness with which he carries out his ideas, it is permissible for Shakespeareans equally as ardent as he to differ from him as to the advisability of his treatment of some of the plays. Such difference of opinion will refer especially to the manner of his re-arrangement of certain scenes and the introduction of others not contemplated by the author; again, to the likelihood of distracting attention from the drama itself by reason of the wealth of its accessories. In this Tree is essentially the disciple of Charles Kean. As has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, he has followed Kean in the interpolation in *Richard II.* of a concrete representation of an event Shakespeare was content to describe by the mouth of one of his characters; the same thing is done in *Antony and Cleopatra* at His Majesty's. The introduction, too, of a "transparency" in the final scene of *Richard II.*, showing (through the walls of the dungeon at Pomfret Castle) the coronation of the new king, savours of the same fault of leaving nothing to

the spectators' imagination. Such devices are open, moreover, to the accusation of calling attention to the ingenuity of the manager rather than assisting the poetical effect of the drama. A certain rearrangement of scenes, it is true, is often necessary in the presentation of Shakespeare's plays, so as to produce acting versions suitable to the conditions of the modern stage; but what are we to say of such a "rearrangement" as that in Tree's *Twelfth Night*, where, to more fully display the elaborate (and, be it freely admitted, very beautiful) scene constructed to represent Olivia's garden, episodes which should take place in a public street are represented as happening in this private garden between personages who could have no right of indiscriminate entry thither?

However, it is perhaps ungracious to cavil at such things when our opportunities of seeing Shakespeare adequately performed are none too many. It is a pleasanter task to lay stress upon the many merits and delights of Tree's revivals. His presentation of *Julius Cæsar*, for instance, is remarkably fine in every way, and the manipulation of the crowd in the Forum scenes is undoubtedly abler than that of the much vaunted Saxe-Meiningen company whose excellence in this particular play was thrust down our throats some years ago. If Tree himself be not quite the ideal Mark Antony (for he is not altogether at his best in the "big style"), in *King John* he is admirably suited; and, in his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, not only is his Bottom a richly humorous piece of acting, but the atmosphere of delicate poesy is throughout preserved in a manner deserving the highest praise.

As Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* Tree has a part after his own heart. Made up with even more than his

usual skill, he revels in the niceties of expression and manner that have made this one of his most successful pieces of comedy. The part of Viola, when Tree first produced the play, was undertaken by Lily Brayton; at a later revival the manager's daughter, Viola Tree, appropriately made her *début* in the part. Her girlish freshness and evident enjoyment of her art went far to make up for lack of experience; time, however, is a remedy for that, and her obviously strong natural capacity for acting should carry her far. Her *Perdita* in *A Winter's Tale* was a delightful performance, and as *Trilby* she has given evidence of considerable power and depth of feeling.

One of Tree's happiest managerial feats was to persuade Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kendal to appear with him in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. His *Falstaff* is a triumphant *tour-de-force*, and his two talented colleagues and he romped through the play with a glee that was infectious. Ellen Terry appeared again under his management as *Hermione* in *A Winter's Tale*, giving an extremely dignified and moving rendering of the part. If neither his *Caliban*, his *Benedick* nor his *Antony* are among the greatest of his successes, Tree is certainly admirably suited as *Richard II.*, that part calling for the subtlety of method that shows him at his best.

In the spring of 1907 he and his company gave a series of performances of Shakespeare in Berlin. During the rest of that year, except for a short season of revivals, he was not much seen at his own theatre, which was tenanted during his absence by a company headed by Oscar Asche and Lily Brayton. Their productions included Laurence Binyon's *Attila*, and revivals of *As You Like It* and *Othello*. Besides his notable amount of Shakespearean work and the

mounting of a number of other plays of varying nature and merit, Tree's record at His Majesty's is remarkable for his successful production of three ambitious poetical dramas, *Herod* (1900), *Ulysses* (1902), and *Nero* (1906), from the pen of Stephen Phillips. Among the miscellaneous plays Tree has produced at His Majesty's may be mentioned a spirited version of *The Three Musketeers* in 1898, *Resurrection* in 1903, *The Last of the Dandies* and *The Darling of the Gods* in 1904, *Oliver Twist* in 1905, *Colonel Newcome* in 1906, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *The Beloved Vagabond* in 1908. Tree's tastes are catholic, and his versatility and restless energy astonishing. His management, moreover, whether at the Haymarket or His Majesty's, has been marked by a laudably high aim and a desire to produce work above the ordinary level. At one time at the Haymarket he instituted a series of special performances, designed to introduce plays not suited for, or not likely to achieve, long "runs," but appealing by their literary merit to tastes somewhat different from those that sway the average audience. Henley and Stevenson's *Beau Austin* and *Macaire* saw the light in this manner, but the experiment (which was begun in the autumn of 1890) was not long-lived.

Furthermore, Tree instituted at His Majesty's (in 1904) a Dramatic School for the training of aspirants for the stage, in order to enable these to gain that knowledge of the technique of their art which their predecessors acquired painfully by experience in the old "stock companies"; for under modern conditions those older schools of training have disappeared, save for such as we are afforded by the excellent Benson and Greet touring companies and their disciples.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE KENDALS ; JOHN HARE ; AND THEIR SUCCESSORS AT THE ST. JAMES'S AND THE GARRICK.

IT was under Buckstone's management at the Haymarket, in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, that the Kendals first made their names known to Londoners after a good deal of hard preparatory work in the provinces. Kendal joined the Haymarket company in 1866, Madge Robertson in 1867 ; and in 1869 they were married. The provincial experience of both had been as varied as was usual ; consequently both were well equipped with a knowledge of acting, as is shown by the critical encomiums on the " neatness and finish " of Mrs. Kendal's acting of her first important part at the Haymarket, that of Lilian Vavasour in *New Men and old Acres* in 1869. It was during the three following years, however, that she and her husband had their chance and used it so happily as to establish their reputations with playgoers. The opportunity came to them with Gilbert's series of plays, *The Palace of Truth*, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, and *The Wicked World*, whose success has already been alluded to. And so it was that when John Hare undertook the management of the Court Theatre in 1875 he obtained the support of two very able as well as popular actors when he engaged the Kendals for his company.

Hare had made his first success at the old Prince of Wales's in the part of Lord Ptarmigan in *Society*, and had followed it up with a series of successes among which his Sam Gerridge in *Caste* and Beau Farintosh in *School* were conspicuous. He remained with the Bancrofts till 1874, the last part he played with them being that of Sir Peter Teazle. Bancroft has left on record his sense of the loss their company suffered "in the departure of its oldest and most valued member, John Hare. Wisely enough, for there was ample room for two such theatres as the then Prince of Wales's in friendly rivalry, he had for some time entertained ideas of commencing management on his own account; how wisely, has been proved by the splendid record of his work in that direction." Hare took the old Court Theatre, which till 1887 stood on a site nearly opposite the present house. Built in 1870, and originally styled the New Chelsea Theatre (and subsequently the Belgravia), it was re-christened the Royal Court Theatre, and enjoyed four years of popularity with Marie Litton as manager. Gilbert, with *The Wedding March*, *The Happy Land*, and other pieces, was her mainstay as dramatic author. Hare opened the theatre in March 1875, his company including, besides the Kendals, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Mary Rorke, Henry Kemble and John Clayton.

Hare's four years of management there were full of success. Gilbert again proved a "trump card" with the last of his fantastic plays, *Broken Hearts* (1875), in which the Kendals especially distinguished themselves; while Hare shared the honours more prominently in *A Quiet Rubber* and *A Scrap of Paper*, both in 1876. In that year the Kendals left him and joined the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's, and he, as has been already recorded, engaged Ellen Terry. She, after undertaking

Mrs. Kendal's old part in *New Men and Old Acres*, appeared in 1873 in *Olivia*, the manager effacing himself in the latter play and handing over the Vicar's part to Hermann Vezin.

After brilliant performances at the Prince of Wales's in *Peril* (1876), *London Assurance* (1877), and *Diplomacy* (1878), the Kendals returned to Hare at the Court in 1879 when Ellen Terry went from there to the Lyceum. The summer season of 1879, Hare's last at the Court, included a revival of *A Scrap of Paper*, and the successful production of Robertson's *The Ladies' Battle* and G. W. Godfrey's *The Queen's Shilling*. At the close of the season Hare announced that he was about to undertake, in partnership with the Kendals, the management of the St. James's Theatre, confident that such a partnership could conduct successfully a theatre that hitherto had laboured under the stigma of being unfortunate. Their plan of campaign was, as he then announced, to produce comedy and comedy-drama, and "to give that which is always, I take it, the most satisfactory thing to an audience—an even, all-round performance." How well he and his partners justified their hopes, the subsequent history of the St. James's shows.

The Hare and Kendal management there lasted for nine years, from October 1879 to July 1888; and at the close of it they had reason to congratulate themselves on having enjoyed, as the result of loyal partnership and earnest and intelligent work, "more successes and fewer failures than fall to the lot of average managers." They started by redecorating the house, and initiated the tradition of its being one of the best appointed and best equipped in London. After a revival of *The Queen's Shilling*, which had been in the height of its success when they left the Court, they took the bold

step of producing (in December 1879) Tennyson's poetic play *The Falcon*. The play had no strong dramatic qualities, but gave the opportunity for a beautiful *mise-en-scène*; and it had all the success it deserved. "The trouble of the cast," says the Kendals' biographer, Mr. Pemberton, "was the noble looking, great-eyed and soft-plumaged peregrine falcon. Mr. Kendal had taken great pains in procuring and taming the bird, and at home he was docile enough; but he was not 'stage-struck,' and resented the footlights in a way that was painful to the wrist that bore him." The bird died during the run of the play, and to-day exists, under a glass case, "as a sad (but very handsome) example of those who are forced to follow a profession for which they have no aptitude."

Other revivals were followed by a new version, by W. G. Wills, of Jerrold's picturesque and pathetic nautical drama *Black-Eyed Susan*; and that, a little later, by the first important play by A. W. Pinero, who was a member of Irving's Lyceum company and had tried his 'prentice hand in the writing of smaller comediettas. This play, *The Money Spinner*, which gave Hare a fine chance in the eccentric part of the rascally Baron Croodle, was produced in 1881, and was followed in the same year by *The Squire* from the same pen. These, with B. C. Stephenson's *Impulse* (1882) and Pinero's *The Ironmaster* (1884), proved as popular as any plays in the Kendal repertory. Neither an elaborate production of *As You Like It* in 1885, nor Pinero's *Mayfair* in the same year, achieved much success; but considerable amends was made with Pinero's *The Hobby Horse* in 1886, in which Hare was able to make a personal triumph in one of the minutely drawn and closely characterized parts with which Pinero excels in fitting him. In 1887 the Kendals received the distinc-

tion of a command to perform before Queen Victoria at Osborne, the programme consisting of *Uncle's Will* and Gilbert's *Broken Hearts*.

Lady Clancarty (in 1887), an "historical" play of considerable effectiveness that did not succeed as much as it deserved, and a revival of Lovell's *The Wife's Secret* (1888), practically concludes the tale of the chief Kendal and Hare productions at the St. James's. Their tenancy came to an end in July 1888, and the brilliant partnership was dissolved. In the following year the Kendals went to tour in America, and Hare became manager of the newly-built Garrick Theatre.

Since 1888 the Kendals have had no permanent theatrical home. They have made a number of successful tours in America, where their popularity has been only second to that of the Irving company. The delicate tenderness and humour of Mrs. Kendal's acting captured the hearts of American audiences at once; and Mr. Kendal's powers were more fully recognized than perhaps they were here, where he was apt to be overshadowed by the enormous popularity of his wife and Hare. In this country the Kendals are constantly touring in the provinces, and their too infrequent visits to London are looked for with pleasurable anticipation. The most conspicuous of their London appearances have been at the Court in 1889, when they played Pinero's *The Weaker Sex* and Sydney Grundy's *A White Lie*; at the Garrick, in Grundy's *The Greatest of These*, in 1895; and at their old house, the St. James's, in *The Elder Miss Blossom* (1898 and 1901), *The Likeness of The Night* (1901), *Dick Hope* (1905), and *The Housekeeper* (1905). In 1893 they produced Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanquerary* at Leicester, Mrs. Kendal giving a rendering of the unhappy Paula's character that was interesting in its

divergences from that of its "creator" Mrs. Patrick Campbell.

The Kendals were followed in the St. James's management by Rutland Barrington, who produced in 1888 (but with small success) Grundy and Phillips' *The Dean's Daughter* and Gilbert's *Brantingham Hall*, the latter an attempt on the veteran Savoy librettist's part to return to serious drama. After Barrington, Mrs. Langtry was manager for a short time, her reign being marked by a capable performance of *As You Like It* in 1889, she playing the part of Rosalind and Arthur Bourchier that of Jacques.

The fortunes of the house seemed to be waning again, when they were happily revived by the advent of George Alexander as manager. He had made his first London appearance as Caleb Deecie in *The Two Roses* at the Lyceum just ten years previously, and from 1881 till 1888 had acted pretty continuously under Irving, playing such parts as Macduff, Bassanio, Laertes, Claudio, and Faust. He had acquired ease and skill in acting, had served under the prince of managers, and had youth and ambition to assist him in undertaking the difficult task of managing a theatre. In the important respect of the production of work by living English dramatists, Alexander's management has been the most remarkable of our own time. Under him Pinero sealed his reputation, and under him the names of Haddon Chambers, R. C. Carton, Oscar Wilde, H. V. Esmond, Anthony Hope, Stephen Phillips, Mrs. Craigie and John Oliver Hobbes have become familiar to playgoers.

After a trial trip as manager at the Avenue Theatre in 1890 with an entertaining farce *Dr. Bill* and a typical Carton comedy *Sunlight and Shadow*, Alexander opened the St. James's early in 1891 with a resumed run of the latter play. Thanks to good judgment allied with

enterprise, as well as a wisely expended liberality in securing the best performers available for his purposes (thanks, too, to his recognition of the limitations of his own very considerable powers as actor, and his avoidance of the pitfalls that beset the path of the actor-manager in the shape of temptations to subdue everything else to the prominence of a "star part") Alexander has been able to follow success with success. To recall the more important of his productions will be certificate of this. The series includes: Haddon Chambers' *The Idler* (1891), with Hubert Waring, Maude Millett, Marion Terry and Lady Monckton in the cast; Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), which was the dramatic *début* of that witty writer and gave Marion Terry one of her best parts; Carton's *Liberty Hall* (1892), which was like a page from Dickens, and again gave Marion Terry, together with Edward Righton, opportunity for a particularly touching performance; *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), which made Mrs. Patrick Campbell's reputation, and established that of Pinero, who now crowned his popularity as a writer of entertaining comedy with this triumphant assertion of his claims as a serious dramatist; *The Masqueraders* (1894) and *The Triumph of the Philistines* (1895), by Henry Arthur Jones, both plays characteristic of their author; *The Importance of being Earnest* (1895), a delicious piece of witty nonsense from Oscar Wilde's pen, acted in exactly the right vein by George Alexander, Allan Aynesworth, Irene Vanbrugh, Evelyn Millard and Rose Leclercq; *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1896), for which H. B. Irving joined the company, and its sequel, *Rupert of Hentzau* (1900); a revival of *As You Like It* (1896), chiefly remarkable for Alexander's Orlando and H. V. Esmond's Touchstone; Pinero's fantastic comedy *The Princess and the Butterfly* (1897);

a revival of *Much Ado about Nothing* (1898), with Alexander as Benedick and Julia Neilson as Beatrice; John Oliver Hobbes' *The Ambassador* (1898), in which Alexander and Fay Davis distinguished themselves, as they did in *The Man of Forty* (1900) and *The Wisdom of the Wise* (1900); *The Wilderness* (1901), in which Alexander was brilliantly assisted by Eva Moore; Stephen Phillips' verse drama *Paolo and Francesca* (1902), in which Alexander was associated with Evelyn Millard and Henry Ainley; *If I were King* (1902), a romantic drama with an effectually picturesque part for Alexander as the poet Villon; *Old Heidelberg* (1903); *The Garden of Lies* (1904); *John Chilcote, M.P.* (1905); Pinero's comedy *His House in Order* (1906); Sutro's *John Glayde's Honour* (1907); an adaptation of Bernstein's *The Thief* (1907); and Pinero's *The Thunderbolt* (1908). In 1900 the interior of the St. James's was remodelled and its comfort and convenience increased.

When Hare dissolved his partnership with the Kendals, he found a new and suitable sphere for his managerial activities in the newly erected Garrick Theatre. There had existed from 1830, for about fifteen years, a Garrick Theatre in Leman Street, Whitechapel; but its position never rose above a very low level, and it was quite forgotten long ere Hare's Garrick arose. Hare opened his new house in April 1889 with Pinero's *The Profligate*, a play which was a tentative effort in the style that reached its fruition in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and was remarkable for at least one scene as deftly constructed as anything in modern drama. Taking his subject seriously, Pinero had ended the play, as he considered legitimate and logical, with the suicide of the "profligate" at the moment when the irony of fate was bringing his wife to him with pity and forgiveness. Hare, however, was

afraid of an unhappy ending (this was in pre-Ibsen days), and induced the dramatist to make a concession to popular prejudice and let his hero live to effect a reconciliation with his wife. In the printed version of the play it ends as the author originally intended. Hare contented himself with a small but telling part, and was brilliantly supported by Forbes Robertson, Lewis Waller and Kate Rorke. It is interesting to compare the "Profligate's" last soliloquy in the printed version of the play with poor Paula's pitiless analysis of the hopeless situation at the close of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

Hare's next production was Sydney Grundy's *A Pair of Spectacles* in 1890. This, though nominally an adaptation from the French, was in all essentials an original comedy and one so delightful as to prove permanently one of the most popular features of Hare's repertory. Pinero's touching comedy *Lady Bountiful*, which did not have by any means the success it deserved, followed in 1891. Hare had a capital part in this, as also did Forbes Robertson, Kate Rorke and Marie Linden, and the whole was acted with a delicacy that exactly suited it. In this Hare's son Gilbert made his first London appearance; and in a revival of *School*, in the same year, H. B. Irving made his, as Lord Beaufof.

Grundy's *A Fool's Paradise* (with H. B. Irving in a more prominent part) followed in 1892, and Carton's *Robin Goodfellow* in 1893. In the latter year the Bancrofts reappeared with Hare in a revival of *Diplomacy*, and again in a revival of *Money* in 1894. The year 1895 was distinguished by the production of Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, a return to the *Profligate* style of comedy, in which Forbes Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell (and afterwards Olga Nethersole) undertook the chief parts.

Hare then gave up the management of the Garrick, and three years later started on a brief tenancy of the Globe. Except for revivals of *School, Ours* and *Caste* (in which Hare played the part of Eccles, and his son Gilbert that of Sam Gerridge), this management was only remarkable for the production of Pinero's comedy *The Gay Lord Quex* (1899), in which Irene Vanbrugh made a great impression by her realistic performance as the heroine, Sophy Fullgarney. It is difficult to recall anything better in its way than her acting and Hare's in the finely written verbal duel that constitutes the third act of this play.

Since then Hare's appearances in London have been infrequent, the chief being in a revival of *The Gay Lord Quex* at the Duke of York's in 1902, in Barrie's *Little Mary* at Wyndham's Theatre in 1903, in a season (which included Captain Marshall's *The Alabaster Staircase*) at the Comedy in 1906, and in *The Great Conspiracy* at the Duke of York's in 1907. In the latter year he began a series of farewell performances in the provinces anticipatory of his retirement, and also received the honour of knighthood.

After Hare's departure from the Garrick there is little that is noteworthy in that theatre's history until Arthur Bouchier became its manager in 1900, save for seasons undertaken in 1895 and 1896 by E. S. Willard (who produced *Alabama* and Jones' *The Rogue's Comedy*) and by the Kendals with *The Greatest of These* in 1896. After an enthusiastic amateur career at Oxford, Bouchier had adopted the stage as a profession in 1889, and had played at the St. James's, with Wyndham at the Criterion, and with Daly's company, before making his first bid for fortune as a manager at the Royalty in 1895. There, with the co-operation of his wife (Violet Vanbrugh), he made a conspicuous

success with *The Chili Widow*, a farce adapted from the French. Subsequently he acted at the Garrick, the Strand and the Court theatres, his Jim Blagden in Carton's *Wheels within Wheels* at the Court in 1899 being memorable. Previous to his taking over the Garrick Theatre he had acquired additional experience by joining Charles Wyndham in partnership to manage the Criterion when Wyndham went to act at the new theatre that bears his name.

At the Criterion, in the early part of 1900, Bouchier was concerned in the production of R. Marshall's *His Excellency the Governor*, and Carton's *Lady Huntworth's Experiment*. Later in the same year he opened his management at the Garrick with Barrie's *The Wedding Guest*, a touching but unsatisfactory play. In 1901 Pinero's *Iris*, a drama of almost unrelieved gloom, was produced. In this Fay Davis and Oscar Asche played the principal parts, the Bouchiers temporarily "standing out." It was followed in the next year by Anthony Hope's refreshingly humorous *Pilkerton's Peerage*. In the latter both Bouchier and his wife appeared, as they have done in nearly every subsequent production at the Garrick. Henry Arthur Jones has been represented there by *Whitewashing Julia* in 1903, and *The Chevalier*, a comedy which deserved better fortune than it enjoyed, in 1904. In the same year (1904) Gilbert's comedy *The Fairy's Dilemma* was mounted. This was an attempt, not wholly successful, to return to an earlier manner; and, though many of the ideas were rich in humorous possibilities, some of the fun appeared laboured.

At the close of 1904 Bouchier brought forward a new dramatist in the person of Alfred Sutro, whose clever play *The Walls of Jericho*, with its effective part for Bouchier, made an impression which was to a great extent maintained by *The Fascinating Mr. Vanderveldt*,

from the same pen, in 1906. Sutro had, as a matter of fact, been knocking at the gates for many years before fortune brought him the chance which he has been quick to seize.

