MEMOIRS

OF

CHARLES LEE LEWES,

COMEDIAN.

VOL. I.

MEMOIRS

OF

CHARLES LEE LEWES,

CONTAINING

ANECDOTES,

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL,

OF THE

ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH STAGES,

DURING A PERIOD OF FORTY YEARS.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1805.

By T. Gillet, Salisbury-square.

ADVERTISEMENT.

PREVIOUSLY to my submitting the following pages to the Public, the regard which I feel for departed talents, and the natural impulse which induces me to exhibit the claims of those talents to posthumous fame and admiration, render it expedient that I should explicitly inform the public, that I have neither directly nor indirectly been connected with a late publication which has appeared under the title of "*Comic Sketches;*" and that I am wholly ignorant of the means which were employed to procure the "light and minute trifles" of which that Work is composed.

This declaration will prove the degree of authenticity which attaches to the publication above named; and I

hope I shall stand justified for having exerted my humble efforts to rescue the fame and talents of my deceased parent from unjust depreciation. The world, I imagine, would deem me wanting in duty and filial obligation, were I silently to look on, while malice, or ignorance, or both, were attempting to lessen that portion of popular regard, to which a character of so much public estimation is entitled.

With respect to the biographical sketch prefixed to the work called "Comic Sketches," it is unnecessary to trouble my readers with a minute detail of each fictitious particular: I shall therefore leave the author to the enjoyment of his superior inventive powers. I will, notwithstanding, be bold enough to say (even in contradiction of this false biographer), that whatever clouds hung over my father's

latter days, and however great was the contumacy and tyranny which he experienced from managerial Nebuchadnezzars, Mr. Lee Lewes was a man unrivalled in the comic line of his profession: and although doomed at frequent periods of his life to witness the encouragement given to foreigners and adventurers of every denomination, while his native genius was suffered to languish in the very capital of the kingdom, there are many living testimonies who will subscribe to the truth of this assertion; and I am prompted to make it from a thorough conviction, that his natural requisites, judicious conception, and acknowledged humour, have placed him in the list of celebrated English comedians.

Impressed as I am with the delicacy of the undertaking which I have assigned myself, and sensibly alive to the

difficulties I have had to encounter in preparing the following sheets for the press, the liberality and candour of the public will, I trust, make allowance for impediments which it was impossible I could anticipate or prevent.

Encouraged by the hope that my motive will be duly appreciated, and having noticed the avidity with which theatrical anecdotes are read, I feel some degree of confidence in presenting these authentic records to the public; and if they should afford satisfaction to the numerous admirers of my late father, I shall have cause to felicitate myself on the success of my efforts, in rescuing these genuine dramatic anecdotes from oblivion.

JOHN LEE LEWES.

Liverpool, June 1805.

PREFACE.

HAVING promised to give a sketch of my own life, as far as it is connected with the stage *only*, it is necessary that I should apologize for saying a little more concerning so unimportant a subject; and as the conductors of the London theatres seem determined that I shall *professionally die* in the metropolis, it may not be improper (by way of my dying speech) to add also my birth, parentage, and education.

Whether I have come naturally by this scenic death, or have been

guilty of *felo de se*; or, whether the managers not having the fear of the public before their eyes, have wilfully and maliciously buried me alive, it is for the coroner of Taste to determine. If I should be able to prove, as I trust I shall, that I have not laid violent hands upon myself, and that *design* only has deprived me of life (by being deprived of "the means whereby I live") it will then not be difficult for me to call to the remembrance of the public many a favourite actor and actress prematurely forced by the divan of a theatre into the hands of the *scenic sexton*; and likewise many that may probably follow, if I may be allowed to judge by the ratio of proportions, founded on

the logarithms of this *unnatural* dramatic mortality.

I know it has been said by many, who are unacquainted with the real cause why I am not employed, that I must be under lunar influence, not to accept of an engagement. Let me say to those observers, who would so unkindly deprive me of the exercise of reason, that if in the *theatric hemisphere* they observe a deviation from general laws, it is but fair they should endeavour to illustrate it from local circumstances, or some partial operation, and not rashly lay the cause of my non-employment at the chaste *door* of *Diana*, by placing me within the sphere of the moon's attraction. However I

may have been thought to be under the influence of this insinuating deity, I trust that, in the course of the following pages, I shall be able to effect a reasonable conviction, that I am not so fit for the *strait waistcoat*, as the exercise of that profession, which to me, from its infancy, has been laborious servitude and incessant toil; and has only served to convince me, that when an actor has made such progress in his art, as to enable him to stand alone, the whim, or the caprice of managers, will soon shew him that he has no solid foundation; all is delusive and airy. I have seen merit become the sport of managerial passion, and the smallest twigs of novelty have been introduced

to supersede and oppose its passage. I confess the crosses I have encountered, have been more difficult to digest, in the progress of my professional ambition, than it was hard for me to curb the natural propension that led me to it.

This preface, I will be bold to say, stands before the pages of truth. A very ingenious critic, on the utility of biography, has observed, that "It is not from the secret history of the green room, the artifices of managers, the petty cabals and private intrigues of actors and actresses, their humility in distress, or their unsteadiness in prosperity, that much advantage or instruction is to be derived."

Sensible of this remark, I am free to confess, that the following pages will "not add to the stores of wisdom," but presume to hope they may enlarge the sphere of dramatic anecdote, and extend the bounds of scenic whim, hitherto generally confined to the territories of the green room.

I have endeavoured to raise the laugh at the expence of *folly*; and surely a man, who has all his life-time been the devotee of folly, ranging over a great part of the globe as her humble instrument, has a right to think himself entitled to act a principal character in one of her temples.

If I have failed, I know my reward will be the *cap* and *bells*: well, even

then, my intention will in some degree be gratified, as by jingling them I may still raise the laugh.

But to the candour of the public I submit: they must determine whether the laugh shall be *with me*, or *at me*.

To the critic, I tremblingly bend. He need not be told, that neither my genius nor education qualifies me for purity of style; and though nearly sixty years have rolled over my head, I hope he will not consider me as an *old offender*. This is my first literary crime, I will never be guilty of the like again.

All I can offer in my defence is, that I am merely a recorder, and as recorder most humbly recommend myself

to his mercy. Hoping farther, that should he sit in judgment upon me at the period of his breakfast, that his tea may not be smoked, nor his butter rancid. If after dinner, and over his bottle, that his viands may have been critically dressed, and his vine juice neat as imported; my fate will then depend on his settled good humour, verifying this known apophthegm:

Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis.

MEMOIRS

OF

CHARLES LEE LEWES, Esq.

TO all whom it may concern—be it known, I am not a Welchman, but proud of being the scion of as honest a Cambrian as ever ranked with the reputable tradesmen of this kingdom, but whose classical education qualified him for the circle of polite arts. I was born in New Bond Street, St. George Hanover Square, London, on the 19th of November, old stile, 1740. My father was honoured by being in

intimate friendship with the late Dr. Young (author of the Night Thoughts); and I well remember the Doctor's attachment to me when only five years of age, his often taking me with him to his house at Welwyn in Herts, where I stayed occasionally many weeks together. Lady Betty Young (his wife) died in the year 1741. Previous to her marriage with the Doctor, she was the widow of Colonel Lee, and daughter to the Earl of Litchfield. Her son by the Colonel was my god-father, (this accounts for *Lee* being added to my sponsorial appellation); she had also a daughter by the Colonel: they all three died about the same period, which so severely afflicted the Doctor, as to be the sole occasion of his *Night Thoughts*. This particular circumstance he thus beautifully describes, speaking of sublunary bliss:—

" Bliss! sublunary bliss!—Proud words, and vain!
" Implicit treason to divine decree!
" A bold invasion of the rights of heaven!
" I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air;
" O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace!
" What darts of agony had miss'd my heart!"

He has often told me, that whenever and wherever the play of the Revenge (written by his father) is performed, he is sure to attend the representation, if within a day's ride, and always lamentingly shakes his head at the mention of *Mossop* in Zanga, that he "shall not look upon his like again;" the drawing of which character seems to me to be one of the greatest efforts of human genius since Shakespeare.

It is my pride to mention this circumstance respecting the intimacy between Doctor Young and my father, who by being a scholar, and a man of extensive reading, was well qualified

for the conversation of such an enlightened character.

My mother was the daughter of William Lewthwaite, esq. of Broadgate in Cumberland. A very near relation, John Lewthwaite, esq. died lately at Whitehaven, leaving behind him no less a sum than one hundred thousand pounds, and by a flaw in his will, sixty thousand of his personal estate falls among his nearest relations. Before it came to my ears, it was publicly talked of that I was one among seven others who were entitled to it; for some time we thought so, and actually put in our claims from the opinions given us by Sir John Scott and Mr. Selwyn, and locked up that sum in the three per cents. till by legal process we had substantiated our separate claims; but to our great disappointment, and to the joy of Sir Gilford

Lawson, we now find this fortune falls to him, and a few others, being of a nearer branch. I sincerely congratulate them, and with equal sincerity declare, that I do not feel one pang at the disappointment, though the possession of eight thousand of that sixty thousand was pointed out to me but a few months since as almost certain, having been offered one morning two thousand pounds stock, to be transferred to me in half an hour, if I would give up my claim for that consideration. Let not this be called apathy; no, I have been too long accustomed to the *up* and *down* hill of life, and to "borrow all my happiness from hope, which in irksome and disappointed moments will not turn to pain, if we keep in remembrance the uncertainty of events." I have the honour of being related by my mother's side to the dowager Lady

St. Aubyn; and to the present Sir John St. Aubyn, and Sir Francis Basset, I am much indebted, for their unbounded liberality at a very critical moment. At seven years old I was placed under the care of the Reverend Mr. Miles, at Ambleside in Westmoreland, from whence I returned to London, after seven years humming, *as in presenti*, with little more improvement than what the discipline of the ferrula imprinted on my palm. Had I, like my sisters, been indefatigable to improve my education, I might, like them, have boasted a polish which has enabled them to complete the tutorage of some of the first families in the kingdom—Lord Bathurst's, Lord Hopetown's, Lord Lothian's, Lord Buckinghamshire's, &c. &c. I left the school at fourteen years of age, with the character of being the most volatile and care-

less. My father, shocked at my non-improvement, undertook to instruct me himself, and, in truth, it needed parental authority to keep such spirits within bounds: for a little time I submitted to the rules laid down by my affectionate parent, enforced with all the rigidness of a Spartan; but high spirits will overleap all bounds, and, if I may be allowed to pun, as I was so early fond of shifting the scene, 'tis no wonder I fixed at last in the theatre.