Meanwhile, fired with Shakespearean ambition, Bouchier mounted *The Merchant of Venice* in 1905, and followed this in the next year with *Macbeth*. One of the recent productions at the Garrick in which Bouchier did not appear was that of W. J. Locke's *The Morals of Marcus* in 1906. This was the occasion of a little friction between the manager and the critics, he having announced that, as a protest against the haste with which the conditions of modern journalism made it necessary for first-night criticism to be written, he did not propose to invite the critics to the first performance, but left it to their discretion to come when they pleased and write about the play at their leisure. Representations were made, however, as to the danger of injustice to the author and actors if such a course were pursued in, for it might happen that the critics would stay away altogether!—and eventually a further letter from the manager calmed the ruffled waters and peace was restored. Bouchier's chief new productions in 1907 were Gladys Unger's *Mr. Sheridan*, Valentine and Francis' *Fiander's Widow*, and Murray Carson and Norah Keith's *Simple Simon*. In the first half of 1908 the Garrick was occupied for a considerable time by Maugham's clever comedy *Lady Frederick*, which, originally produced at the Court in 1907, successfully survived four or five migrations in the course of its career. Bouchier's advance as a manager has been rapid and decisive. He has shown enterprise and judgment in his choice of plays, and a due liberality in mounting them; and the result, taken together with his popularity as an actor and that of his gifted wife, is a deserved success.

CHAPTER XV.

OTHER THEATRES CONCERNED WITH COMEDY AND FARCE.

WHEN Toole died, in the summer of 1906, he had been in retirement for more than ten years, and, except to the older generation, he is little more than a name to the playgoers of to-day. Yet fifteen or twenty years ago he still enjoyed an enormous popularity, after having been the idol of the public for thirty years. No actor's popularity has ever been more warmly tinged with personal affection, and the kindly heart of the man deserved it no less than his honest and clean work in promoting mirth.

He was only two and twenty when, after some provincial experience, he had his first chance in London at the St. James's. Two years later he was engaged by Dillon for the Lyceum, where he remained for three years, playing in company with Marie Wilton who was making her London *début*. So good an impression did he make that, when the favourite comedian Wright retired from the Adelphi in 1858, Toole was chosen to succeed him. The Adelphi saw the creation of two parts that always remained favourites of his, Spriggins in *Ici on parle Français* (1859) and Caleb Plummer in Boucicault's *Dot* (1862), the former broadly farcical and the latter a mixture of comedy and pathos. Then followed six years as one of the principal comedians of

the Queen's Theatre in Longacre, where his fellow-actors included Irving, Wigan, Ryder, Wyndham, Clayton, Lionel Brough and Henrietta Hodson. Toole's most ambitious effort there was the part of Richard Eames in H. J. Byron's *Dearer than Life* in 1868. After that he migrated to the Gaiety, where, except for the interruption of a tour in America from 1874 to 1875, he remained for the best part of ten years. One of his earliest appearances there was in Byron's *Uncle Dick's Darling*, in which Irving also acted, in 1869. Nellie Farren was already a member of the Gaiety company, and played in a number of farces and burlesques with Toole.

In 1879 Toole became manager of the Folly Theatre. Built on the site of a Roman Catholic oratory, this little house had arisen ten years previously as the Polygraphic Hall. It was converted into a theatre, and enjoyed a chequered career as the Charing Cross Theatre until it was re-named the Folly Theatre in 1876 by Alexander Henderson, who managed it for three years. Henderson's one great success was with the comic opera *Les Cloches de Corneville* (1878), in which Violet Cameron and Shiel Barry gave performances that became famous.

Toole opened the Folly in 1879 with the ever-popular *Ici on parle Français* and Byron's *A Fool and his Money*, and for fifteen years made the little house a centre of wholesome laughter. One of his earliest successes there was with Byron's *The Upper Crust* in 1880. He ran the theatre on "stock-company" lines, keeping the same actors together with him as far as possible. Billington, Shelton, and Sarah Thorne were among those who served under him for many years.

In 1882 he re-christened the theatre Toole's Theatre; and with such farces as *The Butler* (1886), *The Don*

(1888), and burlesques of popular successes such as *Stage Dora* in 1883 (parodying *Fédora*) and *Paw Clawdian* in 1884 (parodying Wilson Barrett's production of *Claudian*), kept the ball merrily rolling.

The Daly Company made their first London appearance at Toole's Theatre in 1884, and other companies were seen there in the manager's absence, particularly during a tour he undertook in Australia in 1890. During the last years of his management he produced few new pieces, relying mainly on his repertory; but in 1892 Barrie's first play, *Walker, London*, and in 1895 R. Lumley's farce *Thoroughbred*, were seen at Toole's.

Toole's last appearance on the stage was made in 1895, and his enforced retirement was clouded by distressing illness which ended in his death in July 1906. His powers of drollery were accompanied by a considerable command of homely pathos, and his aptitude for travesty made his burlesque-acting delightful. As a man he was the soul of kindness. His boyish sense of fun made him an inveterate practical joker, but always without malice or intent to harm; and abundant testimony could be quoted as to his capacity for staunch friendship, his affectionate comradeship with Irving (to instance but one case) having become proverbial.

Toole's Theatre was pulled down in 1896, and its site is now occupied by an extension of the Charing Cross Hospital buildings.

Sir Charles Wyndham, who is by many years our senior theatrical manager, was originally intended for the medical profession. Born in 1837, he served as a surgeon in the Civil War in America. While in that country he made an abortive appearance on the stage in New York. The story goes that he had a longish speech to deliver on his entrance, beginning with the

words "I am drunk with enthusiasm"; but, being absolutely overcome with stage-fright, he could only manage to stammer out the words "I am drunk" and rush from the stage, from which he was promptly dismissed.

He clung to his fondness for acting, however, and before he was thirty had made some fairly successful appearances in the provinces, and in London at the Royalty, where, according to Burnand, his agile dancing made him conspicuous among the clever performers of Burnand's burlesque of *Black Eye'd Susan* in 1866. In 1867 he was at the St. James's, acting heroes while Irving acted villains, and subsequently supported Kate Terry in her farewell performances at Manchester, playing such parts as Claudio and Laertes. In October of the same year he was engaged as a member of the company that opened the Queen's theatre in Longacre, where he remained for two years and established his reputation as an actor. At the Queen's (famous as the dramatic nursery of several future actor-managers) he had amongst his colleagues Irving, Ellen Terry, Toole, Clayton, the Wigans and Lionel Brough.

In 1869 he retrieved his former histrionic disaster in New York by appearing successfully there as Charles Surface; after which he toured in America with a company of his own for three years. In a production of *Caste* during this tour, Wyndham played Hawtree to the Sam Gerridge of George Giddens, who was afterwards for so many years a member of Wyndham's company at the Criterion.

One of the most popular plays in the "Wyndham Comedy Company's" repertory in America had been a play of Branson Howard's called *Saratoga*; and, on his return to England, Wyndham made a great success

at the Court Theatre (in 1874) with an anglicised version of this under the name of *Brighton*. It was when he was at the height of this success that he was offered a part share (with Alexander Henderson) of the management of the Criterion Theatre, which had enjoyed but little good fortune since its opening in 1874. Henderson, however, had faith in Wyndham's powers of attraction; the partnership was arranged; and it was in his popular part of Bob Sackett in *Brighton* that Wyndham appeared for the first time, in December 1875, at the house that was to be his theatrical headquarters for three-and-twenty years.

The Criterion became rapidly popular, and famed for its brilliant representations of farcical comedy. It is only necessary to mention the most prominent of Wyndham's early productions there. These include Albery's *Pink Dominoes*, about whose "propriety" certain critics raised a pother and thereby advertised the play so well that it ran for nearly two years; Burnand's *Betsy* (1879), in which Wyndham did not act, employing himself with a season of *Brighton* at the Olympic; Albery's *Where's the Cat?* (1880), in which Wyndham was supported by Beerbohm Tree, Giddens and Mrs. John Wood; Gilbert's *Foggerty's Fairy* (1881), a whimsical comedy whose wit proved too subtle for Criterion audiences in spite of the cleverness of a cast that included, besides Wyndham, Giddens, Alfred Maltby, William Blakeley, Mrs. John Wood and Mary Rorke; and Byron's *Fourteen Days* (1882), for which Kate Rorke joined the company.

In 1883 Wyndham toured again in America, while extensive structural alterations were made at the Criterion, which he opened again in 1884 with a revival of *Brighton*. This was soon followed by *The Candidate*, which, somewhat unexpectedly, proved one

of the greatest Criterion successes, and ran from November 1884 till January 1886.

A revival of *Wild Oats* in 1886 brought a new actress before the public in the part of Lady Amaranth. This was Mary Moore, whose professional partnership with Wyndham has lasted ever since. David James, Edward Righton, William Blakeley, Alfred Maltby, George Giddens and Annie Hughes were also with Wyndham in this revival. In the same year Wyndham appeared, with Mary Moore, in the piece which has proved the most perennially popular of all his repertory, T. W. Robertson's *David Garrick*. Wyndham has gained for this play a popularity that far exceeds any that its original exponent Sothorn could achieve. He has, moreover, translated the play into German; and as both he and Mary Moore speak the language well, they took the bold step of giving performances of the German version at Liegnitz and in Berlin in 1887. Their success was complete, news of it even reaching the august ears of the Czar of Russia, at whose desire the clever pair gave a series of performances of the play in St. Petersburg and in Moscow. In the same year they gave a "command performance" of it at Sandringham, and again in 1903 at Windsor.

After playing John Mildmay in a capital revival of *Still Waters Run Deep* early in 1889, Wyndham produced Burnand's *The Headless Man* in the summer, an occasion rendered memorable by the manager's colloquy with a discontented man in the gallery, who was duly brought to book. In the autumn of the same year Wyndham started off on another successful American tour. Three revivals followed on his return: *She Stoops to Conquer* (1890), the chief feature of which was Giddens' admirable Tony Lumpkin, *London Assurance* (1890), and *The School for Scandal* (1891). In the last-

named, Wyndham played Charles Surface to the Joseph of Arthur Bouchier. William Farren was the Sir Peter, and the cast included Mrs. Bernard Beere, Mary Moore, Giddens, Cyril Maude and Ellaline Terriss.

After a brilliant record with light comedy, the Criterion now began to acquire a reputation for work of a more solid nature. Henry Arthur Jones' comedy *The Bauble Shop* was produced in 1893, to be followed by a less serious work from the same pen in *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1894). Carton's *The Home Secretary* (1895) brought Charles Brookfield, Lewis Waller, Sydney Brough, and Julia Neilson to join the Criterion company, and in the same writer's *The Squire of Dames* (1895) Fay Davis was seen with Wyndham and Mary Moore. Messrs. Parker and Carson's pretty comedy *Rosemary* proved very much to the taste of the public in 1896; and in the following year Wyndham mounted two more plays by Henry Arthur Jones, *The Physician*, which was only moderately successful, and *The Liars*, which made its mark at once and has borne the test of revival. Messrs. Parker and Carson's romantic "costume" play *The Jest* was the chief production of 1898, and the spring of 1899 saw the too brief run of Haddon Chambers' clever comedy *The Tyranny of Tears*.

In November 1899 Wyndham opened the new theatre (in Charing Cross Road) which bears his name. There is very little to be said in favour of this growing practice of christening theatres with the names of living actors. Toole began the practice, but his theatre disappeared with him. The practice, moreover, leads to such anomalies as a Wyndham's Theatre in which Wyndham is rarely seen, a Terry's Theatre in which Terry is now almost never seen, and one of the most popular theatres in the town (Daly's) named after an

American manager who is dead. The Hicks Theatre (opened in 1907) is the latest example of this mistake.

Wyndham's Theatre was opened with various revivals, the first new production being an English version of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* in the summer of 1900. This ambitious effort not meeting with the success Wyndham had hoped for, he turned again to Henry Arthur Jones, who had on many occasions fitted him admirably with a part. The play that resulted, *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, advanced Lena Ashwell's reputation and presented Wyndham in a character of the type in which his maturer powers excel,—that of a tender-hearted, keen-witted man of the world, who is the *deus ex machina* of the plot. *The Mummy and the Humming Bird* by Isaac Henderson (1901) and Davies' *Mrs. Gorringer's Necklace* (1903) were other new plays produced at this house by Wyndham.

In 1902 Wyndham received the honour of knighthood; and in the following year became proprietor of yet another theatre, the New Theatre (in St. Martin's Lane), where his most successful new production has been Davies' *Captain Drew on Leave* (1905) which contained excellent parts for himself, Mary Moore and Marion Terry. In the last few years Wyndham has been seen now at one and now at another of his theatres, often in revivals of former successes, the theatres being tenanted by various companies during his absences.

At Wyndham's, for example, Lena Ashwell and H. V. Esmond were seen to some advantage in Henry Arthur Jones' *Chance, the Idol*, in 1902; and Barrie's *Little Mary*, which proved to be a practical joke in the form of a play that was excellently interpreted by Hare, Nina Boucicault and other clever folk, was produced in 1903. Other miscellaneous plays produced at this

theatre include Pinero's comedy *A Wife without a Smile* in 1904, Carton's *Public Opinion* in 1905, and an adaptation of Mrs. De la Pasture's *Peter's Mother* in 1906. In 1907 James Welch caught the public's fancy at Wyndham's with a fantastic comedy *When Knights were Bold*, which had a long run.

At the New Theatre, Cyril Maude and the Haymarket company (during the reconstruction of their theatre) produced *Beauty and the Barge* in 1904, Lena Ashwell made a considerable impression in *Leah Kleschna* in 1905, and Julia Neilson and Fred Terry were seen in "romantic" drama in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* in 1905, *Dorothy o' the Hall* in 1906, and *Matt o' Merrymount* in 1907. In 1907, also, Vachell's *Her Son* was played there.

After his departure from the Criterion, Wyndham retained an interest in the house and for a time managed it in partnership with Arthur Bouchier, the latter actor appearing there in Carton's *Wheels within Wheels* (a revival), and *Lady Huntworth's Experiment*, in 1900. Among the various pieces that have since been seen there may be mentioned Esmond's *Billy's Little Love Affair*, in 1903, with a cast that included Eva Moore and Florence St. John; Capt. Marshall's *The Duke of Killicrankie*, in 1904; *The Freedom of Suzanne*, which exhibited Marie Tempest as a comedian of the first rank, in 1904; and in 1905 Bowkett's *Lucky Miss Dean*, in which Ethel Irving gave the first conspicuous evidence of powers of comedy that have since been triumphantly asserted in *Lady Frederick*. In 1907 Wyndham and Mary Moore were once more seen at the Criterion, in a revival of *The Liars* and the production of H. H. Davies' comedy *The Mollusc*.

Hare's successor in the management of the Court Theatre was Wilson Barrett, who had already made a

considerable provincial reputation and had managed theatres at Leeds and Hull. He was at the Court, but without much success, from the autumn of 1879 to the summer of 1881, the most memorable feature of his management being his introduction of the Polish actress Mme. Modjeska to English audiences. His company at this time included Coghlan, Arthur Dacre, Mrs. Leigh Murray and Amy Roselle.

In 1881, when Barrett went to the Princess's Theatre, the Court was taken over by John Clayton, a sound actor who started with a company comprising fellow-comedians of such calibre as Mrs. John Wood, Marion Terry, Mrs. Tree and Arthur Cecil. The last-named joined Clayton in the managership in 1884. A fair amount of success attended the venture for the first three or four years, the chief productions being Godfrey's *The Parvenu* in 1882, Pinero's *The Rector* in 1883, Godfrey's *The Millionaire* in 1883 and *My Milliner's Bill* in 1884, and Bronson Howard's *Young Mrs. Winthrop* in 1884. For the last-named play, Lydia Foote and Rose Norreys joined the company at the Court.

It was in the final three years of its life, however, that the old Court enjoyed its greatest popularity. This was due to Pinero's inimitable series of farces, *The Magistrate* (1885), *The Schoolmistress* (1886) and *Dandy Dick* (1887). Pinero struck a new vein of purely English humour at a moment when the public was wearying of adaptations of doubtful French farces, and he worked it with consummate skill. Observing the proper canon of farce—namely, that one should place possible personages in possible but improbable circumstances—he brought to bear on this an ingenuity in construction, a skill in dialogue and a capacity for eccentric characterization that made these plays irresistible, acted as they were

with all possible point and spirit by the Court company. None that saw them are likely to forget Arthur Cecil's "Mr. Posket" in *The Magistrate*, Clayton's "Dean of St. Marvell's" in *Dandy Dick*, and his "Admiral Rankling" and Rose Norreys' "Peggy Hesselrigg" in *The Schoolmistress*, or Mrs. John Wood's matchless acting in all three farces, culminating in her triumph as "Georgina Tidman" in *Dandy Dick*.

The old Court was pulled down in 1887, and in September 1888 the present house was opened under the management of Mrs. John Wood and Arthur Chudleigh. Arthur Cecil remained a member of the company until 1891; Clayton had died in the early part of 1888.

The new house opened with Grundy's *Mamma*, in which Hare, Annie Hughes and Rosina Filippi appeared with Mrs. Wood and Arthur Cecil. Save for a season played by the Kendals in 1889, and the production of Pinero's *The Cabinet Minister* in 1890, the history of the first years of the new Court offers few points of interest. *The Cabinet Minister* was very strongly cast; besides the usual Court "principals," Weedon Grossmith, Allan Aynesworth, Eric Lewis, Herbert Waring and Eva Moore were seen in it. It was revived by Cyril Maude at Wyndham's Theatre in 1906.

Such farces as *The Late Lamented* (1891), *Aunt Jack* (1889), and *The Volcano* (1891), were carried to success mainly on the tide of Mrs. Wood's personal popularity and the vigour and vitality of her acting. She appeared at the Criterion in 1892 in Haddon Chambers' *The Old Lady*, and was not seen again at the Court until 1895. Meantime various entertainments were tried at the Court with varying fortunes, and in 1893 Pinero made a return, with *The Amazons*, to the manner of his successes of the old Court days. The play was a delightfully humorous fantasy, and was acted in just the right spirit

by Rose Leclercq, Lily Hanbury, Pattie Browne, Ellaline Terriss, Kerr, Elliott and Weedon Grossmith.

In 1894 Olga Nethersole was seen at the Court in A. W. Gattie's *The Transgressor*; and, later on, Charles Hawtrey, Lottie Venne and Eva Moore in Burnand's *A Gay Widow*. In 1895 Mrs. Wood returned with Godfrey's *Vanity Fair*, in which her old colleague Arthur Cecil reappeared with her; and in the same year she gave a characteristic and irresistibly funny performance of Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*, to William Farren's Sir Anthony. In the spring of 1896 she joined Hawtrey and Lottie Venne in a revival of *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past*, this being the close of her long connection with the Court, which was at once invaded by the already ubiquitous "musical comedy." In the autumn of the same year Mrs. Wood was seen at Drury Lane as Lady Janet Macintosh in the spectacular drama *The White Heather*.

Hare played a season at the Court in 1897, with revivals of previous successes; this was followed by a charming fairy tale, *The Children of the King*, which was beautifully played by Martin Harvey, Dion Boucicault, Cissie Loftus and a clever company, but failed to make the success its qualities merited.

The next year saw the production of a very characteristic Pinero comedy, *Trelawny of the Wells*, in which Irene Vanbrugh played the chief female part; and in 1899 the Court was the scene of the production of Carton's *Wheels within Wheels* and Marshall's *A Royal Family*.

Subsequently a long spell of ill fortune seemed to fasten upon the house, only to be removed when attention began to be directed to it once more by the activities of the Stage Society, several of whose performances took place there in 1903 and 1904. This

body was the historical, if not the actual, outcome of an earlier body, the Independent Theatre, that had been founded in 1891 for the purpose of the production of meritorious plays which, for whatever reason, were unlikely to be produced by the ordinary manager.

The Independent Theatre existed as a corporate body from 1891 to 1897, its performances taking place either at the Opera Comique or the Royalty Theatres. The production of a translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* was one of its first efforts, and George Moore's *The Strike at Arlingford* (1892), Bernard Shaw's *Widowers' Houses* (1893) and *The Philanderer* (1894), Michael Field's *A Question of Memory* (1893) and Todhunter's *The Black Cat* (1894) were among the native plays that it produced. Its mantle fell upon the Stage Society, which came into existence in 1899 and has since then been instrumental in a number of interesting productions. Apart from translation of foreign plays by such dramatists as Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, Gorki, and Brieux some of its main productions have been as follows:—in its season of 1899 to 1900, Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, Olivier's *Mrs. Maxwell's Marriage*, Fiona Macleod's *The House of Usna* and Shaw's *Candida*; in 1900, Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*; in 1901, Murray's *Andromache*; in 1902, Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and Granville Barker's *The Marrying of Ann Leete*; in 1903 Maugham's *A Man of Honour* and Shaw's *The Admirable Bashville*; in 1904, Browning's *A Soul's Tragedy*, Fenn and Pryce's *'Op 'o me Thumb*, and Yeats' *Where there is Nothing*; in 1905, Street's *Great Friends* and Shaw's *Man and Superman*; in 1906, Benson's *Dodo* and Hankin's *The Cassilis Engagement*.

These plays were performed at various theatres, as opportunity offered. In 1903 and 1904 certain of them were produced at the Court; from 1901 onwards, the

presence of the Press was invited, and the attention thus directed to the theatre helped to create there an audience which made possible the spirited independent management that was begun in 1904 by Messrs. Barker and Vedrenne. Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) was one of their earliest productions, and this writer's trenchant pen provided them with a large proportion of the entertainment they offered their audiences.

The Barker and Vedrenne management was a notable effort, in respect of being undertaken primarily with an artistic aim; it "discovered" a great amount of new talent in the way of acting, and not a little in the way of play-writing; its stage-management was masterly; it steadily set its face against long runs, and so acquired a repertory; and the result was a gratifying response on the part of the intelligent public and a considerable measure of financial success, so much so that in 1907 the management felt justified in removing the sphere of their operations from the Court to the roomier Savoy Theatre. Their place at the Court was taken by Otho Stuart, who started management there in 1907 with Mackay and Ord's *Barry Doyle's Rest Cure*, and Maugham's *Lady Frederick*.