The first stage bite I received was by playing Cash in Every Man in his Humour, in the Haymarket, about the year 1760. Mr. Wilkinson played Kitely. This scenic mania next led me to appear for a benefit in Mr. Linnet's company, at the Cross Keys, a little public house near Chelsea church, in the character of Mathew Mug, in Mr. Foote's farce of the Mayor of Garrat. Among

the numberless ridiculous, and truly aukward situations, that country managers have been brought into in the course of their pilgrimage through this *vale of sorrow*, I think that of the veteran Linnet, on the following droll occasion, deserves to be mentioned.

The old gentleman, while at Hammersmith, expressed a desire to play at Chelsea, but was informed it was under the control of a very inflexible magistrate, particularly averse to giving any encouragement to plays, or other amusements. However, notwithstanding this seeming insurmountable difficulty, Linnet met with a friend, a gentleman who wrote a warm recommendatory letter for him to the obdurate magistrate, and gave him assurance of his meeting with success; with this encouragement Linnet boldly pushed to the justice's house, directing

his whole company to proceed to Chelsea, and order a dinner at the Swan, and regale themselves; this mandate was cheerfully complied with, and the eventful letter was delivered according to direction. But what was the purport of this letter? Instead of that which should secure a welcome and support, it was one that menaced the reader with a sudden scene of horror. 'Tis proper to explain.

Then thus it was. The comedy of the Bold Stroke for a Wife had been played a few nights before, and old Linnet, on this occasion, resolving to make a grand appearance, had put on the stage waistcoat he had worn in the Colonel; in one of the pockets of which, a letter supposed to be sent by the colonel's friend to Obadiah Prim, upon hearing that the real Simon Pure was actually come, which if not timely

prevented must ruin the colonel's design upon the cautious quaker. Judge of the magistrate's surprise at opening the supposed letter of recommendation, when he found it began thus :—

" There is a design formed to rob thy house and cut thy throat."—The justice rang his bell—a servant appeared.—Where is the man that brought this letter ?—In the hall, sir.—Call him up directly.—While the servant was employed in going to fetch up the unconscious culprit, old Quorum read on.

" The gang, whereof I am one, though now resolved to rob no more," —(here old Linnet made his appearance)—Well, friend, says the Justice, you belong to a *gang*, how many are there of you ?—We are fourteen in all, sir.—Fourteen ! and where are you all ?—At Tool's, sir*—at the Swan.—

* One Mark Tool kept the Swan public house at that period.

Indeed! oh, very well, you have all your tools at the Swan, have you? I'll take care of you and your tools presently.—Many thanks to you, sir. Squire —— told me you would encourage us.—Aye, was it he sent you to my house?—Yes, sir.—Well, and when do you intend to begin this grand affair?—We always begin about seven o'clock, sir.—You do!—here Thomas, here, seize this daring, hardened old villain; he and his whole gang are coming to rob and murder my family this night, and all their horrid tools are at the Swan public house!—I did not think this of you (says the servant to Linnet).—What, do you know the fellow, sirrah?—Yes, sir, he's master of the play.—A player! and are not you an open and avowed murderer? Oh Lord, sir, what do you mean!—Look at this letter, you hang dog! Did

you not deliver this to me?—Who can describe the innocent Linnet's astonishment upon the discovery of his mistake? Oh, dear sir, I beg your pardon, here's Squire ——'s letter, I hope this will satisfy you——Hold him till I see what's here. On the perusal of the real letter, his worship's countenance was changed from a savage ferocity to a most placid smile. He immediately dismissed the innocent aggressor with a full permission for his performing, with this piece of wholesome advice—Never to forget his part again.

My probations in the Hay-market and Chelsea, as Foote says, "like a link, threw a radiance round me," and lighted me to Chesterfield in Derbyshire, under the management of one Parsons (not the comic hero of Drury Lane). My *entré* was in the part of Charles in the Busy Body. The en-

couragement I received vainly taught me to think, that towards the period the company left off performing, I was perfectly qualified for the Theatres Royal. This idea, with a little persuasion from one Jackson, prevailed on me to leave the company abruptly with him one night, after the play was over;—and hereby hangs a tale of curious embarrassment. Mr. Stanton, a respectable country manager, was a principal actor in the scene, and with whom, a few months ago, not having met for twenty years before, I enjoyed a hearty laugh at the following story.

Mr. Jackson and myself had proceeded as far as the Peacock, the half-way house between Chesterfield and Derby, and not being anxious to hasten our departure from thence, lo! and behold! in the morning, in came the manager, and Mr. Stanton, then the leading per-

former in his company. So, says Mr. Stanton, young gentleman (addressing himself to me) we have overtaken you at last, how will you like to walk back again?—Not at all, says I, because I'll run away.—No, you don't, replied he, and shut the door.—What is all this, Mr. Stanton?—Ask your colleague, Mr. Lewes.—Come, come, grumbled old Parsons, you two gentlemen must return with us to Chesterfield, you have robbed the wardrobe.—"Who, I, Mr. Parsons?"—I don't know which of you have done it.—The fact was, Jackson had, unknown to me, walked off with the black breeches he played in the preceding night, and *vi et armis*, we were forced back to Chesterfield. But the manager's sole view was, our being two sheet anchors, he did not wish to lose us. Jackson was to be frightened into his staying with the compa-

ny, by the manager's promise not to prosecute him for the small-clothes.—But how to detain me? Why, by a curious managerial manœuvre. When we arrived at Chesterfield, the whole town had been apprized of the manager's pursuit after his old breeches, and a great mob had gathered round the inn we were at.—While Stanton was using his endeavours to persuade Jackson to stay, and proceed with the company to Mansfield, old Parsons slipt out, and prevailed upon one Doctor Staniforth to arrest me for his attendance during a slight illness. It is to be lamented, that a man of the doctor's consequence, should have condescended to aid the cunning of this mock tyrant of a barn; but so it was. I got previous intelligence that the bailiff was at the door, up went the window, out went Harlequin; but not without be-

ing perceived by the officer. I had nothing for it but my heels, with John Doe and Richard Roe at my back—but *procul este prophani*, away I scoured over two fields, with not less than two hundred of the mob following, whom I afterwards learned meant to rescue me had the caption taken place. Finding my breath fail me, and a river being near, in I jumped, and laid hold of the branch of a tree that hung over close to the water; in this situation remaining for a quarter of an hour, with only my head and hands out of the water, till the pursuit was over. When it was completely given up, I went shivering to a house about two hundred yards from me, where I was humanely rubbed down, and put to bed between two blankets. This was on Saturday; as soon as the clock struck twelve, I was determined to

have my revenge upon old Parsons, so forth I sallied in the queer habiliments my good rustic host had lent me; a pair of thick yarn stockings, greasy patched leather breeches, a long red waistcoat, and his best grey cloth Sunday coat, with a large slouched beaver umbrella, that wanted only a crape hatband to sanctify it for a funeral. I found him with the doctor and a number of tradesmen, at a house where they used to meet every Saturday night, without any regard to the following sacred day; for here would they celebrate their nightly orgies, till the early hours of Sunday generally sent them reeling to their beds. I was by no means a welcome visitor to either the old sly manager, or his colleague the doctor. At the moment of my abrupt obtrusion, the waiter happened to be carrying in a large bowl of punch;

which I snatched from him, and with it saluted this "King of shreds and patches." It must be observed that he was (at the moment I sluiced him) either dosing, or fast asleep, and I suppose dreaming, for the shock had such an effect, that he fell with his face upon the floor, and, being pretty well drenched, must have fancied himself fallen into the river, and in danger of being drowned, for he instantly began sprawling with his legs and arms, as if in the action of swimming, and called out lustily, a boat! a boat! and had actually swam half across the room, before he could be convinced he was in no danger of suffocation. I then began to reproach the doctor, a general scuffle ensued, and ended in my being forcibly conducted to the cage in the market place. And here I must lament that provincial towns cannot accom-

modate nocturnal disturbers of the peace, like the parish rendezvous houses in the metropolis, where a Dogberry or a Verges, over a gallon of porter, can cure a black eye, a bloody nose, or a broken head, and afterwards submit themselves to be kicked, and the register of their proceedings torn to pieces, as lately happened in Covent Garden watch-house, between those mighty Gothamites, and the manager of a theatre royal in London, a principal actor, and a favourite author. Not so with poor pilgarlick; I had no one to appeal to; the wind whistling through my airy cage, till daylight brought round me *tag*, *rag*, and *bob-tail*. Up stood orator Lewes, and to the rabble told his "unvarnish'd tale." They heard me, and they wished it had been otherwise—they wished "my redemption thence," and "swore 'twas piti-

ful, 'twas wonderous pitiful." I so far "beguiled them of their tears," they would actually have pulled down the cage to effect my freedom, had I not assured them such a measure would have added to my distress. However, I was soon released, the heads of the town having taken up the matter, and it ended in the doctor's withdrawing his writ, and the manager apologizing to me, for being the cause of voluntarily ducking myself in the river; and after an apology from me to him for interrupting his slumber, by forcing the bowl of punch *on* him, instead of *in* him. I then went to London for a few weeks, and aftewards joined the same company at Mansfield; and here I had not been many days before Mr. Stanhope, the chief magistrate, a gentleman of the Chesterfield family (who when in London always lodged at my

father's) sent for me to his house, where I received from him a severe lecture, for running about the country, and "blacking my face for the diversion of children," as he was pleased to express himself, with his positive commands instantly to return to my parents, or the house of correction should be my portion.—I remonstrated—he was peremptory—however I was able at last to soften him by a promise, that when the benefits were over, (which I should much injure by then leaving the company) I would return home; which promise I kept. But on my benefit night in this town a circumstance happened, which I cannot pass over. The benefits were double, and my partner was Mrs. Bates, the wife of the well known facetious Bobby Bates. Previous to the night of performing, I had sold tickets to the amount of about

five pounds, which money I constantly kept in my pocket, and not being troubled with much more, I thought this sum a pretty plaything. On the night of the play I was appointed to receive the money at the door, without any check taken; a trusty office, which I suppose Mr. Bates thought me competent to fill, being a novice, and not having learned the door-keeping art of sinking. On the contrary, for it was well known the house would not hold, when full, more than sixteen pounds, however I brought to book twenty one pounds. Here was uplifted hands—What an honest door-keeper I was! what a misfortune I had not stood there every night! And though they did not directly charge each other, who had alternately been employed in that important office, with peculating, yet did they all agree, that there must

have been holes in the pockets where the money was deposited. Well, the charges being deducted, eight pounds each fell to the share of Mrs. Bates and self, which Bates received.