Among the new plays produced by Barker and Vedrenne at the Court may be mentioned: Murray's *Hippolytus* and Granville Barker's *Prunella* in 1904; Shaw's *How He Lied to Her Husband*, Mrs. De la Pasture's *The Lonely Millionaires*, Murray's *Trojan Women*, Mrs. Ward's *Eleanor*, Hankin's *The Return of the Prodigal*, Barker's *The Voyage Inheritance* and Shaw's *Major Barbara*, all in 1905; and, in 1906, Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*, Hankin's *The Charity that began at Home*, Murray's *Electra* and Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

The Barker-Vedrenne management at the Savoy,

which only lasted for a few months, began in the autumn of 1907 with a revival of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* and a production of the same author's *The Devil's Disciple*. Later in the same year Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra* was produced, and a revival of his *Arms and the Man*. The prohibition, by the Censor, of the performance of Granville Barker's *Waste* gave a fresh impulse to the agitation for the abolition of the Censorship. The play was privately produced by the Stage Society in December 1907.

Other independent bodies, somewhat similar in constitution to the Independent Theatre and the Stage Society, are the Elizabethan Stage Society and the Mermaid Society (afterwards called the English Drama Society), both existing for the revival of old plays; the New Century Theatre, which performed Murray's *Hippolytus* in 1904; and the Literary Theatre Society, which produced Sturge Moore's *Aphrodite against Artemis* in 1906.

The Comedy Theatre, which for a score of years has justified its name, was opened in 1881 with comic opera, which held the boards there till 1884. Since then, under a variety of managers, comedy has been pretty consistently its programme, and a fair number of plays whose memory lingers in the playgoer's memory have seen the light there. To name the chief of these: Grundy's *The Silver Shield*, with Kate Rorke, Dacre and Amy Roselle in the cast, in 1885; Outram Tristram's *The Red Lamp*, in 1887, in which Beerbohm Tree was assisted by Charles Brookfield, Marion Terry, Lady Monckton and Rosina Filippi; Von Moser's *The Arabian Nights*, with Hawtrey, Lottie Venne and Penley in the cast, in 1887; *Sunset* and *Woodbarrow Farm*, two delicate little pieces by Jerome K. Jerome, in 1888; Grundy's *Sowing the Wind* in 1893 and *The New Woman*

in 1894, in both of which Winifred Emery added to her laurels, supported in the former by Cyril Maude, Sydney Brough, Annie Hughes, Rose Leclercq and Alma Murray; Barrie's *The Professor's Love Story*, with E. S. Willard in the chief part, in 1894; Pinero's *The Benefit of the Doubt* (1895), a tragi-comedy in which Winifred Emery and Cyril Maude each gave as finished a piece of acting as any in their careers; Grundy's *The Late Mr. Castello*, in which Winifred Emery again scored, in 1896; a tenancy of the theatre by Charles Hawtrey from 1896 to 1898, during which he was seen to advantage in Esmond's *One Summer's Day* (1897), and in Carton's *A White Elephant* (1896) and *Lord and Lady Algy* (1898); Esmond's *When we were Twenty-one* (1901), played by the American actors Natt Goodwin and Maxine Elliott; Welch's entertaining farce *The New Clown* in 1902, and in the same year Lewis Waller with *Monsieur Beaucaire*, a play which has ever since proved the trump card in his managerial hand; Hare's season in 1906, with revivals and with Capt. Marshall's *The Alabaster Staircase*; Barrie's *Punch* and *Josephine* in 1906; and, in 1907, *Peter's Mother*, memorable for Marion Terry's acting, *Raffles*, in which Gerald Du Maurier distinguished himself, and Clyde Fitch's *The Truth*, in which Marie Tempest added to her reputation. In the late autumn of 1907 Marie Tempest appeared at the Comedy in Sutro's *The Barrier*, and subsequently in Duval and Lennox's *Angela*; in 1908, in Carton's *Lady Barbarity* and Maugham's *Mrs. Dot*.

Like the Comedy, the Avenue Theatre (which was opened in 1882) began its career with comic opera, and comedy was not seen there till George Alexander chose it as the sphere of his first essay in management with *Dr. Bill* in 1890. It was a house that never enjoyed the success its location would seem to ensure, but it has

taken a certain share in the history of contemporary comedy. After *Dr. Bill*, Alexander produced Carton's pleasant *Sunlight and Shadow* there in 1890, taking the latter play with him when he went to the St. James's early in 1891. In the late months of 1891 Henry Arthur Jones took the unusual course of undertaking management at the Avenue for the production of one of his plays. The experiment was not a success, despite the fact that the play, *The Crusaders*, was decidedly interesting and was acted by a strong company of players that included Winifred Emery, Arthur Cecil, Lewis Waller, Weedon Grossmith, Henry Kemble, Yorke Stephens, Allan Aynesworth, Lady Monckton and Olga Brandon.

The Kendals played a season at the Avenue in 1893, and Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* was produced there in 1894 under the management of Florence Farr, who had begun her venture with Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*. The unconventional manner in which Shavian realism dealt with the personality of a gallant soldier gave rise to acrimonious discussion, and was of no little service in drawing wider attention to a dramatist whose work had so far been seen only under the auspices of the Independent Theatre.

In 1895-96 Hawtrey was at the Avenue with *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past* and other farces; in 1897 Forbes Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell were seen there in *Nelson's Enchantress*; and in 1898-99 Hawtrey was back with Carton's *Lord and Lady Algy* (transferred from the Comedy), Brookfield's *The Cuckoo*, and Ganthony's *A Message from Mars*, the last proving a great success.

The theatre's subsequent history, up to its demolition by the Charing Cross Station catastrophe in 1905, offers little of note, except for the production of

Weedon Grossmith's farce *The Night of the Party* in 1901, Maugham's thoughtful comedy *A Man of Honour* in 1904, and Carton's *Mr. Hopkinson* (with James Welch in the chief part) in 1905. Rebuilt as The Playhouse, the theatre was re-opened in 1907 by Cyril Maude, as has already been recorded.

The Novelty Theatre in Great Queen Street, which dates from 1882, followed the then prevailing fashion by opening with comic opera. Its career till lately has not been fortunate, owing partly no doubt to its location, and it has been four times re-christened in the hope of breaking a seemingly persistent bad luck. After having been successively known as the Folies Dramatiques, the Jodrell (after the name of a temporary manageress), and the Great Queen Street Theatre, it was opened by Lena Ashwell in the autumn of 1907 as the Kingsway Theatre, with A. P. Wharton's striking drama *Irene Wycherley*, which was followed in 1908, with an equal success, by Cicely Hamilton's *Diana of Dobson's*. In the Novelty's earlier days a farce by T. G. Warren, called *Nita's First* (1884), had been among its few successful ventures. Various comedians at different times tried their fortunes at the Novelty, and a Russian Opera company and German Comedy companies have been seen there, but all with small success. Now, however, Miss Ashwell's spirited and intelligent management bids far to make the house one of the most popular in London.

The Prince of Wales's Theatre in Coventry Street was, at its opening in 1884 and for two years later, known as the Prince's Theatre, to avoid confusion with the old Prince of Wales's in Tottenham Street. Its first manager was Edgar Bruce (who had been the last manager of the old Prince of Wales's), and from the opening of the theatre Beerbohm Tree, who had made

his first success at the old house, was a member of his company. A revival of Gilbert's *The Palace of Truth* was the opening piece; and it is curious to recall that shortly afterwards, although the Ibsen "boom" did not begin till fully five years later, an adaptation (by Messrs. Jones and Hermann) of what was known in later translations as *The Doll's House* was produced, under the title of *Breaking a Butterfly*, at the Prince's in 1884.

In 1884 were also seen *The Private Secretary* (which, though but a partial success at the Prince's, had so prosperous a career subsequently at the Globe with Penley in the part originally played by Tree), and *Called Back*, in which Tree made his mark as Macari. During the next ten or twelve years there is nothing of much note in the history of the house, save for the success of the comic opera *Dorothy* (which was transferred there from the Gaiety in 1886), a dramatization of *Alice in Wonderland* in 1887, and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, with Annie Hughes in the name-part, in 1888. In the 'nineties, comic opera and the then novel form of entertainment known as "musical comedy" for the most part held the boards, until Forbes Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell (in 1898-99) came there to produce Maeterlinck's *Pélléas and Mélisande*, C. B. Fernald's *The Moonlight Blossom*, George Fleming's entertaining satire *The Canary*. In 1900 Martin Harvey occupied the house with an elaborate romantic play called *Don Juan's Last Wager*, and Marie Tempest with *English Nell*. The latter play had a rival in *Sweet Nell of Old Drury* (another Nell Gwynne play) which Julia Neilson and Fred Terry produced at the Haymarket in the same year. In 1901 Hawtrey produced, at the Prince of Wales's, Anstey's *The Man from Blankley's* (which was revived at the

Haymarket in 1906); in the same year Marie Tempest was seen in *Peg Woffington* and Annie Hughes in *A Country Mouse*; and in 1902 Marie Tempest again in *Becky Sharp*. Of late years the Prince of Wales's has again been the home of "musical comedy," which will be dealt with in another chapter.

In 1887 Terry's Theatre was opened by Edward Terry, a comedian whose previous work had been chiefly concerned with burlesque. After a six or seven years' apprenticeship at the Surrey and Strand Theatres, he went to the Gaiety in 1875 and remained there till 1884, sharing with Royce, Nellie Farren, and Kate Vaughan the honour of making "Gaiety burlesque" an institution in the town. Five months after the opening of his theatre, Terry scored a remarkable success with Pinero's pretty play *Sweet Lavender*, which ran from March 1888 to January 1890 and has since been more than once revived. Terry has never been better suited than in the part of the good-hearted ne'er-do-weel Dick Phenyl; Fred Kerr, Maud Millett, and other clever people were also well suited, and, in spite of its tendency to sentimentality, the play is so full of humour and the milk of human kindness that its popularity is not surprising. Pinero's *In Chancery* (1891), which had been originally seen at the Gaiety seven years earlier, was fairly fortunate at Terry's; and later in the year Terry produced the same writer's *The Times*, an excellent comedy that did not have all the success it merited. In it Terry was furnished with a part after his own heart, and was admirably seconded by Fanny Brough; in the cast were also Esmond, Elliot, Fred Thorne, Helena Dacre and Annie Hill. Since then Terry has been but rarely seen at his own theatre, being mostly occupied in touring the provinces.

Of the miscellaneous pieces produced at Terry's of late years may be mentioned: Thornton Clark and L. N. Parker's well-written comedy *Gudgeons* (1893), with Waring, Murray Carson and Janette Steer in the cast; Law's farce, *The New Boy* (1894), which was afterwards transferred to the Vaudeville; Stephens and Yardley's *The Passport* (1895), in which Gertrude Kingston gave a delightful portraiture of absent-minded femininity, with Giddens, Maltby, Yorke Stephens and Fanny Coleman as her associates; Madeline Ryley's *Jedbury Junior* (1896), a play of mingled humour and sentiment that gave Fred Kerr and Maud Millett opportunity to repeat a very successful partnership at this theatre; and (after a long interval, sometimes filled by spasmodic productions of comic opera, such as *The French Maid* in 1898 and *Lady Molly* in 1904) H. A. Jones' comedy *The Heroic Stubbs* in 1906.

The theatre now known as the Duke of York's was opened with comic opera under Frank Wyatt's management, in September 1892, as the Trafalgar Square Theatre. Its three years of life under its original name were not prosperous, despite such temporary attractions as Charles Hawtrey's appearance in a farce, *Tom, Dick, and Harry*, in 1893, and the comparative success of H. Graham's comedy *The County Councillor*, in the same year, with Cyril Maude, Fanny Brough and the author in the cast.

In 1895 the house was re-named the Duke of York's, and soon passed under the enterprising control of Charles Frohman, a justly esteemed American manager who has acquired extensive theatrical interests in this country. For two or three years Lewis Waller and Evelyn Millard were his "stars." They were associated in Anthony Hope's *The Adventure of Lady Ursula*, a slight but pleasing piece whose effect was largely

dependent on the author's skill in dialogue, in 1898; Hall Caine's *The Christian* (of which a revised edition was presented at the Lyceum under a "popular" management eight years later) in 1899; and H. A. Jones' *The Lackey's Carnival* and Parker's *The Swash-buckler* in 1900. In 1901 Marie Tempest advanced her reputation as a comedy actress in *The Marriage of Kitty*. Neither a translation of Fulda's *The Twin Sister* (with the chief characters played by H. B. Irving and Lily Brayton) nor H. A. Jones' *The Princess's Nose* achieved much success in 1902; but amends were fully made in the same year by Barrie's extremely clever play *The Admirable Crichton*, interpreted by a cast that included H. B. Irving, Irene Vanbrugh, Gerald Du Maurier and Henry Kemble. This was revived in 1908. Pinero's *Letty*, in 1903, was a great personal success for Irene Vanbrugh, and Hope's *Captain Dieppe* (in 1904) for H. B. Irving, while both scored in a revival of *His Excellency the Governor* in 1904. Barrie's *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* (1905) had the merit of exhibiting Ellen Terry in a congenial and suitable part; and in the same year, with *Peter Pan*, a delightful "nursery tale" written for children of all growths by a man who understands them, Barrie made one of the best deserved and most remarkable successes of recent years. *Peter Pan* was triumphantly revived in 1906 and 1907, and at the present time there seems to be every expectation that it may recur regularly as a Christmas piece. Its hero and his companions have become familiar figures in children's imaginations, and the play itself a nursery classic.

In 1906 Barrie's *Pantaloons* was seen at the Duke of York's, as well as the farce, *Toddles*, with which Cyril Maude afterwards inaugurated his new theatre; and, in 1907, *The Great Conspiracy* (which not even the powers

of Irene Vanbrugh and Hare could make a success) and *Brewster's Millions*, with Gerald Du Maurier in the name-part. The latter play was transferred to the Hicks Theatre, a house opened in 1907 in Shaftesbury Avenue, where later in the same year H. A. Jones' *The Hypocrites* was produced.

Yet another new theatre, the Queen's, was opened in 1907 (on a site adjoining that of the Hicks Theatre) with a comedy by Mrs. Ryley entitled *The Sugar Bowl*, the chief part in which was played by Ellis Jeffreys.

An outstanding feature of the dramatic history of the past fifteen or twenty years is the great diminution in the number of adaptations from foreign farcical sources (mainly French) that had for so long provided the programmes at most of our comedy theatres. Indeed the wheel has turned to such effect that nowadays adaptations of English comedies, from Pinero and Shaw downwards, are constantly seen upon foreign stages; and, when our theatres produce adaptations of foreign pieces, the proceeding is usually warranted by the merits of the originals. Another fact of good augury is the number of "new men" that have recently come to the front as dramatists. The work we have had from such writers as Barrie, Shaw, Sutro, Locke, Maugham, Davies and Horniman, may well be taken to inspire hope for the future.

CHAPTER XVI.

MELODRAMA, ROMANTIC AND "DOMESTIC" DRAMA.

IF the playgoer of to-day—or rather, of yesterday—were asked what actors represented melodrama to his memory, he would unhesitatingly say "Wilson Barrett and William Terriss." Each of the two was overwhelmingly popular in this branch of their art; but melodrama as they knew it has, since their death, disappeared from the first-class theatres, save for the wonderful spectacular pieces that each autumn brings forth at Drury Lane. Its popularity with less sophisticated audiences, however, is perennial. A striking instance of this has been furnished recently by the Lyceum, which, having failed as a music-hall, is enjoying success with emotional melodrama at popular prices. It may be that from this another Wilson Barrett or another Terriss may emerge; but for the present these two are without successors to their special gifts and irresistible personalities.

Wilson Barrett, after his brief management at the Court (which was dealt with in the preceding chapter) became manager of the Princess's Theatre early in 1881 and was connected with it till 1889. He found his "line" as a melodramatic actor in G. R. Sims' play *The Lights of London* (1881), which was followed in the next year by the same writer's *Romany Rye*. Barrett's

most memorable success at the Princess's, however, came later (in 1882), with Henry Arthur Jones and Henry Hermann's *The Silver King*, which ran for more than a year, has been often revived, and is one of the best melodramas our stage has seen. Barrett's full-blooded style was exactly suited to the direct appeal of manliness and pathos demanded from the melodramatic heroes he impersonated; and in the case of *The Silver King* he was provided with an admirable foil in the person of E. S. Willard, who decisively laid the foundation of his future popularity by his acting in the part of a villain of a type then new to melodrama,—the polished and “gentlemanly,” as opposed to the usual lurid and truculent, villain. *Claudian* (by Wills and Hermann) which followed in 1883 is chiefly remembered by its realistic representation of an earthquake. In these two plays, as in others for many years subsequently, Barrett was supported in the heroine's part by Mary Eastlake, an actress of genuine power and much charm, who had graduated at the Criterion under Wyndham.

In 1884 Barrett's ambition led him to play Hamlet. It was a straightforward, rather hysterical, performance that aroused considerable discussion by its occasional violation of tradition, and was signalized by a curious little bit of self-revelation on the actor's part when he made his speech before the curtain at the close of the play on the first night. “Twenty-five years ago,” said Barrett, “a poor and almost friendless lad stood outside the walls of the Princess's and determined to devote his last sixpence to the enjoyment in the gallery of one of the celebrated revivals of Charles Kean. Coming out of the theatre he swore to himself that not only would he become manager of that theatre, but that in the distant future he would play Hamlet on that

very spot. Ambition is in this instance satisfied; for the little boy was myself, and I have played Hamlet before you this evening."

After an elaborate revival of Lytton's *Junius* in 1885, Barrett essayed dramatic authorship in collaboration with H. A. Jones. Neither *Hoodman Blind* (1885) nor *The Lord Harry* (1886), which resulted from this collaboration, was an unqualified success; more attention was aroused by Sidney Grundy's *Clito* (1886), in which Mary Eastlake was able to display unsuspected powers of emotional acting in the part of the courtesan Helle.

While Barrett undertook an American tour, the Princess's was occupied in 1887 by H. Hamilton's *Harvest*, in which Amy Roselle appeared, and Gillette's *Held by the Enemy*; and in 1888 by Grace Hawthorne with Pettitt's melodrama *Hands Across the Sea*. While the latter play was in progress Barrett played a short season at the Globe, and returned later in the year to the Princess's with *The Ben-ma-Chree*, founded by himself and Hall Caine on that novelist's book "The Deemster." This was followed in 1889 by two plays, neither of which was successful, *The Good Old Times*, by Caine and Barrett, and *Nowadays*, by Barrett alone. This was the end of Barrett's connection with the Princess's, and in 1890 he undertook another American tour. He had been, perhaps laudably, anxious to emerge from melodrama to a higher type of play; but the fact remained that it was to the less subtle forms of drama that his methods and powers were best suited, and his chief successes were obtained subsequently, as they had been previously, in melodrama.

There is little to record in the later history of the Princess's, save for a sumptuous revival of *Antony and Cleopatra* by Mrs. Langtry in 1890. Melodrama after-

wards held its boards at various times, but with little advantage to those who adventured on its management. G. R. Sims and A. W. Shirley's *Two Little Vagabonds* (1896) was practically the only new production that was received with favour; and at the time of writing the theatre has been closed for some years.

On his return from America, Wilson Barrett opened the New Olympic in 1891 with a play, called *The People's Idol*, written by himself and Victor Widnell. It did not attract, and was followed by revivals of former successes. After this Barrett attempted no more permanent London managership, but toured the provinces, with occasional visits to the metropolis. He was to some extent rewarded for previous failures by the favour extended to his acting and that of Maud Jefferies in an adaptation from Hall Caine's *The Manxman* at the Shaftesbury Theatre in 1895; and still more by the great popular success of his "religious" melodrama, *The Sign of the Cross*, at the Lyric in 1896. An attempt to follow up the same vein with the *Daughters of Babylon* at the same theatre in the following year was not successful, neither was his production of *Makers of Men* (by himself and L. N. Parker) at the Lyceum in 1899. In 1898, and again in 1902, he toured in Australia, working pluckily (and not without reward) to retrieve his fortunes. An effective actor of the "robustious" type, but without much real skill in the differentiation of character, he enjoyed a great personal popularity, and was esteemed as a good manager and a good man. The decline of his popularity as an actor, at all events with the more sophisticated London audiences, was due to the fact that his ambitions outran his powers. He died, at the age of fifty-eight, in 1904.

William Terriss, the darling of Adelphi audiences,

made his first London appearance in 1868, under the Bancrofts. His engagement with them was obtained by sheer persistence on his part, as is amusingly told in the Bancrofts' "On and Off the Stage." It was some time, however, before his restless disposition allowed him to settle down finally to what became his profession. Before trying an actor's life, he had been in turn sailor, tea-planter and engineer, and his earliest appearances in London were sandwiched between attempts at sheep-farming in the Falkland Islands and horse-breeding in Kentucky. From 1873, however, he stuck steadily to the stage and was able, by working cheerfully at whatever part came in his way, to develop his very considerable powers of acting. His handsome and manly personality was, all his life, an asset of the greatest value to him.

The impression he made as Squire Thornhill in *Olivia* at the Court Theatre in 1878, and his subsequent work at the St. James's, earned him his engagement by Irving for the Lyceum, where he first appeared as Chateau Renaud in *The Corsican Brothers* in 1880. Between 1880 and 1885 he played, with Irving, such parts as Sinnatus in *The Cup*, Cassio, Laertes, Bassanio, Mercutio, and Don Pedro. A noteworthy result of his going with the Lyceum company to America in 1883-84 was his enterprise in inducing the Daly company to visit London for the first time. In 1885, after he had repeated at the Lyceum his former success in *Olivia*, he was induced to go to the Adelphi, to play in melodrama.

At the Adelphi, which since 1879 had been managed by the brothers Gatti, Terriss succeeded Charles Warner, who had been the mainstay of a succession of melodramas. These had been mainly from the pens of Henry Pettitt and G. R. Sims, and had exactly

gauged the expectations and likings of Adelphi audiences. *In the Ranks*, produced in 1883, was one of their most typical successes. The chief successes of Terriss's first engagement at the Adelphi were in *The Harbour Lights* (1885), *The Bells of Haslemere* (1887) and *The Union Jack* (1888). In the last two plays Pettitt had Sydney Grundy for his collaborator.

After a tour in America in 1889, Terriss rejoined his old chief at the Lyceum, to appear in *Ravenswood* in 1890, Claudio in *Much Ado about Nothing* in 1891, the King in *Henry VIII.* in 1892, and Henry II. in *Becket* in 1893; and to go again to America with Irving in the tour of 1893-94. On his return to England, he left Irving and went back to the Adelphi, where, except for an appearance at the Haymarket in Grundy's *A Marriage of Convenience* in 1897, he spent the rest of his life. Though this may have been regrettable, with regard to the fact that his powers were equal to more than the demands made on them by the somewhat elementary characterization of the average Adelphi melodrama, it is easy to understand the compelling attraction of the opportunity to "star" instead of supporting a "star." Be that as it may, the fact remains that there was never an "Adelphi hero" like Terriss. He revelled in his work and in the astonishing manner in which he retained his physical qualifications for the task, and to the end of his life (which was so cruelly cut short) he enjoyed an unclouded popularity. His principal appearance at the Adelphi during these years were in an ultra-sensational play *The Fatal Card*, by Haddon Chambers and B. C. Stephenson, in 1894, Fyles and Belasco's *The Girl I left Behind Me*, Brandon Thomas and Clement Scott's *The Swordsman's Daughter* (in which Terriss played his only elderly part), and Seymour Hicks and George Edwards' *One of the Best*

(suggested by the Dreyfus episode), all in 1895; Haddon Chambers and Comyns Carr's *Boys Together* in 1896 and the same authors' *In the Days of the Duke* and Gillette's *Secret Service* in 1897. It was during the run of *Secret Service* that he was assassinated on leaving the theatre, in December 1897.

With Terriss the glories of "Adelphi drama" disappeared, and small success repaid the attempt that was made to keep it alive subsequently. Since then the theatre has had a variety of tenants, but no coherent history. In 1901 it was for a brief and unfortunate space known, after extensive reconstruction, as the Century Theatre; in the following year a wise return was made to the old name. Olga Nethersole and Wilson Barrett were among those who tempted fortune at the Adelphi in the early 'nineties. Of late years its most interesting and ambitious management has been that of Oscar Asche, who, with his clever wife Lily Brayton, has been instrumental in producing several romantic and poetical dramas. At the Adelphi they produced Fagan's *The Prayer of the Sword* (1904) and Besier's *The Virgin Goddess* (1905), both of them plays that deserved a longer life than the public accorded them, as well as a spirited revival of *The Taming of the Shrew*. With the same laudable enthusiasm for the poetic drama, they produced Laurence Binyon's *Attila* in the course of a season at His Majesty's in 1907, when they also revived *As You Like It* with Lily Brayton as Rosalind and Asche as Jaques.

Of other actors who distinguished themselves in melodrama, two prominent names are those of Charles Warner and Henry Neville. Warner, though more recently remembered for his prowess in melodrama at the Adelphi in the days immediately preceding

Terriss's advent there, previously went through a miscellaneous histrionic training that turned him out a very finished and capable actor. His first appearance on the stage was made as far back as 1861, and his first marked success in Byron's *Daisy Farm* at the Olympic ten years later. From January 1875 he was one of the cast in the triumphant domestic comedy *Our Boys* at the Vaudeville, after which his acting was on more strenuous lines. He was conspicuously successful in *The Danisheffs* at the St. James's in 1877 and in Clement Scott's *Odette* at the Haymarket in 1882; and subsequently with Marie Litton at the Imperial. In 1879 he first gave, at the Princess's, the performance with which his name is most bound up, that of Coupeau in *Drink*, a piece of realistic acting worthy to rank with Irving's Duboscq in *The Lyons Mail*. After a fine performance of Othello (considered by many to be the finest given by any contemporary English actor) at Sadler's Wells, he went to the Adelphi, where he played melodramatic heroes for five years till Terriss succeeded him.

Henry Neville is remembered more consistently as a melodramatic actor, having laid the foundation of his fame in that line by a striking performance in Tom Taylor's *The Ticket of Leave Man* in 1863 at the Olympic, which theatre Neville subsequently managed from 1873 to 1879. He was seen also at the Princess's, the Opera Comique, and various other houses, always compelling popularity by his virile and straightforward acting; and in later years, from the days of *Human Nature* in 1885, was the mainstay of several successive "autumn melodramas" at Drury Lane.

E. S. Willard is a conspicuous instance of a fine actor whose powers ripened in a course of melodrama. After initial experience in the provinces, he attracted

attention in *The Lights of London* at the Princess's in 1881, and for five years afterwards remained with Wilson Barrett as leading villain in his productions. His "Spider" in *The Silver King*, a finished piece of highly-coloured character acting, was the performance that first showed him to be possessed of powers above the average; but it was not until he was emancipated from Princess's melodrama that he realized his full powers in *Jim the Penman* at the Haymarket in 1886.

Following on this came his two years at the Shaftesbury, from 1889 to 1890. That theatre had been opened in the previous year by Miss Lancaster Wallis, an actress of some distinction in romantic drama, with a production of *As You Like It*, Miss Wallis playing Rosalind, Forbes Robertson Orlando, and Mackintosh Touchstone. It was not a successful venture, however; and the new house enjoyed but little popularity till Willard came there. He obtained a great personal triumph in Henry Arthur Jones' *The Middleman*, in the part of the old potter Cyrus Blenkarn. Arthur Law's *Dick Venables* succeeded *The Middleman* in 1890, but was not so successful; and the same year saw the production of two more plays by Henry Arthur Jones, *Judah* and *The Deacon*. The latter of these attracted very little attention; while *Judah*, though it aroused plentiful discussion as to its ethics, had not as long a life as it deserved. In it Willard was well seconded by Olga Brandon, an intelligent and promising emotional actress (now dead) who is also remembered by her share in the performance of *Hyppatia* at the Haymarket in 1893.

America now began to hold out inviting hands, and Willard made in 1890 his first tour in the country that was subsequently his home for many years. His

appearances in London since then have been all too few. An actor of ripe experience, well equipped with mental and physical advantages and with a thorough knowledge of his craft, he appeared at one time destined to inherit Irving's mantle; but America was insistent. Thus London has seen little of Willard of late years. In 1894 he produced Barrie's sentimental idyll *The Professor's Love Story* at the Comedy, and in 1895 *Alabama* and Henry Arthur Jones' *The Rogue's Comedy* at the Garrick.

The history of the Shaftesbury Theatre after Willard's tenancy is that of restless change. In 1890 Miss Wallis tried, with *The Pharisee*, to retain the popularity that Willard had brought to the house; and since then almost every kind of entertainment has found a home there,—Italian opera, musical comedy, comic opera, melodrama, farce, romantic comedy, negro comic opera, and French and Sicilian "shockers." Hall Caine's *The Manxman* was seen there in 1895; Ogilvie's poetic play *The Sin of St. Hulda*, with Kate Rorke as its heroine, in 1896; and in 1898 the strepitous but undeniable success of *The Belle of New York* caused English musical comedy to "hustle" in emulation.

The romantic "domestic" drama, as distinct from melodrama, found a home for a long time at the Vaudeville Theatre under David James and Thomas Thorne's management. The Vaudeville's earliest days (it was opened in 1870) are identified with Albery's *The Two Roses*, in which Irving made his first "hit" as Digby Grant. After that came a succession of comedies and farces, of which *Our Boys* (with its four years' run from 1875 to 1879) and *The Guv'nor* (1880) were the most prominent, before the house settled down to a series of plays of the nature just indicated. In the early 'eighties there were some capital revivals there,

the names of Warner, Farren, Neville, David James, Thorne, Mrs. Stirling, Mrs. John Wood and Winifred Emery being among those on their bills; and a serious drama, Henry Arthur Jones' *Saints and Sinners* (produced in 1884), was responsible for some animated controversy and fluttered the dovescotes of the pharisaically inclined. After that came five prosperous years of pleasingly romantic and mildly humorous plays, such as Henry Arthur Jones' *Heart of Hearts* in 1887, and Robert Buchanan's series of plays, *Sophia* (1886), *Joseph's Sweetheart* (1888), *Dr. Cupid* (1889), *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Miss Tomboy* (1890). A good revival of *She stoops to Conquer* in 1890 was followed in 1891 by Jerome K. Jerome's *Woodbarrow Farm*, and a series of matinees at which several of the Ibsen plays were produced.

Lighter fare followed, such as Buchanan's *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown* (1895), with Fred Kerr, Lionel Brough, M. A. Victor and May Palfrey in the cast; *The Romance of the Shopwalker* (1896), with Weedon Grossmith, David James and Nina Boucicault; and *A Night Out* (1896), which was a jovial adaptation from the French vigorously interpreted by Giddens, Sugden, Wyes, Fanny Ward and others. The last-named play was revived by Giddens at the Criterion in 1907.

The house had been remodelled in 1891, and in 1892 its management was undertaken by the Brothers Gatti, who began with a revival of *Our Boys*. An interim of musical-comedy succeeded the plays detailed above, *Her Royal Highness* being produced in 1898; and in 1900 a musical version of *Alice in Wonderland* was given. In 1901 the attraction was again "domestic comedy" as interpreted by Seymour Hicks and Ellaline Terriss in *Sweet and Twenty*, followed by Barrie's

charming *Quality Street* (1902), for which Marion Terry joined the company. The same year saw a very pretty Christmas piece in Seymour Hicks' *Bluebell in Fairyland*, which he followed up, in 1903, with an equally attractive fanciful play, *The Cherry Girl*.

More recently the Vaudeville has been occupied by musical comedy—*The Catch of the Season* (1904) and *The Belle of Mayfair* (1906)—and, after the success of these, by comedy with Charles Hawtrey as its principal exponent. He revived Brookfield's *The Cuckoo* there in 1907, and in 1908 produced Brookfield's *Dear Old Charlie* and Maugham's *Jack Straw*. In the latter Lottie Venne shared the honours of the acting with Hawtrey.

The Globe Theatre, which existed from 1868 to 1902, was a good deal concerned with the romantic drama, though in its chequered career almost every kind of dramatic entertainment was presented on its stage. Its change of management was frequent, and its fortunes usually precarious. Miss Jennie Lee was first seen there in *Jo* (a sentimental adaptation from "Bleak House") in 1876; Tennyson's *The Promise of May* made its memorable failure there in 1882, under the management of Mrs. Bernard Beere, who followed it up in the same year with a lurid dramatic version of *Jane Eyre*; and in 1883 Ada Cavendish produced Buchanan's *Lady Clare*, an adaptation of Ohnet's *Le Maître de Forges*. Then came a spell of comedy and farce which has been alluded to elsewhere, followed by a short season of Wilson Barrett's in 1888. Shakespeare produced by an American actor, Richard Mansfield, in 1889 was succeeded in the following year by Shakespeare as presented by F. R. Benson's company, the latter's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* being one of their happiest efforts.

They were succeeded by comic opera, and that by farce again, with Penley in the irresistible *Charley's Aunt*, which was brought to the Globe from the Royalty in 1893. There is little more to note in the records of the house till its latest years. In 1898, when the public, weary of problem-plays, was turning for relief to the "cloak and rapier" drama, there were two rival productions of dramatic versions of Dumas' most famous romance. At the Globe, Henry Hamilton's *The Three Musketeers* was produced with Waller as D'Artagnan and Mrs. Waller as Miladi; while at His Majesty's, in Grundy's *The Musketeers*, Tree and Mrs. Brown Potter were playing the corresponding parts.

Hare's season at the Globe in 1899 was notable for the production of Pinero's *The Gay Lord Quex* which has been alluded to in a previous chapter; and in 1901 Julia Neilson and Fred Terry, who specialize in romantic comedy, were seen there in the already popular *Sweet Nell of Old Drury* which they had produced in the previous year at the Haymarket. In 1902 the Globe Theatre ceased to exist.

Of the popular successes of Julia Neilson and Fred Terry, the most prominent, besides *Sweet Nell of Old Drury*, have been *Sunday* at the Comedy Theatre in 1904, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, which was first seen at the New Theatre in 1905, and *Dorothy o' the Hall*, also produced at the New Theatre, in 1906.

The Lyric Theatre, which was opened with the already famous comic opera, *Dorothy*, in 1889, adhered (except for the production of Buchanan's *Sweet Nancy* in 1890) appropriately to that form of entertainment for some six or seven years. For the last ten years, however, romantic drama has been frequently seen there since Wilson Barrett's melodramatic success with *The Sign of the Cross* in 1896. There have also been several musical

productions, as will be recorded in the next chapter. Forbes Robertson's season in 1902 to 1903 was responsible for two successes with Mrs. Ryley's *Mice and Men* (1902) and a dramatic version, by George Fleming, of Kipling's *The Light that Failed* (1903). Martin Harvey, a talented romantic actor who was trained at the Lyceum in Irving's day, has been more than once seen at the Lyric; and more recently Lewis Waller has been a frequent tenant with, amongst other productions, his perennial success *Monsieur Beaucaire*, a *Robin Hood* play in 1906, and a revival of *Othello* in which he played the Moor's part to the Iago of H. B. Irving. In 1907 Waller produced *The Little Admiral* and revived Tom Taylor's *LadyClancarty*, his "leading lady" being Evelyn Millard. In 1907, also, was produced a romantic comedy by H. V. Esmond, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, with the American actress Maxine Elliott in the chief part.

Waller was the most successful manager of the New Imperial Theatre, which was the lineal descendant of the old Aquarium Theatre that was originally an integral part of the now demolished Westminster Aquarium. In the early 'thirties there had existed a Westminster Theatre on the same site. The Aquarium Theatre was opened in 1876 under the management of Edgar Bruce, and in 1879 passed into Marie Litton's hands and was by her re-named the Imperial. Her management (which lasted till 1880) was excellent from the artistic point of view, and was marked by one of the best revivals of *As You Like It* that has been given of recent years. Kyrle Bellew, Lionel Brough, Farren and Mrs. Stirling were among her company. Mrs. Langtry played at the Imperial for a season in 1881-82; and in 1883 Edgar Bruce again became its manager. Soon afterwards, however, it lost all favour with playgoers, and for some years ceased to exist as a theatre.

In 1901, after an almost entire reconstruction had converted it into a convenient and handsome house, it was reopened by Mrs. Langtry as the New Imperial Theatre, with a play entitled *A Royal Necklace*. In spite of courageous efforts, the management was hardly a success; and in 1903 Waller (who had been a member of Mrs. Langtry's company), took over the house and controlled its fortunes for three years. His trump card, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, was played there for some time, and he also revived (among other things) his fine production of *Henry V*. His chief new productions were *The Harlequin King* and *Brigadier Gerard*.

Previously Ellen Terry had been seen at the Imperial for a short season in 1903. She started with *The Vikings*, a translation of an early Ibsen play; but, as this met with small success, she followed it with a revival of *Much Ado about Nothing*. For both these productions the dresses, scenery and effects of lighting were designed and devised by her son, Gordon Craig, who has unconventional theories on such matters. Whether, in the result, their effectiveness is as remarkable as their unconventionality, is a matter that may be questioned. He had previously put his ideas to the test in the staging of R. G. Legge's poetical play, *For Sword or Song*, that was produced by Julia Neilson and Fred Terry at the Shaftesbury in 1903.

In 1906 the Imperial was tenanted for a while by Martin Harvey, who produced a play called *Boy O'Carrol*. Martin Harvey has never yet attempted a lengthy management, but has had two prominent successes, which have been often revived, *The Only Way* (which he produced originally at the Lyceum in 1899), and *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance*, founded on Marion Crawford's story, which he first gave at the Apollo

Theatre in 1901. In 1907 some Stage Society performances were given at the Imperial.

The beautiful Scala Theatre, built by Dr. Maddick on the site of the Bancrofts' Prince of Wales's, was opened in 1905 by Forbes Robertson with R. E. Fyffe's *The Conquerors*. It did not succeed, and Forbes Robertson fell back on revivals; but it would have needed an emphatic initial success to draw playgoers so far northwards. The Scala is too far from the centre of things to compete successfully with the older theatres, and not far enough away (or so, apparently, it has been thought at present) to rank as a suburban theatre and be managed on the lines of those. It is a pity, for it is a well-planned and unusually handsome house. Except for performances of Wills' *A Royal Divorce* in 1906, and Calmour's *The Judgment of Pharoah*, a spectacular melodrama, in 1907, the Scala has only been the scene of ephemeral dramatic experiments.

It must not be forgotten that there were in the last century a number of other theatres, besides those of the first rank, that played (and, some of them, still play) melodrama and domestic drama to audiences vociferous of their approval. Some of them maintained stock companies up to quite recent times, and stood on a footing different from the suburban theatres of to-day, which rely on touring companies to occupy their boards.

Of those whose life proved longest, the Grand Theatre at Islington, the Britannia at Hoxton, the Elephant and Castle, the Standard at Shoreditch, and the Pavilion at Whitechapel are the chief. The Islington "Grand" was transformed from a music-hall into a theatre in 1870 and devoted itself largely to comic opera. It was burned in 1882; a second house was opened in 1883 and burned in 1887; a third was

built in 1888 and burned in 1900. A very popular house in every way, it latterly used to attract audiences from other regions than its own by the excellence of its pantomimes. The Britannia at Hoxton is remarkable as having been under one management for nearly fifty years; that is to say, though its original manager died after conducting it from 1841 to 1849, his widow, Mrs. Sarah Lane, managed it from 1849 to 1899, keeping up a competent stock-company for melodrama and pantomime, and regulating its affairs in such a manner as to win general esteem. The Elephant and Castle, in the New Kent Road, built in 1872 and reconstructed thirty years later, has been another popular house of melodrama and pantomime. The Shoreditch Standard Theatre was also notorious for a good stock-company; it dates from 1835, was burned in 1867 and rebuilt in 1868. The Pavilion in Whitechapel was opened in 1829, and suffered the common fate by burning in 1856. Of late years, in a reconstructed form, it has been the home of melodrama written in Yiddish.

Of extinct or forgotten theatres of the same class may be mentioned the Royalty in Wellclose Square, which was opened in 1787, known as the London Theatre from 1810, burned in 1826, and rebuilt, but destroyed by the fall of the roof before it could be re-opened; the Albion, in Windmill Street, Haymarket, which existed from 1832 to 1836; the Westminster Theatre, which existed for about the same period on the site now occupied by the Imperial; the Royal Kent Theatre, in High Street, Kensington, which lived from 1834 to 1840; the Grecian Theatre, in Shepherdess Walk, which was opened in 1832, was the scene of Robson's earlier efforts before he went to the Olympic, was managed (with melodrama and pantomime) by George Conquest for many years, and had in its stock

company such actors as Harry Nicholls, Herbert Campbell, Arthur Williams and Kate Vaughan; the Clarence Theatre, King's Cross, which had not a very reputable record; and the Park Theatre, Camden Town, which was opened in 1871, re-christened the Alexandra in 1873 and burned in 1881.

It will be convenient here, before passing on to lighter topics in the next chapter, to make brief mention of the Ibsen performances which aroused such noisy discussion in London in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties. "Ibsenism" was as much a cult with some as an irritant to others; and the fact that the "Ibsenite" persisted in obscuring Ibsen's merits as a dramatist by dilating overmuch on his philosophy of life was probably largely to blame for the antagonism aroused. The ethical value of these plays, even their importance in the history of contemporary drama, are matters open to discussion; but as to Ibsen's great ability as a playwright there can be no dispute. His knowledge of theatrical effect was complete and his characterization clear-sighted and uncompromising; while the compelling power (even in translation) of his rigidly terse dialogue was, when heard on the stage, a revelation to those who had only known his plays in the study. His methods have undoubtedly influenced the dramatic writing of to-day, and in the main the influence has been salutary. It has been, for instance, largely responsible for the disappearance of the "soliloquy" and the "aside" in serious drama, as well as for a far stricter regard for verisimilitude in dialogue and action. He had no respect for mere theatricality, and his plays taught audiences to be impatient of it. That in itself was an advance; and in many respects Ibsen's craftsmanship has formed a model for succeeding dramatists. The earliest of his plays to be

adequately translated and performed were *The Pillars of Society*, first played at a matinee at the Gaiety in 1880, and *The Doll's House*, which was given at the Novelty in 1889. *Ghosts* was given (in private performances) at the Royalty in 1891, and in the same year *Hedda Gabler* and *Rosmersholm* at the Vaudeville and *The Lady from the Sea* at Terry's; *The Master Builder* at the Duke of York's, and *The Enemy of the People* at the Haymarket, in 1893; *The Wild Duck* at the Royalty in 1894; *Little Eyolf* at the Avenue in 1896; *John Gabriel Borkman* at the Strand in 1897; and *When We Dead Awaken* at the Imperial in 1903.

Even so brief a survey of the romantic drama as has been possible in this chapter would be incomplete without mention of the excellent touring companies maintained by F. R. Benson and Ben Greet. The former of these is particularly deserving of praise for good all-round performances of Shakespeare, and for constituting a training-school whose excellence has been proved by the many good actors who have emerged well equipped from its ranks. Greet's company is equally praiseworthy in its degree, and was one of the first to recognize the possibilities of "pastoral plays" given in the open air.

CHAPTER XVII.

MODERN BURLESQUE, COMIC OPERA AND MUSICAL COMEDY.

THE earlier days of burlesque as written by Planché, Gilbert, Byron, Burnand and Reece, have been incidentally dealt with in preceding chapters. The Olympic, the Royalty and the Strand were then the houses identified with this form of entertainment, though till the early 'seventies there were few theatres whose evening's entertainment did not include a one-act burlesque, either as a curtain-raiser or to play the audience out. From the 'eighties onward the house chiefly associated with burlesque in playgoers' memories is the Gaiety, where it was expanded to a three-act entertainment, and occupied the bill by itself. Planché's "classical" burlesques and Gilbert's extravaganzas were a thing apart, in respect of invention and originality of idea. Byron's, Burnand's and Reece's burlesques depended, for their fun, largely on verbal fireworks and the excruciating possibilities of the pun, a form of humour that had lived (and possibly out-lived) its day by the time "Gaiety burlesque" disappeared with Fred Leslie's death and Nellie Farren's withdrawal from the stage. William Brough, another burlesque writer of the Byron and Reece school, deserves to be remembered for one of the best puns on record, which occurs in his *Field of the Cloth of Gold*. Henry VIII. has crossed from Dover to Calais in very bad weather and has suffered accordingly,

whereupon, to his courtiers endeavouring to cheer him from his despondency, he says:

"Yesterday all was fair—a glorious Sunday,
But this *sick transit* spoils the *glory o' Monday*."