The next morning, when I came to make up my account, I was two pounds ten shillings deficient. Thus I explain it: I had mixed the money I had taken for tickets before the night, with the money received on the night, and which I should have been accountable for only in tickets. On the discovery of this mistake I immediately applied to Bates, and insisted on his refunding. He said I was a very honest fellow, and he did not believe I meant to deceive him, and as to a mistake, he was sure there was none on his side; as to *refund*, Master Lewes, I do not understand that; I have heard of the theatrical fund, but refund is quite out of

the course of things. No, no, possession is eleven points of the law, as they say;—a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. You get no money of me, Master Lewes; you are a younker, it will teach you how to be honest at the door again. In short, I was only laughed at by Mr. Bates; so I found it necessary to lay my complaint before Mr. Stanhope. He sent for Bates, who had the mortification of refunding before a third person, the chief magistrate; when, had he laid aside, but for a moment, his natural talent for low humour, it might have been settled as it ought, between ourselves. I here took my leave of this company, and, in a few months, entered under the dramatic flag of the celebrated James Augustus Whiteley. And here I must digress; as no memoirs of this extraordinary gentleman have been published

since his demise, the following short relation may not prove wholly unentertaining to my theatrical readers.

JAMES AUGUSTUS WHITELEY,

was descended from an obscure stock; his father was a private in the St. George's light dragoons—not (as he boasts in his preface to his *Intriguing Footman*) a major in the army; and while Whiteley was very young, reduced to the scanty allowance of an out-pensioner of Kilmainham hospital. The indigence of the parent was the consequent neglect of the son's education; but as young James was a shrewd, sensible lad, he had attracted the notice of an old limb of the law, who being a papist, and not qualified for the exercise of his profession in any of the courts of judicature, he prudently followed the business of a chamber soli-

citor, or, as they commonly term it in Ireland, a *lough derug* attorney. This respectable personage took young Whiteley into his service, and finding the boy of a quick understanding, he put a pen in his hand, and instructed him in writing. After some time, the master was immured for debt in the City Marshalsea, where young Whiteley paid close attendance on him, and became very useful in procuring many lucrative jobs for him in the hackney line of writing; but on the failure of work in that way, on a casual visit of Joe Elrington, the comedian, to this mansion of distress, a sudden acquaintance commenced between them, and Elrington recommended him to Mr. William Rufus Chetwood, prompter of Smock-alley theatre, Dublin, as one well qualified to write out such parts as he might have occasion for; upon which an agree-

ment was struck, and the needy lawyer was forced to the necessity of writing parts at a penny a length (42 lines each), when the unconscionable prompter charged the manager, Tom Phillips (Mr. Garrick's first employer in the Dublin theatre), no less than two-pence.

However, this intercourse with the theatre opened to young Whiteley a more enlarged field of action, as he was not only principal scribe, his master being frequently attacked with the gout, but the only confidential messenger his master had to fetch and carry the work. In short, Whiteley was made free of the house, and Thomas Carmichael, then prompter's call-boy, as it is termed, growing tired of his servile station, and ambitious to wield a truncheon, gave William Rufus warning to provide himself with another deputy. Upon this desertion Chetwood cast his eyes upon

young Whiteley, and tampered with him to engage as his call-boy, promising most solemnly to make him a first-rate actor if he would mind his duty. Fired with the proposal, Whiteley, without hesitation, closed with it; and at the end of the Dublin season, without giving the proper warning to his unhappy master, still in durance, set off with the company for Waterford, and during his three months abode there, made such a rapid progress in the scenic profession, that he was solicited by a widow Parker to join her company at Galway, with a pleasing offer of a first cast of parts; or, in the modern phrase, a principal line of business. This was too flattering an offer for our yet callow hero to be looked upon with indifference; he therefore took leave of the company, carrying with him a considerable number of play-

books, farces, &c. well cut, marked, and margined by the successor of old Downes.*

Here it will be necessary to inform my readers that there was a considerable arrear of salary, or rather wages, due to Whiteley for his drudgery. Though his weekly hire, had he been regularly paid, would have amounted to no more than 7s. yet, notwithstanding his frequent pressing instances of the necessity he was under for the use of the whole, he could not prevail upon the manager to pay him, and that by several unequal installments, more than

* Chetwood, it is well known to many, was the pupil of Downes, the prompter, who was cotemporary with the famous Betterton, Dogget, Nokes, and had the supreme felicity of giving material instruction to the late Mr. Barry, Miss Nossiter, and many other eminent performers.