The original Gaiety Theatre was built on the site of a defunct music-hall, and was opened under John Hollingshead's management in December 1868. The opening programme comprised (as was then customary) three items: a one-act operetta, a three-act comedy-drama called *On the Cards*, and Gilbert's "operatic extravaganza" *Robert the Devil*. Hollingshead was shrewd and careful in choosing his company. Alfred Wigan and Madge Robertson headed the list; Nellie Farren was engaged with an eye to burlesque, and her husband, Robert Soutar, as stage-manager. Of those engaged for singing parts, Constance Loseby, who came from the music-hall stage, and Charles Lyall, who came from Covent Garden Opera, were the principal. John Dauban was the principal dancer, and the scenery was painted by one of the best scenic artists of the day. From the first there were "no fees" at the Gaiety in Hollingshead's time, a welcome reform afterwards copied by several theatres but unfortunately in danger of becoming entirely abandoned in the present day. As Hollingshead points out, however, in his "Gaiety Chronicles," the abolition of fees was not his own invention; it had been begun at Covent Garden and at Webster's Adelphi, but only carried out in a half-hearted manner at both houses.

In the twelve years that preceded the institution of "three-act burlesque" at the Gaiety, Hollingshead had produced there a bewildering variety of comedies, operettas and burlesques, whose number had been

augmented by the frequent performance of new plays at "trial matinées," an institution which he inaugurated. Besides his strong comedy and burlesque combination (which by this time had been joined by Royce, Edward Terry and Kate Vaughan), such names as those of Toole, Irving, Clayton, Phelps, Mathews, Vezin, Lionel Brough, Arthur Cecil, Forbes Robertson, Adelaide Neilson, Marie Litton, Mrs. John Wood and Rose Leclercq appear on the bills of plays given at the Gaiety in its early days. Gilbert and Sullivan collaborated for the first time in *Thespis*, which was seen at the Gaiety in 1871; it had become the recognized home of French companies when they came to play in London, Sarah Bernhardt making her first London appearance there in 1879; in short, as Hollingshead said in a notice to the public in December 1880, "long runs had been the exception and infinite variety the rule, the variety covering the whole area of dramatic entertainments." It was in this notice that Hollingshead used the phrase "the sacred lamp of burlesque" that became classic in connection with the Gaiety.

The first of the series of three-act burlesques was Reece's *The Forty Thieves*, in 1880. Its success was immediate, thanks to the ability and popularity of the quartette of performers—Royce, Terry, Nellie Farren and Kate Vaughan—who carried it through. In 1881 came *Aladdin*, Hollingshead's newspaper advertisement of which was a characteristic composition: "Aladdin—a favourable specimen of the New School of Burlesque, in which artistic dancing is substituted for the cellar-flap breakdown, in which the music is carefully selected and executed in a way worthy of comic opera, and in which gracefully designed costumes take the place of the old red, green and blue abominations."

The boasts were justified, particularly in the matter

of the dancing. Kate Vaughan's inimitably graceful style was a revelation of the possibilities of skirt dancing, an artistic and tasteful performance that is almost forgotten in the modern predilection for the high-kick or the undraped. Two very popular additions to the company about this time were Connie Gilchrist (who became Countess of Orkney) and Phyllis Broughton, the latter of whom was a worthy disciple of Kate Vaughan and carried on the traditions of her dancing. Of the other Gaiety burlesques, mainly from the pens of Reece and Burnand, that were produced in Hollingshead's time, *Bluebeard* (1883) was one of the most popular. Harry Monkhouse and Arthur Williams were among the additional comedians engaged for this. *Very Little Hamlet*, in 1884, was occasioned by Wilson Barrett's *Hamlet* at the Princess's, and gave Nellie Farren opportunity for one of her most famous songs as a "street arab."

During his last few months at the Gaiety, Hollingshead took into partnership George Edwardes, who succeeded him in the sole control of the theatre in the summer of 1886. Hollingshead was an astute manager, and, moreover, his courage and enterprise at the Gaiety did a great deal more for the drama and its interpreters than was credited by those who looked upon him merely as a purveyor of burlesque.

The last of the burlesques in his time was *Little Jack Sheppard* (1885). A good deal of new blood was brought into the company for this. Terry had left the Gaiety, and Royce was incapacitated by illness; Connie Gilchrist and Kate Vaughan were also gone from the company. To fill the blanks, Hollingshead engaged Marion Hood, a singer already popular in comic opera, Sylvia Grey, who was a very accomplished dancer, David James and Fred Leslie. The latter, who had

enjoyed a great personal success as the hero of Planquette's *Rip van Winkle* at the Comedy two years previously, developed into an entertaining and resourceful burlesque actor, and, working loyally with Nellie Farren, was with her the mainstay of the Gaiety until his death (and her retirement through illness) in 1892.

The sequence of burlesques subsequent to *Little Jack Sheppard* included *Monte Cristo*, *Miss Esmeralda* and *Frankenstein* in 1887, *Faust up to Date* (in which Florence St. John appeared) in 1888, *Ruy Blas* in 1889, *Carmen Up to Date* in 1890, and *Cinder Ellen* in 1891. After that, without a Fred Leslie and a Nellie Farren, Gaiety burlesque of the old type became impossible. It speedily gave place to the newer type of "musical comedy," which for a time drove comic opera from the theatres besides routing the older-fashioned burlesque. But gradually the wheel has turned, and musical comedy, to preserve its vitality, has of late had to approximate more closely to comic opera.

The death of the old type of Gaiety burlesque was due to the disappearance of the popular personalities who had made it a tradition, to the decline in public favour of merely verbal humour, to the demand for more originality of idea, and probably also to the advance in general musical taste. An attempt was made to revive *Little Jack Sheppard* at the Gaiety in 1894; but, clever performers as they were, Jessie Preston was not a Nellie Farren, nor was Seymour Hicks a Fred Leslie, and the attempt to resuscitate dead bones was not repeated.

The illness which necessitated Nellie Farren's withdrawal from the stage in 1892 having practically crippled her, and she having in the meantime been unsuccessful in an attempt at theatrical management at the Opera

Comique, a "monster benefit" was given to her at Drury Lane in March 1898, resulting in a striking display of enthusiasm and personal affection. Every prominent actor and actress in London took part in the entertainment; the house was crammed to suffocation with an audience that had willingly paid fabulous prices for seats; and the gratifying result was the handing over of a handsome sum to one who had ever been a loyal worker, till circumstances made work impossible, and had given pleasure to countless audiences. She died, after some years of quiet retirement, in 1904, at the age of fifty-six.

The first of the "musical comedies" at the Gaiety was *In Town* (1892), with Arthur Roberts as leading comedian. The piece had already been successfully produced at the Prince of Wales's and was transferred from there. This new type of musical play was not burlesque, nor was it comic opera. It had, indeed, grown up largely as a result of the temporary exhaustion of the vein of popularity that comic opera had worked during the 'eighties. The "musical comedies" were plays of real life—stage "real life," that is to say—as opposed to the entirely fanciful atmosphere of comic opera or burlesque; their plots, rudimentary as they were, marked an advance on the futilities of comic-opera plot; they depended a little more on characterization and a little less on conventional "song and dance." After a mistaken excursion into the romantic with *Don Juan* (with Arthur Roberts, Sylvia Grey and Cissie Loftus in the cast) in 1893, and the equally ill-advised attempt to revive *Jack Sheppard* in 1894, the Gaiety settled down to a run of such musical comedies as *The Shop Girl* (1894), *The Circus Girl* (1897) and *The Runaway Girl* (1898). By this time Ellaline Terriss and Seymour Hicks were prime

favourites at the Gaiety. When this clever pair had left the Gaiety, *The Messenger Boy* (in 1900) firmly established Edmund Payne as leading comedian there, to be seconded before long by the growing popularity of the younger George Grossmith, who has made the rôle of the inane modern youth peculiarly his own, and has made it very entertaining. *The Toreador* followed *The Messenger Boy* in 1901; and shortly before the demolition of the old Gaiety in 1903 an appropriate entertainment was staged in the shape of a piece called *The Linkman*, which was a *potpourri* of reminiscences and imitations of scenes from bygone Gaiety successes.

In July 1903 the old house was closed and shortly afterwards demolished; but the builders had been busy with a new theatre on a site hard by that of the old, and in October 1903 the new Gaiety was opened with every prospect of success. *The Orchid* was the first production there, followed by *The Spring Chicken* in 1905. These were of the regulation musical-comedy type; but in 1906 an attempt was made at a kind of modernized old-Gaiety burlesque with *The New Aladdin*, which, in spite of some humorous ideas, did not quite succeed in hitting its mark. *The Girls of Gottenburg*, in 1907, came nearer to comic opera than to burlesque; this was succeeded in 1908 by a similarly picturesque piece, *Havana*.

For a long series of these pieces Ivan Caryll has proved himself as apt in providing exactly the right kind of music as Meyer Lutz did for the burlesques of old days. Whatever may be urged against musical-comedy as a form of art, it is at least less inane than a large amount of the old burlesque would undoubtedly appear to modern ears; it demands very considerable powers from its interpreters, who are continually called upon to "hold the stage" in an isolation as complete as that

of music-hall performers; it is conveniently elastic, allowing of the interpolation of anything under the sun that may be likely to please or amuse (for the plot usually disappears after the first act); and at its best it forms a very acceptable form of relaxation for the playgoer who does not wish for more than the pleasing of his senses of sight and sound without being called upon to fix his attention too closely. To take a few names at random, those of Letty Lind and Katie Seymour, two accomplished dancers in different styles, Cissie Loftus, a very capable mimic, Connie Ediss, who is that rare thing a genuine *comédienne*, and Gertie Millar, an actress and singer of much daintiness and considerable sense of character, occur to the mind among those who (in addition to those already mentioned) have enjoyed popularity at the hands of Gaiety audiences.

There is little to record in the history of the Opera Comique Theatre (which was opened in 1870) until the beginning there in 1877 of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan series of operas. Though they had previously collaborated in *Thespis* at the Gaiety in 1871 and *Trial by Jury* at the Royalty in 1875, Gilbert and Sullivan practically became famous with the production of *The Sorcerer* at the Opera Comique in November 1877. For the permanence of the partnership thus begun, and for the enormous amount of pleasure it has derived from it, the public is directly indebted to the late Richard D'Oyly Carte, who was manager at the Royalty at the time of the production of *Trial by Jury*. He perceived the great possibilities that underlay this new combination, and secured their services on behalf of the Comedy Opera Company, a body which he brought into existence for the purpose of this venture. George Grossmith, Richard Temple and Rutland Bar-

rington, who subsequently appeared in all the best of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, were in the cast of *The Sorcerer*, the female parts being played by Mrs. Howard Paul, Alice May and Giulia Warwick. The success of *The Sorcerer* led to the production, in 1878, of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, for which Jessie Bond joined the company. After *Pinafore* the Comedy-Opera Company ceased to exist and the management was vested in D'Oyly Carte alone.

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas are so widely familiar, and their success so well-known a matter of theatrical history, that it will suffice here to enumerate their first appearances. For thirty years the work of this ideal collaboration has delighted the public, and time seems to have no dulling power on the effect of the wit and lyrical ability of the librettist or the deathless charm of the melodic invention of the composer. *H.M.S. Pinafore* was succeeded in 1880 by *The Pirates of Penzance*, in which Marion Hood played the part of the heroine, and in the following year by *Patience*, which was a skit on the "æsthetic" craze. Later in 1881 *Patience* was transferred to D'Oyly Carte's newly built Savoy Theatre, which was the first theatre in London to be lit by incandescent electric light. For *Patience*, Leonora Braham joined the company as leading soprano and Durward Lely as leading tenor.

The Opera Comique theatre existed for eight years after Carte's removal from it, but its good fortune departed with him. Isolated productions now and then achieved a success there, but there was no stable management. Of subsequent musical pieces one of the most successful there was a *Joan of Arc* burlesque in 1891, with Arthur Roberts and Charles Danby as leading comedians. Its chief claim to remembrance lies in the deftness of the writing of the "lyrics,"

which were the work of a librettist who assumed the *nom de guerre* of "Adrian Ross" and subsequently followed up his success in this line in various other musical comedies. Villiers Stanford's Irish opera *Shamus O'Brien* was produced at the Opera Comique in 1896; an adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* in 1896; and in the following year the theatre was demolished.

To continue the series of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the "fairy opera" *Iolanthe* was produced at the Savoy in 1882, and *Princess Ida* in 1884, the latter being one of Gilbert's happiest efforts in verbal parody. In 1885 *The Mikado*, probably the most popular of the series, was produced, and ran for nearly two years. For this Rosina Brandram, an actress with unusual sense of humour and a contralto singer of great ability, joined the band of "Savoyards," and Leonora Braham was the chief soprano. In *Ruddigore* (1887) Leonora Braham was again the heroine; while in *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888), in which both author and composer struck a more serious note, the soprano part was sung by Geraldine Ulmar. In *The Yeomen of the Guard* W. H. Denny (who had risen into popularity by a richly humorous performance in Pinero's *Dandy Dick* at the Court) first appeared in comic opera, playing the part of Wilfred Shadbolt, "head gaoler and assistant tormentor." A return to the lighter manner was made with *The Gondoliers* in 1889. Frank Wyatt, Courtice Pounds and Decima Moore were the chief new recruits for this.

With *The Gondoliers* the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership came temporarily to an end. *The Nautch Girl*, with music by Edward Solomon, was produced at the Savoy in 1891, and later there was a revival of *The Vicar of Bray*, an earlier opera of the same composer's

that had been originally seen at the Globe in 1882. In 1892 Sullivan was again heard at the Savoy in *Haddon Hall*, in which he collaborated with Sydney Grundy; and in the same year a work of Gilbert's, with a fresh partner in the person of Alfred Cellier (the composer of *Dorothy*), was seen at the Lyric, under the title of *The Mountebanks*. Gilbert's *His Excellency*, with music by Osmond Carr, was subsequently seen at the Lyric in 1894.

Jane Annie, with a libretto by J. M. Barrie and Conan Doyle and music by Ernest Ford, was given at the Savoy in 1893, and the disappointment it occasioned was more than atoned for by the announcement of another opera by Gilbert and Sullivan, to be produced in the autumn of the same year.

The new opera was *Utopia*, which introduced Nancy Macintosh to Savoy audiences, and brought Emmie Owen and Florence Perry, two clever young singers, to the front. Its success, however, was not to be compared with that of the earlier operas; nor was that of *The Grand Duke* (in 1896), which was the last occasion of Gilbert and Sullivan's working together. In 1894 Messenger's *Mirette* had a short run; in 1897 Burnand and Lehmann collaborated with Mackenzie in *His Majesty*, and in the same year Offenbach's *Grand Duchess* was revived, with Florence St. John in the name part. After this Sullivan was heard in three more operas at the Savoy. These were *The Beauty Stone* (1898), whose libretto was from the combined pens of A. W. Pinero and Comyns Carr, *The Rose of Persia* (1900), in which Sullivan had a more congenial librettist in Captain Basil Hood, and *The Emerald Isle* (1901), of which Basil Hood also wrote the libretto. Sullivan's death prevented his completing the music to *The Emerald Isle*, which was finished by Edward German.

During these last four years there were also revivals at the Savoy of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1899 and *The Pirates of Pensance* and *Patience* in 1900, and a new comic opera (with music by Ivan Caryll) entitled *The Lucky Star* (1899), which established Walter Passmore in his position as leading Savoy comedian in Grossmith's place.

In 1891 Sullivan's sole attempt at "grand opera," his *Ivanhoe* (written to the libretto of Julian Sturgis) had been heard at the beautiful new English Opera House, now the Palace Theatre, erected by D'Oyly Carte in Shaftesbury Avenue. Only one other opera, Messenger's *The Basoche*, was heard at this house before it was turned into a "theatre of varieties."

A revival of *Iolanthe* at the Savoy in 1901 was succeeded by two charming operas by Basil Hood and Edward German, *Merrie England* (1902) and *The Princess of Kensington* (1903). The mutable taste of the public had been drifting away for some time from comic opera to "musical comedy"; the last productions at the Savoy failed in consequence to attract as they deserved, and the Savoy company was broken up. The majority of them appeared together in the same year (1903) at the Adelphi, in *The Earl and the Girl*, a musical comedy no worse and no better than many others, but scarcely worthy the efforts of Passmore, Henry Lytton, Agnes Fraser, Louie Pounds, and others of their calibre. Miscellaneous ventures, including a season of romantic drama undertaken by Mrs. Brown Potter in 1904-05, occupied the Savoy at odd times; until in a season from 1906 to 1907, and again in 1908, Mrs. Carte (her husband being now dead) agreeably and successfully revived old memories with a series of revivals of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *The Gondoliers*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, and *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

In these C. H. Workman distinguished himself in the "Grossmith" parts. In the autumn of 1907 (as has been already recorded) the theatre was occupied for a short time by Messrs. Barker and Vedrenne, who transferred their Court Theatre management thither.

In the late 'seventies and early 'eighties comic opera adapted from the French, with the music of Planquette or of Audran, was in great popular favour. The production of the evergreen *Les Cloches de Corneville* at the Folly Theatre in 1878 has already been recorded. The Comedy Theatre, in Panton Street, was opened in 1881 with Audran's *La Mascotte*, which was followed by Planquette's *Rip van Winkle* (1882) memorable for Fred Leslie's performance as Rip, and this in its turn was followed by Chassaigne's *Falka* (1883). The Comedy's "bright particular star" in the female line was Violet Cameron, and in *Falka* W. S. Penley played a comic part.

The Avenue Theatre, also, was occupied by comic opera for the first few years of its existence. Opened in 1882 with a revival of Offenbach's *Madame Favart*, with Fred Leslie, Florence St. John and Marius in the chief parts, a succession of similar operas followed, one of the most pleasing being Planquette's *Nell Gwynne* in 1884. Subsequently Arthur Roberts was the "star" there in comic opera, one of his happiest efforts being in the part of the Old Campaigner in Planquette's *The Old Guard* in 1887.

Of later theatres which still fostered comic opera, until that form of entertainment was temporarily shouldered out of the field, the Prince of Wales's and the Lyric were the chief. The Prince of Wales's, which was opened in 1884, enjoyed, after two years of comedy, its first comicopera success with Cellier's *Dorothy*,

which, originally produced at the Gaiety in 1886 and received there with but little favour, was transferred to the newer theatre in the same year and enjoyed a remarkable career with Marie Tempest, Hayden Coffin, Ben Davies and Arthur Williams in the cast. The same composer's *Doris*, subsequently produced, did not repeat this success. After a period of comedy, the Prince of Wales's reverted to comic opera in 1889 with Walter Slaughter's *Marjorie* and Planquette's *Paul Jones*, in which Frank Wyatt, Harry Monkhouse, Agnes Huntington, Kate Cutler and Phyllis Broughton were seen. Then the entertainment by degrees merged into the newer form of "musical comedy." In 1891 Jane May had been first seen at the Prince of Wales's in her inimitable dumb-show performance in Carré and Wormser's *L'Enfant Prodigue*. *In Town* (with Arthur Roberts) was the first of the "musical comedies," in 1891, and was followed by *Blue-Eyed Susan* in 1892, *A Gaiety Girl* in 1893, and *Gentleman Joe* (in which Arthur Roberts gave one of his cleverest "cockney" impersonations) in 1895. A return to comic opera was made in 1896 with Audran's charming opera *La Poupée*, with Willie Edouin, Courtice Pounds, Alice Favier, and afterwards Jessie Huddleston in the chief parts, in 1897, and *The Royal Star*, with Edouin and Lottie Venne, in 1898.

After another spell of comedy, the series of musical comedies was resumed at the Prince of Wales's with Leslie Stuart's *The School Girl* in 1903. Its chief successors have been *Sergeant Brue* (transferred from the Strand Theatre) and *Lady Madcap* in 1904, *The Little Cherub* (afterwards called *A Girl on the Stage*) and *See See* in 1906, *Miss Hook of Holland* in 1907, and *My Mimosa Maid* in 1908.

The Lyric Theatre, in Shaftesbury Avenue, was

opened in December 1888 with *Dorothy*, which was transferred from the Prince of Wales's to continue its lengthy run. In 1889 *The Red Hussar*, with music by Edward Solomon, was given with Marie Tempest, Ben Davies and Arthur Williams in the cast. After this Marie Tempest played for some time in America. In 1890 *La Cigale* added to Geraldine Ulmar's reputation, and in 1892 Lecocq's *Incognita* brought Aïda Jenoure to the front. The latter singer was also prominent in Albeniz' *The Magic Opal* (1893), in which the American singer May Yohe made her earliest London appearance. Caryl's *Little Christopher Columbus* (1893) and *Dandy Dick Whittington* (1894), pieces more of the "Gaiety burlesque" type, further exploited May Yohe, who had Lonnen and Eva Moore as companions in the cast of the earlier of the two.

In 1892 Gilbert's work, in collaboration with Alfred Cellier, had been heard at the Lyric in *The Mountebanks*, in which Monkhouse, Lionel Brough and Aïda Jenoure distinguished themselves; and in 1894 *His Excellency*, by Gilbert and Osmond Carr, with Barrington, Gros-smith, Jessie Bond, Nancy Macintosh and Ellaline Terriss in the cast, was produced there. In the following year Humperdinck's charming fairy tale, *Hansel and Gretel*, was given. *Little Miss Nobody*, a musical comedy, was produced in 1898, and in 1899 Evie Greene made her London *début* in Louis Varney's *L'Amour Mouillé*. *Florodora* in 1899, and *The Silver Slipper* in 1901, were popular successes that called attention to the music of Leslie Stuart; and 1903 saw the production of *The Medal and the Maid*, by Sidney Jones, a composer who was doing better work at Daly's Theatre.

Ivan Caryl's *The Duchess of Dantzsig*, a musical adaptation of Sardou's *Madame Sans-Gêne*, which gave

Evie Greene opportunity for some forcible acting and was rather a play with music than a comic opera, was produced in 1905. The same year brought Howard Talbot's *The Blue Moon*. Since then the Lyric has been more uniformly devoted to the romantic drama, as has been detailed in the preceding chapter.