seventeen shillings and five-pence for nine weeks servitude. Thus circumstanced, candour must acknowledge, that though our hero did not in this case act conformably to the most rigid rules of moral rectitude, yet was he not much to blame, as he knew he could pursue no legal course to oblige his employer to pay him, he having, from the hour of his entering the town, sheltered himself in the Friars, a privileged place, where a snug playhouse was erected within its precincts, and for obvious reasons the most eligible spot in the town for the purpose. Conscious of not having violated the laws of his country, and confident that he had secured a sufficient indemnity for the money due to him, young Whiteley boldly proceeded across the country to the renowned capital of Conaught, at that time notorious through the whole king-

dom for being the local residence of the thirteen families, particularly dreaded by their peaceable neighbours on account of their ferocity, and implacable resentment of every supposed affront, which nothing but the death of the devoted victim of their ruthless animosity could in any shape atone for. But it is with infinite pleasure I am able to certify, that on some examples being made of many of the toughest branches of the thirteen distinguished families by the salutary laws of their injured, bleeding country, that the whole province is in a fair way of following the example of their praise-worthy neighbours of Ulster. But to return from this digression, and look after our hero, who, upon joining Mrs. Parker's company, made his first appearance in the Cure for a Scold, compiled from Shakespeare's play of that name, and Bul-

lock's Cobler of Preston, made into a ballad farce. Whiteley was possessed of an excellent voice, and performed the hero of the piece; the manageress, the part of Peggy, his haggard patient. Whiteley succeeded beyond his warmest hopes, and soon gained upon the affections of the fair widow. She wanted a male assistant to assist her in her business; and ever prudent Whiteley was equally eager to catch at the young widow's property.—In short they were married: the husband at eighteen, the wife then twenty-six, with two sons by her former husband, the eldest of which was the cause of endless family dissensions, and the new married pair were equally prone to unruly passions. She would with pertinacious audacity insist that he was of a more irascible temper than her deceased husband, who, though a Welchman, and consequently had a

right by prescription, from the days of the great grandfather of the renowned and redoubted Cadwallader, to be inflated with choler, even to the bursting of his spleen. These domestic jars occurred so frequently, that the fatal consequences of them were at no distant period from their nuptials sorely felt by them. The performers deserted them by degrees, and sought for a more peaceful retreat, among whom was the late respectable Mr. William Havard, of Drury-Lane Theatre, who had been some probationary months in that company. The paucity of the number of performers caused a falling off in their receipts, and to so great a degree, that Whiteley has declared often (even after he arrived at the highest pitch of opulence) that he lived many days (though a manager) upon bread and buttermilk, in the plentiful town of Carlow. How-

ever, our hero, ever fruitful in devising resources in all emergencies, took courage, and having formed the desperate resolution of selling off his whole wardrobe, except one suit of tarnished laced cloaths, which he reserved to make a genteel appearance upon his arrival in England. The produce of the sale of his stock scantily furnished him with the means of paying the passage of his family to Liverpool, at which flourishing town he had previous intelligence of a company performing under the management of John Heron, of intriguing memory. Whiteley and wife were gladly received. The company's success was great, exceeding the receipts of any former season. During a run of the Tempest for five nights, they seldom took less than twenty pounds; and at the benefit of Tottenham Wright, a favourite actor, the re-

ceipt amounted to twenty-seven pounds fourteen shillings and sixpence. I am afraid my readers will imagine I cannot be serious in this relation, but there are several now living who will subscribe to the truth of it. But lest I should be suspected of advancing any thing which might induce the present generation to form any idea of a sordid disposition in the wealthy inhabitants of that hospitable town, I declare it as my opinion, that neither lack of spirit or taste was the cause of such scanty receipts at their theatre in those days. On the contrary, it was an eminent proof of their true taste and discernment, by their soon after giving great encouragement to Mr. Gibson, who brought a regular company to their town, and instead of exhibiting in an old crazy warehouse, built a house in Drury-lane in that town; and here it was for the first time

boxes were erected, as a just partition for the better sort to withdraw from the near contact of drunken sailors and their female associates, who by paying two shillings, which many of them could and would afford, for the honour of mixing in company with their employers and their families. Nor is it the prodigious influx of wealth into the place since that period, now fifty years at least, that caused the surprising difference between receipts of the playhouse then and what they have been for many seasons past; but a nice discriminating judgment, that merits the highest encomium. But to return to our Hibernian adventurer—I said that Heron's company had uncommon success. At the close of this productive season, Whiteley turned his thoughts once more upon commencing manager, and though he tampered with several

members of this well-fledged corps to engage with him, they were, one and all, deaf to his rhetoric, and some of the closeted parties even informed the manager of Whiteley's scheme of inveigling his people, which produced his discharge. This was a thunder stroke to Whiteley.—But upon hearing of a list of "lawless resolutes" being in a village on the borders of Wales, he went and joined them; and such influence had he over the majority of this group, that they relaxed their republican spirit, for they stiled themselves a commonwealth, and put themselves without reserve under the sole direction of this hero, who soon made a managerial use of the authority he was invested with. In short, from this small beginning he rose to a pitch of affluence before unknown to provincial managers. But as I shall have frequent

occasion to mention this gentleman, I shall here close my account of the rise and early progress of this extraordinary man.

In the year 1760 I joined Whiteley (as I have observed) at Doncaster. The first part he put into my hands was Don Duart's servant in the Fop's Fortune; he has only one speech, where he tells Elvira that "Your brother, madam, my master, young Don Duart's dead: he just now quarrelled with a gentleman, who unfortunately killed him in the street." At the rehearsal in the morning Whiteley stood before me, and after I had repeated the speech, asked me significantly if I meant to speak it so?"—"Yes, sir."—"Why, my dear, it may do in those companies you have been in, but it won't do with me, my dear."—"If I am wrong, sir, I'll thank you to instruct me."—

"Wrong, my dear, you never were so wrong in your life; who made you an actor? I gave you this part, my dear, because you have an eye; the fellow I have taken it from has two, to be sure, but they are put into his head with dirty fingers, he looks like a chimney-sweeper: now you are a clean tight fellow, my dear, but no actor; for in that very speech never was a finer scope for an actor to shew himself since the Almighty first taught angels to spout in Paradise." Profane as this is, it is a literal truth. I had not been many weeks with him before he changed his mind respecting my abilities, permitting me to strut in Romeo, Barnwell, Castalio, Moneses, &c. Herbert's company was then at Sheffield, and hearing of my fame, he came over to Doncaster to feel my pulse respecting a change of situation, which I

very gladly embraced on his first opening the matter to me. I agreed to join him at the close of my engagement with Whiteley, who, suspecting the business, obtruded himself into our company, and with all that smooth plausible manner he was perfectly master of, begged pardon, hoped he did not intrude—perhaps you are on business, my dears?—No, sir, we are glad to see you. Herbert and I had settled the business, and whatever Whiteley's suspicions might be respecting my leaving him, he could get nothing out of us then to confirm them. About three o'clock in the morning, lo! his wife made as unmannerly an entry into the room as he had done before, but without any apology.—What do you want here, my dear, says Augustus?—You old fool, mumbled she, are you not ashamed to sit in company with a man

that's come to rob you of the best actor you have.—You lie, my dear, I am the best actor: he don't rob me, my dear, let him take him, he's fit only for a puppet-show, to be hung upon a peg, and taken down when wanted; his words come out of his mouth as if he was speaking through a comb: he'll do very well for Flockton, my dear.—I tell you again, Mr. Whiteley, he's the best actor you have. Whiteley then, almost savage, exclaimed, here's an infidel! leave the room, ma'am.—I won't, Mr. Whiteley.—You won't.—At this moment Herbert and I interposed, and having got her out of the room, and pacified him, he shook me by the hand, hoped he had not been provoked to say any thing to offend me, as he thought me the best actor he ever had. Such is the eccentricity of this man, that I cannot quit him without relating a cu-

rious anecdote that happened at this very period—I mean at the time I was with him at Doncaster. He had then arrived at his grand climacteric, grew hypochondriacal, and, as is the case with many of his brother misers when they have accumulated wealth, are loth to make their wills, which they consider as a forerunner of their speedy dissolution, deferred that act of family duty as long as he could; but being one night at an eleemosinary debauch, he slept to an unusually late hour the next day; his old lady, however, stole from his side at a proper time to manage her family affairs, in which she was employed when she was summoned by her husband's chamber bell, which continued to tingle till she arrived upon the spot from whence the alarm arose.—Now Whiteley, at his waking, had occasion to make use of a bason that

stood by his bedside, in which, as he was setting it down, he perceived in the contents what shook his soul with horror; at the sight thereof an agonizing perspiration pervaded every part of him; and the most gloomy thoughts invaded and took possession of his perturbed mind; scarce had he power to ring the bell which was to introduce his spouse.

The affrighted dame, on her arrival, demanded the cause of this larum? Whiteley, groaning in spirit, and scarcely able to articulate the words, desired she would send for an attorney to make his will immediately! Your will, my dear Jemmy! Why, what's the matter? ——Oh!—the matter, my dear Casy, (her name was Cassandra) why, woman, I have not half an hour to live in this sinful world. Within a short hour I trust I shall be taking my repose in

Abraham's bosom. You torture me, my dear Jemmy! what have you been doing? I hope you have not drank poison, my love.—No, no, I am not so rash, Sinner as I am, and always was, I ever had better thoughts. Send for the attorney directly; I am a dead man; bid him bring a proper stamp for the purpose. The wife, wringing her hands in real grief, quitted the room in order to perform her good man's dying request. She dispatched a messenger for a lawyer, and his instrument; but quickly, as was natural, returned to her doleful husband, and, falling on her knees, most earnestly conjured him to satisfy her, whether he had drank any deleterious draught, that might give cause for his fears of so speedy a dissolution? Thus tenderly pressed, he presented his wife with the bason. Look here, my dear, could any

man behold this, and entertain the smallest hope of surviving a single hour?——And is this the only cause of your being so alarmed, dear Jemmy! —Aye, and cause sufficient, is it not? —Thank heaven, I can soon restore you to peace of mind again, and make you put off thoughts of rushing so suddenly into Abraham's bosom, or any Jew like him. You must know, my dear, that I made use of oatmeal to wash my hands with this morning, and emptied the water into this bason. So you thought— The enraged Whiteley, on hearing this, flew out of bed, snatched down his horsewhip, and, with a savage ferocity, began to exercise it upon his tender spouse most cruelly, till interrupted by the entrance of the attorney, who was truly expeditious in procuring the stamp, and every other thing needful for the solemn ceremony.

Bless me! said the astonished scribe; why, Mr. Whiteley, I was informed you were dying ——You lie, you thief, you was not, nor, I'll never die, you thief, to vex you and that Jezebel there, your confederate—you're both in a conspiracy against my life, I see it plainly; but here stands old James Augustus Whiteley, that will never die, but live for ever, to disappoint you all! Take that, you thief, and that.—— This opprobrious language to the lawyer, was accompanied with many severe blows with the butt end of the whip, which brought on the miserable Whiteley an action of battery; the cost attending which had such an effect on his penurious soul, as to almost realise what his fancy had so lately created.