Daly's Theatre, in Leicester Square, which has been the home of the best musical pieces of more recent days, was opened by Daly's American company in 1893 with *The Taming of the Shrew*, memorable for Ada Rehan's performance as Katharine. This was followed in the same year by Tennyson's play *The Foresters*. Since 1884, when they first appeared in London at Toole's Theatre, Daly's company had been seen at various theatres—the Strand, the Opera Comique, the Gaiety and the Lyceum. They now enjoyed the advantage (till Augustus Daly's death in 1899) of a permanent London home in which to perform whenever they came over for a season. The management of the theatre when they vacated it was taken over by George Edwardes, who eventually, on Daly's death, became the lessee of the theatre he had done so much to popularize.

He had attracted the public to it by a kind of entertainment that sufficiently resembled the prevailing "musical comedy" in many respects, but differed sufficiently from it to appeal to a more exacting audience and to tastes slightly more discriminating and more musical. The series of musical plays he produced between 1889 and 1901 approximated more closely to comic opera, which of late years has held up its head again, and the astute manager is entitled to all credit for foreseeing the inevitable swing-back of the pendulum. He was fortunate in his composer, Sidney Jones, whose melodic

invention and technical skill are of a high order. The fact that in many instances, both in these and subsequent productions, some of the best numbers (from the musical point of view) were speedily excised to make way for what was more popular, and that the plot of the piece was considered a negligible quantity when it became the question of giving a popular favourite another individual "turn," is only a symptom of the public taste of the time.

The first of the series, *An Artist's Model*, which was produced in 1895, was frankly of the musical-comedy type. In it Marie Tempest made her reappearance after five or six years' sojourn in America. Among her associates in the cast were Hayden Coffin, Lottie Venne, Eric Lewis, Letty Lind and Leonora Braham. *The Geisha* (1896), whose scene was laid in Japan, was a more ambitious effort and was enormously popular. In addition to the performers just mentioned, Rutland Barrington, Huntly Wright, Monkhouse and Juliette Nesville were seen in this, and it ran for two years. *The Greek Slave*, which contained some of Sidney Jones' best music, followed in 1898, but was not so popular. After a revival of *A Gaiety Girl* in 1899, *San Toy* (with China as its imaginary locale) was produced in the same year, and held the boards till 1901. In this Marie Tempest made her last appearance in musical pieces. She subsequently abandoned comic opera in favour of drama, and has developed into one of the foremost comedy actresses of her day.

The Country Girl, with music by Lionel Monckton, followed in 1901, and *The Cingalee*, by the same composer, in 1904. In the former of these the heroine's part was played by Evie Greene, in the latter by Sybil Arundale. In all of the series Hayden Coffin had been seen as the tenor hero, and Huntly Wright was, with

Rutland Barrington, the mainstay of the comic element.

A frank return to comic opera was made, with delightful results, in 1905 with Messenger's *The Little Michus*, in which George Graves came to the front as a resourceful comedian. This was followed by Hugo Felix's *The Merveilleuses* in 1906 and Lehar's *The Merry Widow* in 1907.

The Duke of York's opened (as the Trafalgar Square Theatre) with a comic opera, *The Wedding Eve*, in 1892; and the first years of its life saw the production on its stage of several musical pieces of no striking merit, the most successful being Ivan Caryll's *The Gay Parisienne* (1896), in which Ada Reeve and Louie Freear were largely responsible for the satisfactory result. Since the turn of the century the house has been, under Frohman's management, devoted to comedy.

The occasional seasons of musical pieces at the Vaudeville have been noted in the preceding chapter; and at Terry's (another comedy house) a considerable measure of success was attained with the musical comedy *The French Maid* in 1898, and a comic opera, *My Lady Molly*, in 1903. *The Pantomime Rehearsal*, an artless piece of burlesque which became very popular and enjoyed a lengthy life at this and other theatres, was first seen at Terry's in 1891.

Of excursions into comic opera at other houses mainly connected with comedy, may be mentioned *Miss Decima* (1891), *All Abroad* (1895), *The White Chrysanthemum* (1905), and *Amasis* (1906), at the Criterion; and *The Girl Behind the Counter* (1906), at Wyndham's.

The Strand, the old house of musical burlesque, had enjoyed a new period of activity in comic opera in the

late 'seventies and the early 'eighties with *Madame Favart* (1879) and *Olivette* (1880). In its last years its most conspicuous success was a musical comedy called *A Chinese Honeymoon*, which, thanks largely to a quaintly humorous performance by Louie Freear, ran from 1901 to 1904.

The Shaftesbury Theatre was the scene of the production (in 1893) of one of the earliest of the musical comedies, Osmund Carr's *Morocco Bound*, in which Violet Cameron, Letty Lind, Shine, Danby and the younger Grossmith appeared. Since 1898 the Shaftesbury has been (as far as musical pieces are concerned) almost exclusively the scene of American productions which it is hardly necessary to detail here, dating from the triumphant production of *The Belle of New York* in 1898. The series has even included a piece written, composed and entirely played by "darkies."

The Apollo Theatre, which was opened in 1901, has been almost consistently devoted to musical plays, the main exceptions being Martin Harvey's season with *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance* and *The Only Way* in 1901 and Valentine's *The Stronger Sex* in 1907. The house opened with *The Belle of Bohemia*, an American musical comedy; and the series which has succeeded that piece includes *Kitty Grey* in 1901, *Three Little Maids* and *The Girl from Kay's* in 1902, *Madame Sherry* in 1903, *Veronique*, a welcome return to comic opera, in 1904, *Mr. Poppo of Ippleton* in 1905, *The Dairymaids* in 1906, and *Tom Jones* and *The Three Kisses* in 1907. Later in 1907 Roy Horniman's comedy *The Education of Elizabeth* was produced at the Apollo. In this play Miriam Clements, Florence Lloyd, H. V. Esmond and Maud Millett acted.

Among those who have added to their reputation at

the Apollo the most conspicuous have been Ruth Vincent, whose finished singing did much for the popularity of *Veronique*; Ethel Irving, who subsequently has proved her possession of brilliant powers of comedy acting; and two excellent comedians, very different in their styles, the veteran Willie Edouin (who is since dead) and the newer recruit G. P. Huntley.

Of the newest London theatres, the Aldwych, whose "stars" are Ellaline Terriss and Seymour Hicks, was opened in 1905 with a revival of *Blue-Bell in Fairyland* (formerly seen at the Vaudeville in 1902). Subsequent musical comedies seen there have been *The Beauty of Bath* (1906), *Nelly Neil* (1907) and *The Gay Gordons* (1907).

At the Waldorf, which was opened in 1905, a comic opera called *The Gipsy Girl* was produced in 1907; and, at the Hicks Theatre, *My Darling* (which was the opening production), in 1907.

Among musical dramatic entertainments in the latter part of the last century, a unique position was occupied for many years by the German Reeds' Entertainment. The beginning of this was a musical entertainment given by Thomas German Reed (who had been musical-director at the Haymarket) and his wife, who, as Priscilla Horton, had become popular as an actress. Their first performances were given in St. Martin's Hall in 1855, the Reeds contributing the whole programme. In the course of the next year they removed to what they called the "Gallery of Illustration" in Waterloo Place, and there until 1873 they provided a mixed musical and dramatic entertainment calculated to attract persons who would not go to a theatre. The venture was very successful, thanks partly to the new audience they tapped and still more to the care with which the entertainments were designed and the ability of the

performers. John Parry, the famous "entertainer at the piano," joined the Reeds in 1860 and remained with them till 1869. His place in the company was then taken by Corney Grain, who was a mainstay of the entertainment till his death in 1895. Farces and musical farces by such writers as William Brough, Shirley Brooks, and Burnand were given from the first in Waterloo Place, Burnand and Sullivan's *Cox and Box* (1869) being one of the great successes. In 1867 Reed had taken a lease of St. George's Hall in Langham Place, and there produced Burnand and Sullivan's operetta *Contrabandista*. He continued to act at the "Gallery of Illustration" till 1871, when he retired and his place was taken by his son Alfred German Reed. Thomas Reed died in 1888.

Arthur Cecil made his first appearance as an actor at the "Gallery of Illustration" in 1869, and remained with the company till 1874. In that year the Entertainment was transferred to St. George's Hall. A large proportion of the musical pieces given there were from the joint pens of Arthur Law and Alfred Caldicott. Their blameless character was scrupulously maintained, as also was the skill with which they were performed; and certainly half the popularity of St. George's Hall was due to Corney Grain's inimitable "musical sketches" which always occupied part of the programme. Fanny Holland, Dora Thorne and Avalon Collard were for a long time popular members of the little company, and several other singers and actors made their first successes there.

The elder Reeds retired from the management in 1877, and after that it was carried on by Alfred Reed and Corney Grain in partnership. The popular Entertainment came to a sad and sudden close by the death of those most immediately concerned. Within ten days

(in March 1895) Alfred Reed, his mother, and Corney Grain all died, and St. George's Hall was closed. In more recent years it has resumed its popularity with a different form of entertainment, the famous "Maskelyne and Cooke" conjuring entertainment having migrated thither when the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly was pulled down.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME PROVINCIAL ENGLISH THEATRES.

As will have been gathered from the preceding chapters, the provincial theatres (while they maintained their "stock companies" and had not yet become merely temporary homes for touring companies) were extremely valuable as training-schools of acting and as recruiting grounds for the London theatres. The stock company was a necessity in days when travelling was tedious and difficult and the dwellers in towns at any distance from London had to be content with home-grown amusements, except perhaps for the occasional visit of a London "star." The advent of the railway made the "star's" visit more frequently possible, and by degrees the stock companies were given up and the provincial theatres ended in relying upon whatever came their way.

While the stock companies existed, the country theatres were largely managed on the "circuit" system. By this system a certain number of theatres, in towns suitably near to each other, would be combined under one management and supplied in rotation with performances by practically the same company. Thus, to mention the most prominent, there were the Bath and Bristol, Exeter, Salisbury, Kent, Manchester, Birmingham, Norwich, York and Newcastle circuits. The

system was a boon to the actor, quite apart from the valuable training it afforded; for, as Macready tells us in his "Reminiscences," a circuit would occupy a company during the whole year, "so that a respectable player could calculate upon his weekly salary, without default, from year's end to year's end."

Pride of place among the provincial theatres must be given to the Bath theatre, which has a distinguished record, and is notable as the first "patent" house after Drury Lane and Covent Garden and so the earliest Theatre Royal out of London.

The first theatre in Bath was built soon after the beginning of the eighteenth century, but had only a short life. Another was erected about 1725, but this in its turn had only a short existence, hampered as it was by the opposition of theatrical performances given in rooms attached to the inns in the town. The Orchard Street Theatre, which was opened in 1750, was the first to obtain a monopoly in theatrical entertainments, and that only after a struggle with the competition of a body of actors that styled themselves the "Bath Company of Comedians" and gave their performances in the Assembly Rooms. It was not, indeed, until after the death of the proprietor of the Assembly Rooms that the Orchard Street Theatre became the undisputed centre of the drama in the town. It had an enterprising manager in the person of a certain John Palmer, who conducted it so satisfactorily that Chetwynd (in his "History of the Stage") speaks of the company "at Bath, where there is a regular theatre and an audience as difficult to be pleased as that in London." Palmer reconstructed the house in 1767, and his son, who succeeded him, managed to get a grant of Letters Patent from George III., and so was entitled to style his house the Theatre Royal, Bath. It is worthy of note

that a Theatrical Fund was started at Bath in 1801. Except at Norwich, where a similar fund had been started ten years previously, there was no such thing known out of London at this time.

The Bristol theatre was licensed for acting towards the close of the eighteenth century, and till 1817 was consistently worked in combination with the Bath theatre, the same company supplying the entertainments at both.

During Palmer's management the Bath company included Henderson, who became a great favourite there and subsequently went to the Haymarket; Foote, who went the same way; and Sarah Siddons, who played at Bath from 1777 to 1781, a period of hard work and much experience. When she left Bath for London she, on her last appearance at Bath, delivered a "poetic address" (written by herself) in which she alleged "three reasons" for her decision, the said reasons being her three children, for whom she could make more money by taking the London engagement. After Palmer's time the house was managed on the same lines and with continuing success, and an engagement there was looked upon as a stepping-stone to an appearance in London. Of other actors, afterwards famous, who began at Bath, may be mentioned Charles Incledon, who appeared there as a singer both at the Assembly Rooms and the Theatre, with such success that he was engaged for Vauxhall Gardens and subsequently for Covent Garden; and Elliston, who made his first appearance at Bath in 1791. He remained a member of the company till 1804. Occasionally during his later years there he appeared, by permission of his manager, in London at the Haymarket and Covent Garden. At one time he appeared one night at Bristol, the next at Windsor, the next at Bath, and the next at

Windsor again, sleeping in the coach on his nightly journeys between these towns!

By degrees, as various actors who had been in their earlier days associated with the Bath house returned there to play as "stars" on occasional visits, the audience showed a tendency to be discontented with the stock company and to desire repeated visits of this nature. The Orchard Street house, which had become too small, was closed in 1805, and in the same year the Beaufort Square Theatre (on the site of the present house) was opened. It was warmly praised for its beauty and comfort, and was visited in its early years by such prominent performers as Incledon, Cooke, Master Betty, Mrs. Siddons, Dora Jordan, Munden, the Charles Kembles, Braham, Elliston, Charles Mathews, Macready and Edmund Kean.

In 1817 the connection between the Bath and Bristol theatres was severed. Visits from London favourites continued to be frequent at Bath for another ten or fifteen years, after which came a spell of ill-luck, both the Bath and Bristol theatres being "to let" in 1833. Macready revived the fortunes of the Bath house by undertaking its management in 1834, and the visits of London "stars" were resumed. In 1838 the house was remodelled.

Another run of ill-luck was stemmed by a pulpit attack on the theatre in 1844, which caused a vigorous reaction in the theatre's favour. Mrs. Macready managed the house for five years from 1845 to 1850. After her the management was continued by Chute, who maintained an excellent stock company and once more combined its management with that of the Bristol theatre. After 1868 he confined himself to Bristol. Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft), Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal) and Henrietta Hodson were among his com-

pany at the start of his management. The Bath theatre was burned down in 1862; and in the following year the present house was opened with a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Ellen Terry appeared as Titania and Madge Robertson as one of the "singing fairies." Irving appeared there in 1867, and the house recovered its reputation as a place of visit from London. The last stock company maintained there dates as late as 1884, since when the theatre has relied on touring companies.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the stern-minded inhabitants of Bristol were busy protesting against the attempts of companies of players to instal themselves in or about the city. Plays were forbidden by the Corporation in 1702, but apparently to little effect; for in 1704 and 1705 we again find strong protests being made against the players, who in the latter year had built a theatre just outside the town. In 1706 they built one inside, and were turned out again in 1709. Macklin is mentioned as acting at Bristol in 1717, and two playhouses are referred to in local periodicals some ten years later.

The first Bristol theatre worthy of the name, the Jacob's Well Theatre, was opened in 1729 by John Hippesley, an actor who had been in the original cast of Gay's *Beggar's Opera*. It stood a short distance outside the town, a circumstance which made moonlight nights very welcome to the management, as the audience could make their way easier and more safely to its doors. Nights during full moon were consequently much in request for "benefit" nights; on one such occasion, we are told, the playbill included the announcement "It is presumed Madame Cynthia will appear in her utmost splendour,"—an ill-advised hyperbole that nearly caused a riot from the Gallery's

clamouring to see the "foreign lady" perform! Mrs. Pritchard and Macklin were among those who played at this theatre, which was a wretchedly incommodious little place, so small that it was averred that, if an actor had to leave the stage on one side and re-enter on the other, he was obliged to walk round the outside of the house. Its inconvenience led to the erection of a new theatre in King Street, which was opened in 1766.

Owing to the strong opposition to theatres in Bristol, particularly on the part of the Quakers, a licence was refused to the new theatre, which for some twelve years was obliged to struggle along by means of a subterfuge which just evaded the law. The performance was advertised as "a Concert of Music, between the parts of which will be exhibited, gratis, a Specimen of Rhetoric diversified in the several characters of a Comedy. . . . To which will be added a farce." In 1778, however, a Royal Licence was obtained, and the house became prosperous, being worked in combination with the Bath theatre from 1779, in which year Palmer (the Bath manager) took it over. Theatrical performances were given once a month in winter and thrice a week during most of the summer, with oratorios in Lent. Mrs. Siddons acted there while she was in Palmer's company from 1777 to 1781, before the days of her London triumphs, and it shared with the Bath house in the visits of various full-fledged "stars." After Palmer gave up its management in 1817, it had a long spell of ill-luck, which was eventually dispelled in 1850, when Chute assumed its control, together with that of the Bath house. After 1868 he devoted himself entirely to the Bristol theatre, and his stock company was the last of any importance there.

The first theatre at Exeter, which town was eventually worked together with Plymouth and Weymouth

as a circuit, was opened in 1749. The first Plymouth theatre was opened in 1758, and rebuilt in 1804. The Exeter theatre was evidently a very incommodious house; for, on the opening of a new theatre in 1787, a prologue was spoken which included the following lines:—

“From a small stage for scenery most unfit,
From shapeless boxes and an awkward pit,
Long dark approaches, passages confined,
And walls whose crannies wooed the passing wind,
With joy sincere our generous friends we greet
On boards where we have room to move our feet.”

The managers, Messrs. Trewman and Hughes, were enterprising, and were greatly praised for the staging of their plays, these being mounted in a style that was pronounced as fine as anything seen in London; but the expense this entailed brought financial loss with it. They maintained a good stock company, and soon after the opening of the theatre were honoured by a professional visit from Mrs Siddons.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century performances at the Exeter theatre were fitful, and, as was but natural in the capital of a county so disturbed by fears and rumours of invasion, “patriotic” dramas met with most favour. In 1805 Master Betty, fresh from his London triumphs, appeared at Exeter. He ended his career as a youthful prodigy at Bath three years later, and in 1812 he reappeared at Exeter as “Mr.” Betty, but the glamour was gone and he was coldly received.

From December 1811 to April 1813 Edmund Kean (then an unknown and struggling actor) appeared with his wife at Exeter, playing parts so widely diversified as Shylock, Sir Edward Mortimer in *The Iron Chest*, and Harlequin in the pantomimes. Three years later he

reappeared there as a famous tragedian, after his triumphant performances in London, and repeated his visits several times in later years. Among other famous names on the bills of the Exeter Theatre in the early years of the century are those of Dora Jordan, Maria Foote (an Exonian, who afterwards became Countess of Harrington), and Eliza O'Neill, famous for her Juliet.

In 1817 the newly-invented gas was tried as an illuminant, but, an explosion unfortunately happening, the theatre returned for a time to candles. Two years later, however, gas was again adopted. The house was burned down in 1820, and a new one opened in 1821. Another slight explosion occurred in 1823, so a return was once more made to lamps for the lobbies and candles for the interior of the theatre. The house was again burned down in 1885, and in October 1886 a new one was opened on a better and more convenient site. Eleven months later the new theatre was a heap of ashes, the fire (which occurred on September 1887) being memorable as one of the most disastrous, in the matter of loss of life, of modern days. The house was rebuilt in 1889.

In Birmingham there were three theatres, of a kind, in existence as early as 1740, the chief being one in Moon Street. Of this it is recorded that its performances were announced by a man who perambulated the streets beating a drum and distributing bills. These three succumbed at the appearance of a slightly better theatre that was built in King Street in 1752 and enlarged twelve years later. It was not, however, till 1775, when a theatre was erected in New Street (on the site of the present Theatre Royal) that dramatic performances in Birmingham were of any particular account. A better class of performers was attracted

to the new house, which tried to get a formal licence in 1777 but failed. The King Street house was shut up in 1780. Its rival in New Street was burned in 1792, rebuilt, and re-opened in 1795. From 1800 to 1806, and again from 1810 to 1813 the elder Macready was its manager.

A patent was at last obtained in 1807, and the Theatre Royal held up its head among its provincial contemporaries. Edmund Kean and his wife appeared there (at a salary of a guinea a week each) in 1808; and six years later Kean, by that time a famous actor, paid the first of several triumphant visits there. In 1810, under his father's management, William Charles Macready made his first appearance there as Romeo. From 1813 to 1819 Elliston was manager, and Alfred Bunn from 1819 to 1824. In 1820 the house suffered the usual fate by burning, and was rebuilt and opened within the same year. In 1824 we find Stanfield painting its scenery; and Kemble, Charles Kean, Helen Faucit and Phelps are among those whose names appear on its programmes in the first half of the century. In 1862 Bancroft was a member of the stock company there, while at the same time Kendal was making one of his earliest appearances at an obscure theatre in the same town in the melodrama of *Sweeney Tod, the Demon Barber*. Edward Sothorn acted at the Theatre Royal, and afterwards, on appearing at the Haymarket, announced himself as "of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham." His first performance of *David Garrick* in England was also given at the Birmingham theatre in 1864. London favourites visited the Theatre Royal freely. Toole was there, with Irving in his company, in 1869; in the 'seventies Royce was in the stock company and Nellie Farren and Constance Loseby were seen there. Ellen Terry appeared there in *The*

Wandering Heir in 1874, and acted there again with Charles Kelly in 1879.

The Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham, grew out of a music-hall which was built in Broad Street in 1856. It obtained a licence as an "operetta hall" in 1862, and later (on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's marriage) was opened by W. H. Swanborough as the Prince of Wales's Operetta House. It was soon devoted mainly to drama, and maintained a good stock company; visits of "stars," too, became frequent. Buckstone played there with his Haymarket company; and in 1865 Fechter was seen there in *Hamlet*, with Henry Irving as his Laertes. Swanborough was succeeded by James Rodgers as manager in 1866, and shortly afterwards Sothorn played there with Madge Robertson in his company. From 1869 to 1870 H. J. Byron acted there, as well as providing plays; and in the 'seventies the elder Farren, Toole, Irving, Mrs. John Wood, Lionel Brough and Wilson Barrett were among those who appeared there under the old order of things.

In the 'eighties two other theatres, both devoted to melodrama, were opened in Birmingham—the Grand Theatre (in Old Square) in 1883, and the Queen's Theatre (in Snow Hill) in 1886.

The first Manchester Theatre Royal, which dates from the same era as that of Birmingham and succeeded an unpatented one built some forty-five years earlier, was opened in 1775 and occupied a site in Spring Street. Tate Wilkinson was for a time manager of it, and under him Mrs. Siddons appeared there in 1776-77. It was burned down in 1789, and rebuilt within a year. The performances there, however, gave rise to numerous complaints and a good deal of controversial letter-writing and pamphleteering in the first years of the

nineteenth century. Eventually a new and more commodious Theatre Royal was built in Fountain Street and opened in 1807, with the elder Macready as manager during the first two years of its existence. It enjoyed a life of thirty-seven years, and then met the common fate by fire. In 1845 the third (and present) Theatre Royal was built in Peter Street, in which thoroughfare the existing theatres of Manchester now stand. Between 1823 and 1849 William Charles Macready was frequently seen at the second and third of the Theatres Royal. The Manchester circuit included also Shrewsbury, Chester, Lichfield and Buxton.

The most conspicuous feature in Manchester's more recent theatrical history is the management of Charles Calvert at the Prince's Theatre, which he opened in 1864 with a revival of *The Tempest*, himself playing Prospero, Mrs. Calvert Miranda, and Julia St. George Ariel. Calvert (who had previously been stage-manager at the Theatre Royal) produced a number of Shakespeare's plays, with a good stock company, between 1864 and 1874, mounting them on the lines adopted by Charles Kean at the Princess's in London. One of his greatest successes was made with *Henry V.*, which he subsequently reproduced in New York in 1875 after giving up his Manchester management.

Of later years honourable exceptions to the almost universal giving up of provincial theatres to touring companies have been made at Manchester by Richard Flanagan at the Queen's Theatre and Robert Courtneidge at the Prince's, both setting before their public Shakespearean productions of considerable merit. The other Manchester theatres are the Comedy and the St. James's, both opened in 1884.

Brighton, which has an honourable theatrical record,

had no permanent theatre before 1774, when one was built in North Street. Subsequently its licence was transferred to a new theatre which was built in Duke Street in 1790 and existed until 1806. Among the more or less famous names connected with this house may be mentioned those of Incledon, Bannister, Emery, the notorious Chevalier d'Eon (who gave exhibitions of swordsmanship there), Mrs. Siddons, Elliston, and Charles Kemble, the last-named making one of his earliest appearances on the stage at Brighton in 1799.

The North Street theatre was superseded by one built in the New Road. This was opened in 1807 with Charles Kemble in *Hamlet*. As was natural from Brighton's proximity to London and its growing popularity as a fashionable resort, its own company's performances were constantly supplemented by the appearance of London favourites. Thus we find Mrs. Siddons acting there in 1809, Master Betty in 1812-13, Dora Jordan in 1813, Elizabeth O'Neill in 1813 and afterwards, Edmund Kean on several occasions from the year 1814, and, at various times after this, Liston, Madame Vestris and Charles Mathews, Macready, Helen Faucit, and Boucicault.

In 1866, when the theatre had been for twelve years under the managership of Henry Nye Chart, it was rebuilt in its present form. It continued its prosperous career, and among the actors there in the 'sixties were Emery, Cathcart, Farren, Chippendale and Buckstone.

In the early 'seventies we find Phelps and the Kendals there, Lottie Venne and Fanny Coleman playing in pantomime and burlesque, and Mrs. John Wood (billed as "the Philadelphia comedienne") and Lionel Brough acting together. Mrs. Nye Chart succeeded her husband in the managership in 1876, and at about that

time the stock company system was given up and the Brighton theatre relied on touring companies. Of late years it has been specially favoured in the matter of "flying matinées," at which performances of London successes, at the height of their popularity, have been given by the London companies concerned.

The York theatre and the York circuit were especially conspicuous in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when Tate Wilkinson was their manager. The patent for the York theatre was obtained in 1759, and it was worked by Wilkinson on the circuit system in conjunction with the Hull theatre which had been opened in 1768, the Leeds theatre which was opened in 1771, the Wakefield theatre, and the Doncaster theatre which was built in 1776. Among actors, afterwards famous, who made their initial successes in the York circuit were John Fawcett, the elder Charles Mathews and John Philip Kemble.

At Leicester a theatre was built in 1750; and in this Mrs. Siddons appeared with her husband in 1778. A new theatre, which the elder Macready managed for some years, took its place in 1800; Edmund Kean, William Charles Macready, Dora Jordan, the elder Mathews and Liston were among those seen on its boards, and it existed till 1836. In that year the present theatre was opened, and among the names connected with it in its early days are those of William Farren, Macready, Charles Kean and Barry Sullivan. Of later years (in 1883) an Opera House was opened in Silver Street.

Liverpool's first duly patented theatre was opened in 1772. It stood in Williamson Square, and had been preceded by an earlier house which, after a chequered career, was transformed into a dissenting chapel. The oldest existing theatre in Liverpool is the Royal Court,

which was opened under the name of the Royal Amphitheatre in 1821, and remodelled in 1851. At the Prince of Wales's, opened later, Bancroft and Hare were both in the stock company; and it was there that T. W. Robertson's *Society* (which afterwards was one of the successes at the London Prince of Wales's in Tottenham Street) was first produced in May 1865. Other Liverpool theatres are the New Empire Theatre, which, under the name of the Alexandra Theatre, was built in 1866 and has recently been remodelled, and the Shakespeare Theatre.

Newcastle's first Theatre Royal, which was opened in 1789, was in its early years controlled by Stephen Kemble, who was then in command of the Edinburgh theatre. The Newcastle circuit, which occupied him during the winter months, included Newcastle, Scarborough, Durham, Sunderland, North and South Shields, Stockton, Darlington and Coventry. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Macready, the Charles Kembles, Emery and Charles Young were seen at Newcastle, where a second Theatre Royal took the place of the first in 1837.

Norwich is noteworthy in theatrical annals as the earliest provincial town to establish a Theatrical Fund on the model of that existing in the metropolis. The Norwich fund was started in 1791, and the example was followed by the city of Bath ten years later. The first patented theatre in Norwich opened in 1759, the circuit which it headed comprising also Yarmouth, Ipswich, Bury, Colchester and Lynn. A new Theatre Royal was erected on the site of the first in 1826.

Sheffield, after a period of unlicensed theatrical performances in the yard of the Angel Inn, obtained its first regular theatre in 1762. The ubiquitous Tate Wilkinson was one of its earliest managers, and under

him John Kemble, Dora Jordan and Mrs. Siddons were introduced to Sheffield audiences.

The Tunbridge Wells theatre belonged to the West Kent circuit, of which the component parts are given below. Its first theatre, opened about 1770, was a makeshift building in the Mount Sion district. Its manageress (a Mrs. Baker) ultimately pulled it down, and, partly with its materials, built a theatre on the historic Pantiles. This in its turn was replaced by another opened on the same site in 1802. A charming coloured plate, depicting the outside of the house, is given in a book entitled *The Theatric Tourist*, published in 1802. The same work comprises views of most of the provincial theatres of the time. A contemporary account describes the Tunbridge Wells theatre as "a neat building which, if properly painted and decorated, would be superior to most theatres of a similar size." It was remarkable as standing in two counties, the stage being in Sussex and the auditorium in Kent. A respectable stock-company was maintained, and the theatre was duly visited by the "stars" from London. Just a century after the opening of that house, the present handsome theatre was inaugurated, in 1902.

To mention briefly the beginnings of theatrical history in other provincial towns of any repute in that respect: the Margate theatre was patented in 1787, and headed the West Kent circuit, which included Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone, Faversham and Rochester; Reading succeeded in building a theatre in 1788; Richmond had a theatre as early as 1730, and a new one in 1765, but it was for long considered an unprofitable theatrical centre, as being too near London; Southampton's first theatre was an old silk-mill metamorphosed, and was followed by a house built (in French Street) for the purpose and opened in 1803; Winchester,

which had enjoyed a theatre of sorts since 1760 and had subsequently tolerated theatrical entertainments in its Town Hall, opened its earliest regular theatre in 1785; and Windsor, after putting up with performances in a mere barn about a mile from the town, opened a Theatre Royal in 1793.

The excellent suburban theatres that have sprung up in greater London during the last ten or fifteen years are run on the lines of present-day provincial theatres, relying for the most part on touring companies and a constant change of programme. Some are managed more spiritedly than others, inviting occasional "first performances" or special seasons of some kind; but in the main they proceed on similar lines. Among the more prominent may be mentioned the Grand Theatre at Fulham, and the King's at Hammersmith, both built in 1897; the Kennington theatre and the Coronet at Notting Hill Gate, both built in 1898, and the Camden Theatre, built in 1900. Clapham, Ealing, Holloway, and other outlying districts have also been well provided in this way of recent years; and in many instances the suburban house has, from its convenience and excellence of entertainment, proved a serious rival to those nearer the centre of London.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SCOTTISH STAGE.

BEFORE 1736 there was no regular theatre in Edinburgh. In the earlier years of the century "companies of comedians" had given performances at various times in the city, a favourite scene of their labours being Taylor's Hall; but the first theatre erected for the purpose was that which Allan Ramsay, with unfortunate enterprise, opened in Carrubber's Close in 1736. This was a reconstruction of a booth fitted up in 1727 by Signora Violante for dancing and acrobatic performances. Ramsay's theatre only existed for about six months, and was killed by the Licensing Act of 1737, to its promoter's great financial loss.

About ten years later the germ of the first Edinburgh Theatre Royal came into being with the building of a new Concert Hall in the Canongate. Local opposition being too strong to permit of a theatrical licence being obtained, the usual device of advertising a concert, "with plays gratis between the parts of the concert," was resorted to, and with these conditions the drama in Edinburgh had perforce to be contented for some twenty years more. The performances there, however, became of sufficient importance for Mrs. Ward, who was for many years a mainstay of the Canongate house, to describe herself subsequently (on her appearance at Covent Garden) as "from Edinburgh."

The dramatic performances offered were of the same

character as those prevailing in the south, but the management of the house left much to be desired. An improvement in the state of affairs came about in 1752, when John Lee (who came from Drury Lane) undertook the management. Actors from the south would not risk the expense and danger of the long journey to Edinburgh for the sake of the few months' season during which that city maintained an open theatre; consequently Lee was obliged to offer them an engagement for the whole year, and utilized their services, when the Edinburgh theatre was closed, at Glasgow, Newcastle and Scarborough. Amongst his other reforms at Edinburgh, Lee is recorded to have succeeded in banishing spectators from the stage, and his general conduct of the theatre appears to have been good. The enterprise ruined him, however, and in 1756 he gave over the management to West Digges, an actor who came from the Smock Alley Theatre at Dublin.

The same year saw the production in Edinburgh (to the scandalizing of the ministry of the Kirk) of John Home's *Douglas*, a tragedy which its revered author had previously offered to Garrick, who returned it to him as "totally unfit for the stage." In Edinburgh, however, thanks partly to the *réclame* obtained by ecclesiastical controversy and partly to its suiting the prevalent taste for rhodomontade in verse tragedies, it achieved a remarkable success; and it was during its first performance that an enthusiastic spectator is recorded to have burst out with the historic apostrophe "Whaur's yer Wully Shakespeare noo?"

In his valuable "Annals of the Edinburgh Stage" (to which any inquirer into Scottish dramatic history must be indebted) Mr. J. C. Dibdin records a little incident during Digges' managership that serves to remind us of the primitive lighting conditions of the theatre of his

day. In an ambitious revival of *The Tempest* elaborate preparations had been made for the storm scene, and in connection with this the managerial announcement was made that "the stage will be entirely darkened for the representation of the storm; the candles therefore cannot be lighted until after the commencement of the first act."

In 1759 Foote (of the Haymarket) made a very successful appearance in Edinburgh, "his strange disposition to adventure from the metropolis of England a journey of 400 miles to Edinburgh" being wondered at and admired. From 1762 to 1764 Mrs. Bellamy appeared in Edinburgh.

At last, in 1767, a patent was secured for the Canon-gate house, which was now able to describe itself as the Theatre Royal, the patent being subsequently made over by the proprietor to David Ross, who had acted with Garrick at Drury Lane and made some reputation there and at Covent Garden. He temporarily patched up the rather decrepit theatre, and then cast about for a site in the New Town on which to erect a new Theatre Royal. His theatre was eventually built on the spot now occupied by the Post Office, at the end of Prince's Street, and was opened in December 1769.

His management was bad, and met with its deserts, and his failure resulted in a remarkable piece of enterprise on the part of Foote, who was already popular in Edinburgh. He took a three years' lease of the theatre, and brought his whole Haymarket company thither to act during the winter months,—for the Haymarket was only licensed for the summer months, when Drury Lane and Covent Garden were closed. One season in Edinburgh, however, proved enough for him, and he made over his lease to Digges and returned to London, eventually appearing once more in Edinburgh early in

1774. Digges secured a partner; and under their managership Mary Ann Yates, who was by this time reputed in London as a tragic actress, appeared with her husband at the Theatre Royal, as did also Mrs. Inchbald and her husband, Elizabeth Younge from Drury Lane, and Spranger Barry and his wife. Digges retired in 1777, hopelessly indebted, and his partner followed him a year later. For the next three years the theatre's fortunes languished, despite the promises (mainly unfulfilled) of Tate Wilkinson, manager of the York theatre, who was lessee for a short time. Digges managed to escape from his creditors and made one more venture in Edinburgh, in 1781. In the summer of the same year John Kemble made his first appearance there,

John Jackson, who founded on his Edinburgh experiences a gossip chronicle which he published as a "History of the Scottish Stage," became manager of the Theatre Royal in the winter of 1781. When he "commenced manager" there, he says, the condition of the house was lamentable. The roof was "like a sieve, which let the rain through in a million of places," and there were "neither scenes, wardrobe, or any other appendage suitable to a Theatre Royal." Jackson was manager for two periods, first from 1781 to 1791, and again for a year or two from 1801. His first spell of managership was combined with the direction of a new theatre he built in Glasgow in 1782. Mrs. Baddeley appeared under him in Edinburgh from 1783 to 1785, Mrs. Siddons at various times from 1784, John Henderson (the "Bath Roscius") in 1784, Mrs. Yates in 1785, and Mrs. Jordan in 1786. In 1790 an "Amphitheatre, or Edinburgh Equestrian Circus," which subsequently as a theatre offered a strong opposition to the Theatre Royal, was opened in Leith Walk.

The excitement caused by Mrs. Siddons' appearance in Scotland was unprecedented. Mr. Dibdin records that, besides an overwhelming rush of local spectators, numbers even journeyed from Newcastle to see her act in Edinburgh, and "London thieves actually found it to their profit to come all the way from town; such a harvest of wigs, hats, canes, snuff-boxes, purses and watches never was gathered with greater ease."

The patent of the Theatre Royal had been, in 1788, renewed for another twenty years, and Jackson continued in sole managership till 1791, when financial difficulties drove him into partnership with Stephen Kemble. Eventually Jackson retired temporarily from the scene in 1793, and in the following year Stephen Kemble announced the opening of the Theatre Royal with himself as sole patentee. His management was more remarkable for promise than for achievement. It is true that he was instrumental in introducing Incledon, Elliston, and Henry Erskine Johnston (afterwards a great favourite also in Glasgow) to Edinburgh audiences; but his stock company as a rule was one of little merit, and his conduct of the theatre was not such as to attract prominent "stars." In consequence of this, and of his inability to prevent frequent rioting in the theatre, his audiences fell away; and his retirement, which took place in 1800, was viewed with no regret. Indeed he was soundly hissed on making an amazingly ill-judged speech when he took farewell of his public.

In 1801 the irrepressible Jackson, having secured a partner, again obtained command of the Theatre Royal. Master Betty appeared under him in 1804 and Mrs. Siddons in 1805; and in 1808 the latter's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Henry Siddons, began a long and honourable connection with the Edinburgh Stage. In spite of such occasional attractions, however, Jackson did little to

relieve his growing unpopularity. Contemporary newspaper criticism speaks of his "gross mismanagement" of the theatre, and of his irretrievable loss of public favour. In 1809 he disappeared from the scene.

Then, for nearly three years, the Theatre Royal was closed. Henry Siddons secured the patent, and used it to open, not the old Theatre Royal, but the "New Theatre Royal" in Leith Walk in 1809. This was the Circus already alluded to, which, originally opened in 1790, had been known in the interim (chiefly with equestrian performances) as the "Edinburgh Circus," the "New Sadler's Wells," the "New Theatre Circus," the "Royal Circus," and "Corri's Rooms." The great Ducrow had been seen there, and burlettas, concerts, and various miscellaneous entertainments had occupied it.

Henry Siddons and his wife, on opening it as the New Theatre Royal, were received with the favour that a new and spirited management deserved; Sarah Siddons appeared there in 1810, and John Kemble a little later. Strenuous efforts had been made for some time by the proprietors of the old Theatre Royal to force Henry Siddons to use his patent there, and in 1811 he returned to the old house. He managed to maintain a fairly high level of excellence in his productions there. Besides Sarah Siddons, the comedian Munden came to assist the popularity of the theatre, and the elder Charles Mathews met with a very warm reception in it. Henry Siddons, however, was in very poor health, and growing financial difficulties further harassed him. He died in 1815, and the management was taken over by his widow, in partnership with W. H. Murray, whose name was long and creditably connected with the Edinburgh Stage. Mrs. Henry Siddons retired in 1830.

The new management made a frank and, as it proved, acceptable appeal to the public for better support, and

the fortunes of the Theatre Royal were now for a long period brighter than they had been for many years. Before Mrs. Siddons' retirement, such famous actors as John Kemble, Elizabeth O'Neill, Edmund Kean, Charles Kemble, Braham, Madame Vestris and Fanny Kemble had assisted in reviving the popularity of the house, and Mrs. Henry Siddons herself had achieved a reputation thoroughly deserved by her considerable powers and estimable personality.

The trump card of the Murray and Siddons management was (as it has been of many subsequent managements in Scotland) Isaac Pocock's adaptation of *Rob Roy*, which was produced in February 1819. This perennially popular play (which had been seen in March 1818 at Covent Garden, with Macready as Rob Roy and Liston as the Bailie Nicol Jarvie, and later in the same year at the Queen Street theatre in Glasgow) met with enormous success in the Scottish capital. The great hit was the performance of Charles Mackay, already a favourite with Edinburgh audiences, as the Bailie. Scott has left it on record that he was "actually electrified by the truth, spirit and humour which he threw into the part. It was the living Nicol Jarvie. . . . I do assure you I never saw a thing better played." The management was reported to have netted upwards of £3000 on *Rob Roy*, and ever since then the piece has been a safe "draw" for Scottish theatrical audiences.

After Mrs. Henry Siddons' retirement, Murray obtained a monopoly of theatrical affairs by taking over the Leith Walk House as well as the Theatre Royal. The Leith Walk theatre, since Murray had abandoned it in 1811, had been known successively as Corri's Pantheon and the Caledonian Theatre. A version of *Rob Roy* had been produced there early in

1818, before Pocock's play was seen at Covent Garden; but it was withdrawn after a failure that must have been rendered the more galling by the subsequent *Rob Roy* triumph at the older theatre. Successive managements failed to make a success of the unlicensed house, and it was thus the easier for Murray to acquire it in 1830, and, as the only person legally permitted by the patent to perform plays in Edinburgh, to get the theatrical interests of the city entirely into his own hands.

Murray was an astute manager, with a useful insight to what his audiences wanted, and the result was that for twenty years he was able to preserve the reputation of the Edinburgh Stage at a high level. He ran his two houses on different lines, as became the nature of the audiences that patronized them; for the Theatre Royal was only open in winter, which was the Edinburgh "season," and the Adelphi (as the Leith Walk house was now called) in summer. Shakespeare and the "legitimate" romantic drama, varied with opera, were the staple fare at the Theatre Royal; melodrama and farce at the Adelphi. Among the famous actors seen at various times in Edinburgh under Murray's auspices may be mentioned Madame Celeste, Ellen Tree, Charles Kean, Buckstone, Mathews and Madame Vestris, G. V. Brooke, and Helen Faucit. For many years Alexander Mackenzie (father of Sir A. C. Mackenzie), who was an excellent musician, was leader of the Edinburgh orchestra.

Murray, whom all concerned with him agree in characterizing as a manager of the highest ability and an honourable and courteous man, was also a capable actor and a fairly successful dramatist. He retired, to the general regret, in 1851, and died in the following year.

With his death the monopoly for a time disappeared.

The management of the Theatre Royal was undertaken by the comedian H. F. Lloyd, and that of the Adelphi by R. H. Wyndham. Lloyd was but an indifferent manager, and his rule only lasted for a year. In 1853 the Adelphi was burned down, and Wyndham took over the Theatre Royal, where he remained for the rest of that theatre's existence. Under his management Toole (who came from the Queen's Theatre, Dublin) made his first Scottish appearance in 1853 and speedily became a great favourite, and four years later Henry Irving made his first bow to Edinburgh audiences. From 1857 Wyndham also controlled the new Queen's Theatre which had been built on the site of the defunct Adelphi. The Queen's had been opened in 1855, and had so far enjoyed no great measure of prosperity under the management of James Black, a Leith merchant.

May 1859 saw the final closing of the old Theatre Royal, its site having been acquired by the Government for the purpose of erecting the General Post Office. The chief item in the bill of the farewell performance was a revival of *Masks and Faces*, in which Irving, Mrs. Wyndham and Edmund Glover (now a prosperous Glasgow manager) appeared. Wyndham spoke a valedictory address, and the curtain fell for the last time.

Wyndham now transferred his patent to the Queen's, which thus became the Theatre Royal. Irving remained with him till September 1859, when he went to the Princess's in London. Under Wyndham's management at this period there were seen, amongst others, Lydia Thompson, Wilson Barrett and Miss Heath, Emma Nicol (a versatile actress who had acted in Edinburgh for nearly fifty years), Louisa Pyne, E. A. Sothern, and Dion Boucicault and his wife. In 1865 the theatre was again burned down, and was speedily

rebuilt. The life of the new house was short, for in 1875 it was in its turn burned down, and after that Wyndham retired from management.

A new house was opened on the same site in January 1876 by J. B. Howard, an actor already popular in the city. Joseph Jefferson appeared there later in the year, as did also Henry Irving, who now returned as a "star" to the scene of his early efforts. The days of the stock company were passing away, and with them disappears the historical interest of the Edinburgh theatres. In 1883 Howard migrated to the newly built Lyceum Theatre, which he managed in conjunction with a son of R. H. Wyndham's; and in the following summer the Theatre Royal once more fell a prey to the flames. It was re-constructed and re-opened within the year, and exists as the present-day Theatre Royal.

Besides the Lyceum, other latter-day Edinburgh theatres worthy of note are the Princess's, which existed from 1868 to 1886, and the Edinburgh Theatre, which had a shorter life from 1875 to 1877. The first manager of the Princess's was A. D. McNeill, who became a popular actor and dramatist in Edinburgh, after having previously acted in London, Birmingham and Glasgow and having managed the Aberdeen theatre. Wilson Barrett appeared at the Princess's in 1869; and subsequently Lydia Thompson, Lionel Brough, Willie Edouin, Charles Collette, Marie Litton, (in whose company was Charles Wyndham), Compton, Chippendale, and Florence St. John were among those who played there. McNeill endeavoured to maintain a stock company there for some years after the system had been more generally given up.

The Edinburgh Theatre started with an efficient stock company, and great hopes, in 1875, but two years later its doors were finally closed.

Glasgow was without a permanent theatre of any account until the enterprising John Jackson (who between 1781 and 1790 managed theatres in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen) built one, in what is now Dunlop Street, in 1782, he having a few months previously become manager of the Edinburgh Theatre Royal. Thirty years previously a wooden booth had been built, outside the city boundaries, for the performances of plays, but was wrecked by fanatics during a religious "revival." In 1764 another makeshift theatre was set up (still outside the city walls) by some admirers of the beautiful Anne Bellamy, who was to act there. The forces of fanaticism made a determined attempt to destroy this, by setting fire to it before it was opened. The building was not destroyed, however, and Anne Bellamy saved the situation. She insisted on giving her performance, as announced, in the theatre whatever its condition; her courage turned the scale of popular opinion in her favour, and she was not only welcomed by the Glaswegians when she appeared but was assisted in doing so by generous gifts of dresses and other necessities that had been lost in the partial fire. In 1780 the building was completely burned down, this time by accident, just as Jackson had arranged to undertake its management.

These events resulted in the opening of the Dunlop Street Theatre (the first to be built within the city) in 1782. The astute Jackson worked upon the generous instincts of the Glasgow folk by giving, soon after he opened the theatre, a performance for the benefit of the poor sufferers from an inundation of the Clyde, and so disarmed the opposition of the "unco' guid" and made his theatre popular. He maintained a good stock company, which included Stephen Kemble and Henry Siddons, and introduced such eminent

performers as John Kemble, Dora Jordan and John Henderson to Glasgow audiences. But the attempt to manage the Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee theatres together was too much for him, and ended in bankrupting him in 1790. Stephen Kemble, one of his creditors, succeeded him in the management in Glasgow, as he did in Edinburgh, and controlled the theatre for eight or nine years. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Jackson reappeared as manager in both cities; but his management was equally unsatisfactory in both and did not last long. It must be remembered, however, that he (with his Edinburgh partner, Francis Aikin) did Glasgow a service by opening a handsome new theatre in Queen Street in 1805. Jackson died about a year later, and the Queen Street house was directed by a frequently changing succession of managers during its quarter of a century of existence. Many of the "stars" that were appearing in Edinburgh, such as Bannister, Elliston, Cooke, Edmund Kean, Elizabeth O'Neill and Liston appeared there also; Pocock's *Rob Roy* was seen there a few months before it took Edinburgh by storm; and a little earlier an adaptation of *Guy Mannering* had brought good audiences within its walls; but its fortunes gradually waned, and in 1829 it was burned down.

Until J. H. Alexander undertook its management in 1822, the fortunes of the Dunlop Street theatre were at a low ebb, and for a time the house was occupied by a circus. The elder Macready combined its control with that of the Dumfries theatre in 1812, and under his management William Charles Macready made an early appearance at Glasgow, whither he frequently returned to act in subsequent years.

Alexander, who had previously been a London actor,

was a capable man, and his enterprise by degrees renewed the popularity of the old house. Enterprise was needed, for opposition was by no means lacking during his thirty years of managership. In Dunlop Street itself, a new theatre was opened by Frank Seymour in 1825 under the name of the Caledonian Theatre; in 1829 Seymour, who was by this time the burned-out manager of the Queen Street house, opened a new theatre in York Street and made an unsuccessful effort to obtain the patent, his energies only resulting in the closing of his new house within two years; in 1842 the Adelphi Theatre was opened, and by degrees attracted good audiences; and in 1845 a brief opposition was offered by the City Theatre, which was built on the Green by J. H. Anderson and burned down after a life of six months.

Alexander and Seymour carried on a ludicrous feud over the Caledonian Theatre, the former (when he found Seymour had forestalled him in obtaining the lease of the theatre) hiring a large cellar which ran beneath it, and giving rival performances therein. Those below spared no pains in using as much stage-fire as possible, in order that the acrid fumes should ooze up through the chinks in the floor of the stage above; while those above retorted by pouring water down the chinks. Each endeavoured to drown the other by clamour and noise of every description, and the result was an almost inconceivable pandemonium. So much did a section of the public enjoy the sport, that the Queen Street theatre was deserted and its manager forced to abandon it; whereupon Seymour obtained its lease and the Caledonian conflict was abandoned by both himself and Alexander. Seymour's possession of the Queen Street theatre only lasted for four years, for, as we have seen, it was burned in 1829.

The Adelphi Theatre, a wooden building on the Green, was opened in 1842 by a certain D. P. Miller, who had been an enterprising showman. He engaged a fairly good company, and contrived to obtain the appearance of such "stars" as Phelps and Fanny Kemble; but it was not long before the financial ruin which in so large a proportion of cases awaited theatrical managers, overtook him. The house was burned down in 1848; and in the following year Charles Calvert opened a new theatre, built this time of brick, on the same site. It was christened the Queen's Theatre and existed till 1863, when it in its turn was burned.

Yet another minor theatre sprang into existence in Alexander's time. This was the Prince's, which Edmund Glover (who eventually succeeded Alexander in Dunlop Street) had converted from a hall into a theatre in 1849. During Glover's management the Prince's was well conducted, and gave opportunity for the rise into popularity of Thomas Powrie, an actor who eventually became a prime favourite with Glasgow audiences.

To resume the history of the Dunlop Street house, while Alexander was still manager there occurred a panic in the theatre from an alarm of fire, resulting in the deaths of a large number of the audience in a mad rush for the doors. This was in February 1849. G. V. Brooke appeared as "star" in 1850; and in 1851 Alexander retired, to die a few months later in the same year. From October 1851 the house was for a year under the control of Mercer Simpson, who came from Birmingham; but not even the presence of such notabilities as Buckstone and Wright could conceal the poverty of the performances; and it was well for Glasgow when Edmund Glover transferred his

energies from the Prince's Theatre to Dunlop Street in 1852.

Glover's management at Dunlop Street, which lasted until his death in 1860, was liberal and intelligent, and he was rewarded by substantial success as well as by the esteem of all who came into contact with him. Under him Toole made his first appearance in Glasgow in 1855, Irving in 1860, and Kendal in 1862. Shakespeare, the "legitimate" in tragedy and comedy, and occasional opera, were what Glover put before his patrons at the old house, the Prince's being at this time mainly devoted to burlesque.

After varying fortunes under various managers in the few intervening years, the historic Dunlop Street theatre was burned to the ground in January 1863, and with it practically ends the history of the Glasgow stage. Times were rapidly changing, and the older methods soon gave place to the touring system.

After the destruction of the Dunlop Street house, a remodelled music-hall in the Cowcaddens was known as the Theatre Royal until it in its turn was burned in 1879. Subsequently the present Theatre Royal, in Hope Street, was built.

At the close of 1879 the Royalty Theatre, in Sauchiehall Street, was opened with a production of Offenbach's *Madame Favart*, which was then at the height of its first popularity in England. The leading members of the company engaged for this were Miss St. Quentin, Fred Leslie and Beerbohm Tree. Other existing Glasgow theatres are the King's Theatre, which was opened in 1904, and the Grand (originally the Prince of Wales's) and the Princess's, the two last being mainly devoted to melodrama.

Another Scottish theatre with an honourable record is the old Marischal Street Theatre Royal in Aberdeen,

which was opened in 1795 and existed for seventy years. One or two theatres had preceded it in the city, but none had enjoyed more than a short life. As early as 1745, and again in 1751, we hear of Edinburgh players giving performances in Aberdeen, but meeting with very little encouragement and much opposition. In 1768, however, opposition was so far overcome that the proprietor of the New Inn ventured upon fitting up, as a public theatre, a hall in his house; and in 1773 West Digges is said to have built a theatre in Shoe Lane, where Edinburgh companies of actors appeared. From 1780 to 1789 a small theatre existed in Queen Street, and about the same time another in what is now called Chronicle Lane.

Still, the drama had no recognized position in Aberdeen until the opening of the Marischal Street Theatre. John Jackson, the Edinburgh manager, had begun to build the house in 1788; but his bankruptcy put an end to the scheme and the building was temporarily put to other uses. In 1795 it was re-modelled and devoted to its original purpose, its first manager being Stephen Kemble, who also controlled the Edinburgh and Glasgow theatres. His management did not last long, and was followed by a succession of others, the first of any length being that of Corbet Ryder, which lasted from 1817 to 1842. After Ryder's death, his widow carried it on until 1862, and was succeeded by two sons-in-law.

It is unnecessary to particularize the performances and performers at the Marischal Street house. A sufficient stock company was usually maintained and the more conspicuous actors from outside were, in the main, the same peripatetic "stars" that made the round of the northern theatres. In the 'sixties, Wilson

Barrett was for some time a member of the stock company.

With the lapse of time and the inevitable change of conditions the old house lost its repute, and closed its doors for ever as a theatre in 1873. It was converted into a church. The present His Majesty's Theatre was opened in 1872.

Perth, Montrose and Dundee were for many years, for theatrical purposes, worked with Aberdeen as a "circuit."

The original theatre in Dundee was pulled down to make room for the Caledonian Railway Station; a theatre which for many years stood in Castle Street was burned down about 1890; the present Her Majesty's Theatre having been built a few years previously.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DUBLIN THEATRES.

THE earliest recorded theatre in Dublin was one opened in 1634 in Werburgh Street. It enjoyed a chequered career that was closed by the outbreak of the rebellion of 1641, when the house was closed by the authorities. The Smock Alley Theatre, which subsequently played a prominent part in Dublin's theatrical history, was opened in 1662; and for half a century its position was unchallenged by any rival. It had its vicissitudes, for in 1677 part of it fell in, and again in 1701 the galleries very properly (as all good moralists admitted) gave way after a performance of Shadwell's licentious play *The Libertine*. At various periods, too, after Charles II.'s death the disturbed state of affairs in Ireland made theatrical performances out of the question. Barton Booth appeared at Smock Alley as Oronooko in 1698, and Wilks and Quin were among those who made their first essay at acting there.

Its first serious rival sprung from the enterprise of the French dancer Madame Violante, who had settled in Dublin in 1727 and proceeded to amuse the town (in a house in Fownes Court) with dancing and acrobatic entertainments. In 1731 she removed to another makeshift theatre in George's Lane, where she continued for a brief period with miscellaneous performances by a

troup of children whom she trained to ape the efforts of their elders in such pieces as *The Beggars' Opera*. It was not long before her establishment was closed by the authorities, but it has earned record by the fact that Peg Woffington was among her early pupils and was much admired as Dolly in *The Beggars' Opera*.

The Smock Alley theatre, however, survived this opposition, as it did that of a music-hall opened in 1731 in Crow Street (on the site of the afterwards popular Crow Street theatre), as well as that of a theatre which was opened in Rainsford Street in 1732 but soon closed its doors.

More serious opposition was offered by the opening (in 1734) of another new theatre in Aungier Street, under the title of the Theatre Royal. This led to the re-building of the Smock Alley theatre, which had fallen into very bad repair; and in the renovated house Quin (by this time a famous actor) appeared in 1739, Peg Woffington in 1741 and Garrick in 1742. The lively Peg had previously appeared, in 1737, as Ophelia at the Aungier Street house, where Quin, Ryan, Kitty Clive and Mrs. Cibber were also seen in 1741.

The competition between the two theatres was keen, each striving to outdo the other in securing popular favourites. Ultimately in 1743 a policy of union between the rival managements was decided upon, and the season opened at Aungier Street with a company recruited from the forces of both houses. The actors who were left unemployed by this arrangement obtained possession of the Smock Alley theatre, where they were fortunate enough to secure the services of Thomas Sheridan, whom the Aungier Street proprietors had failed to attract by the salary they had offered him. Fortune was, however, against the forlorn hope of Smock Alley,

for Sheridan was so disgusted with the company that he deserted it after a year and accepted an invitation to act at Covent Garden. The result of this defection was the abandonment of the enterprise, and the Smock Alley house was prudently acquired by the Aungier Street management. The disappointed actors from the older house made one more bid for fortune at a theatre built in Capel Street. They opened it in 1745, but want of capital led to their discomfiture and the closing of their theatre after a few years.

Things meanwhile had been going none too well in Aungier Street, despite such occasional attractions as the appearances of Spranger Barry and Foote. The upshot was that Sheridan was invited to return there as undisputed head of affairs, and thus there began a management which was of the utmost service to the drama in Dublin.

In 1745 Sheridan brought the fair Anne Bellamy to Dublin, and in the same year and the following Garrick also played at Aungier Street. In 1747 Henry Woodward, a good comedian and pantomimist appeared there; Macklin, Henry Mossop, and West Digges between 1748 and 1750; and in 1751 Peg Woffington, who now returned to Dublin in the height of her powers and remained there till 1754. Sheridan's lot was by no means enviable; for, besides constant financial difficulties, he had to contend with recurrent friction springing from professional jealousy, as well as with riots arising both from that cause and from others connected with the attitude of the "young bloods" of the day towards the theatre and its management. He succeeded, however, in the difficult task of bringing order and decency into a theatre which, when he undertook its management, he described as "one part a bear-garden and the other part a brothel."

In March 1754 there occurred a more than usually serious riot, sprung, as usual, from a trivial cause. Sheridan's attitude with regard to it incensed the audience, who forgot all the obligations under which he had laid them and in a foolish fury wrecked his theatre. He accordingly retired from the management and went to London, but two years later (in October 1756) was induced to return to Dublin and once more undertake the conduct of affairs which had languished without him. To the eternal discredit of the Irish audiences, he was forced on his reappearance to make a public apology to the audience which had treated him so badly. His only fault had been a perhaps too obstinate regard for his dignity; in any case, he was an excellent manager, and a man whom it was a cruelty to humiliate in this fashion.

To add to Sheridan's troubles, it became known that Spranger Barry intended to build a new theatre on the site of the Crow Street music-hall. Every effort was made by the Smock Alley management to get the new scheme interdicted, but without success, and in October 1758 the Crow Street theatre opened its doors. Its initial success was not great, nor was the older theatre in very good case; still the opposition of the other was enough to spoil the prospects of each of the rivals. The Smock Alley house was further handicapped by two disasters. Sheridan, who had gone to London to recruit for his company, leaving his partner Benjamin Victor to manage the theatre in his absence, had engaged two "stars" in the shape of Theophilus Cibber and a celebrated Harlequin of the name of Maddox, both of whom were drowned by the foundering of the vessel in which they were crossing to Ireland. On the top of this came a crowning blow in the shape of Sheridan's decision not to return to Dublin. Victor

tried a final *coup* by engaging Macklin and his daughter, but, when it came to the point, Macklin cried off his bargain, putting forward his daughter's health as an excuse for not fulfilling the engagement. Eventually in the summer of 1759 both the Smock Alley and Crow Street theatres closed their doors.

Both shortly reopened under new management, the Crow Street theatre now surpassing the older house in enterprise. Henry Mossop and Foote were two great attractions offered by it, and its management diplomatically prevented Tate Wilkinson from appearing at the rival house. Smock Alley's only successful venture at this period was the engagement of Mrs. Abington, who made there her first Dublin appearance late in 1759.

In 1760 Mossop, who had declined to renew his engagement at Crow Street, took and reconstructed the Smock Alley theatre, and got together an efficient company. Crow Street retaliated in kind, and a keen competition began again. Mossop, Digges and Anne Bellamy at Smock Alley were opposed to Barry, Woodward and Fleetwood at Crow Street; and each house strove to outdo the other while neither managed to make their enterprise pay. The Barry and Mossop rivalry continued till 1767, when Barry disappeared and Mossop took both houses for a short time. The chief point of dramatic interest during these years was the presence in Dublin of Macklin, who appeared at Smock Alley in 1761 and again at various times between 1763 and 1770. Mossop was soon obliged to give up Crow Street to a new manager, and in 1772 retired ruined from Smock Alley, which was taken by Thomas Ryder, who was already a popular actor in Dublin.

Crow Street ruined its new manager by 1776, in

which year Ryder acquired its lease and acted there, retaining Smock Alley only so as to prevent competition. He eventually had to surrender Smock Alley, owing to his inability to pay its rent; the old competition revived; and in 1782 Ryder disappeared from the managerial scene, bankrupt, and became a member of the company controlled by his rival Richard Daly, who had been in control of Smock Alley since 1781. Daly's first important engagement was that of John Kemble in 1781, and in 1783 he brought Sarah Siddons to Dublin. A year later, owing to the failure of the manager who had followed Ryder at Crow Street, that theatre fell into Daly's hands, who now could prevent opposition. He confined himself almost entirely to Crow Street, and the Smock Alley house practically ceased to exist as a theatre. In 1790 it was turned into a storehouse, and later a church was built on its site.

Daly, whose means were diminishing, abandoned theatrical management in 1798, and his place at Crow Street was taken by Frederick Jones, who had successfully tried his hand in the control of a private theatre opened in Fishamble Street in 1793. Jones' reign was short, riots and want of patronage producing the usual result; and the patent passed into the hands of Henry Harris, who was manager of Covent Garden.

Harris decided to abandon Crow Street theatre and to build a new Theatre Royal. Accordingly a site was obtained in Hawkins Street, and the new house was opened in January 1821. In the matter of comfort and convenience it was a great improvement on its predecessors; and Harris (who controlled it till 1828, though he frequently sub-let it during that time) started it with a good stock company, which included Paul Bedford, Montague Talbot and the fair Mrs. Humby.

A brother of William Farren acted as deputy-manager when Harris was in London.

In its early seasons such favourites as Charles Kemble, Liston, Braham and Edmund Kean appeared at the Theatre Royal; and among those who subsequently visited it in Harris' time were Macready, who acted there in 1824, T. P. Cooke in 1827, Charles Kean in 1828, and in the same year the great Ducrow with his circus.

In November 1828 the theatre and its "properties" were offered for sale by auction.

Undaunted by the experience of their predecessors, fresh managers were found, and the theatre was re-opened early in 1829. In May of that year Edmund Kean and his son Charles acted together on its stage. Charles and Fanny Kemble appeared there in 1830, as also did some Siamese Dancers and a Performing Elephant.

The history of the remaining fifty years of the life of the old Theatre Royal is divided into two long and meritorious managements, that of John William Calcraft from 1830 to 1851, and that of John Harris from 1851 onwards.

Calcraft maintained a good stock company, and, to protect his patent rights, took up also the lease of the Adelphi Theatre, known later as the Queen's. He suffered, however, from a new (though perhaps never very formidable) opposition by the opening in 1883 of a theatre in Lower Abbey Street, which John and James Calvert managed to keep open till 1844.

During his management Calcraft, impelled by financial reasons, fell into the snare of playing down to the vitiated taste of the public. Thus, in his time, while we find Compton, Helen Faucit, Mathews and Madame Vestris, the Charles Keans, Webster and

Sims Reeves at the Theatre Royal, we also find there Van Amburgh's Lions, a Belgian Giant and Performing Monkeys.

John Harris, who succeeded Calcraft in 1851, was a manager of higher ideals and stronger determination. He had been for three years in control of the Queen's Theatre, as the Adelphi was now called; and on his assuming the management at the Theatre Royal it soon became evident that he intended to spare no pains to restore the theatre's prestige. That aim he accomplished to a remarkable extent. The great feature of the early years of his rule was a series of excellent Shakespearean revivals, in the course of which he produced, between 1851 and 1855 no fewer than fourteen of the plays, all adequately mounted and capably acted. The London "stars" were glad to visit Dublin under such auspices, and altogether Harris may be given the credit for a remarkable revival of dramatic activity in Dublin. In the 'seventies, too, he gave his audiences a succession of seasons of Italian opera. The Theatre Royal was burned down in 1880, and there was no Theatre Royal in Dublin till 1897, when the present one was opened.

The old Queen's Theatre has for long been devoted to melodrama. Other present-day theatres in Dublin are the Gaiety (in King Street) and the Abbey Theatre, the latter being opened in 1904 for the performance of Irish dramas under the auspices of the National Theatre Society. That body (or rather its earliest ancestor) was founded in 1899, as the Irish Literary Theatre, by W. B. Yeats, Edward Martyn and Lady Gregory. It was known by that designation till 1901; as the Irish National Dramatic Company in 1902; as the Irish National Theatre Society from 1903 to 1905; and as the National Theatre Society since 1905. Its performances

in Dublin have been successively given at the Gaiety Theatre, St. Teresa's Hall, the Molesworth Hall, and finally at the Abbey Theatre, the plays produced being mainly from the pens of W. B. Yeats, Edward Martyn, George Moore, Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge and William Boyle.

A body calling itself the Gaelic Theatre gave performances in the Dublin Rotunda in 1903.

ERRATA.

Page 35, line 16. *For "1652" read "1662."*

Page 133, line 3. *For "on" read "in."*

Page 224, line 2. *For "Elliott" read "Elliot."*

Page 286, line 18. *For "elder" read "younger."*

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