Before I proceed any farther, I must inform my readers, that I find it absolutely necessary to relate my anecdotes

as they happened, so that this sketch of my life, thus interspersed, like the modern sketches of parliamentary debates, will probably be very long, but I trust not unentertaining. Before I return to my unimportant self, I shall relate what further happened in this company before I left it for Sheffield.

One day, this Bajazet of the stage kings, Whiteley, was taking a cheerful glass with some respectable inhabitants of the town, when one George Downing, a ruby-faced member of the scenic corps, came in, and desired to speak to Mr. Whiteley.—Your commands with me, my dear sir?—Sir, I have glorious news for you, as well as me.—What is it, my dear sir?—I have got my play bespoke by the gentlemen of the hunt.—I am glad of it, my dear.——The gentlemen, sir, have cast the play; 'tis She Would and She Would Not; and

have sent me to have it signed with your approbation, that I may take it immediately to the printer: here it is, sir; they have cast me Trapanti.—What! How! Who? What Trapanti?—Trapanti in the play, sir?——You don't mean my Trapanti?—To be sure, sir; they say you are too old, and too fat for such a starved character!—They do, you red nosed rascal, do they? Then pray hunt out these gentlemen of the hunt; lap up my compliments to them in a cabbage leaf, and carry them to the ignorant rascals; and there's for your impudent, presumptuous message, (sluicing poor George with the best part of a tankard of beer.) Look, look, gentlemen, observe how the beer hisses and sputters on his worm inhabited countenance, like a salamander! You get no benefit in my company, you creeping incendiary! Sirrah, I'll expose

you through the three kingdoms; you informing scoundrel! My Trapanti indeed! So George walked off, dishonoured and undone.

FORETHOUGHT FOR A COFFIN.

It is customary in travelling companies, when any thing is to be shared, to make the dividend as soon as the farce is concluded; in Whiteley's company, at this period, which was not common, the sharing had been very indifferent for a succession of nights. However, a bespoke play filled the house, and the actors with the expectancy of a large dividend at the end of the farce, which was of Whiteley's own writing—The Humbug. Eighteen shillings fell to the share of each performer; but Whiteley gave Andrews, one of the company, only nine shillings. What's this for? says Andrews.—Your

share, my dear.—My share! Don't humbug me, Mr. Whiteley, though you have humbug'd the audience to-night; why, I don't owe you any thing! True, my dear, but you will very soon; you are in a bad state of health.—Look at him, gentlemen—the thief wants to leave us without warning. You see he is in a consumption. Where did you get it, you thief, not in my flesh and blood company, but the skin and bone troop you came from. You'll die in a fortnight, my dear; and, as we must bury you, I have stopped nine shillings towards your coffin. Cruel as these modes of joking were, Whiteley could not forego them.

The following anecdote of Mr. Richard Hurst may not unaptly be related here, as it will serve to place our friend Whiteley in a point of light we have not yet noticed him in.

Mr. Hurst, after his hopes were blighted, in respect to the great benefit he was sure his merit as an actor would command at Liverpool, turned his thoughts towards an immediate engagement; and hearing that Whiteley was then playing at Manchester, to very great houses, he wrote him a letter to the following purport.

"SIR,

"I am a gentleman, well received in my professional line, as an actor of no mean abilities. This you may judge of, by the applauding world declaring, that I have been these two years treading hard upon the heels of Barry. In short, so great a favourite am I, that all true connoisseurs in acting say, wherever I appear on a country stage, that I am too good for such mean places. However, sir, hearing

you have a tolerable stock of clothes and scenes, and a good circuit, I will wave, for the present, my superiority over others of your company, and condescend to join you immediately, on only two shares. Your speedy answer to this will oblige yours, &c.

RICHARD HURST."

On the receipt of this truly modest epistle, Whiteley was, for some minutes, at a stand to find words to answer it. A tolerable stock of clothes and scenes! This slighting account of his stage property, he looked upon as more intolerable, than any other part of his bouncing letter. His being too great and good for country towns, he considered as the effusions of a young coxcomb, who had been taught by some to set an extraordinary value upon himself. To the same account he placed his treading upon Barry's heels. After

some struggles with himself, wherein rage and laughter had their turns alternately, he hit upon a scheme to draw this too good person to the company; as he longed to see one that had the impudence to avow himself a better man than he was, who had never been out of the country. Accordingly he sent for this phenomenon, and in three days after received a billet from an inn, in Manchester, subscribed Richard Hurst, desiring to speak with him.

The first part of Whiteley's plan, for mortifying this self-sufficient gentleman, was to collect his whole company together, when he proposed to introduce them to an uncommon prodigy. Accordingly, they all attended their manager to the Bull, in the market place. Whiteley inquired for the strange gentleman, and was shewn into a room, where they found Mr. Hurst seated,

with a bottle of wine before him. They soon came to a right understanding—the ceremony of civility being over, Mr. Whiteley having acted as master of the ceremonies on the occasion, he asked him what character he would choose to open with? Bajazet, sir, if the play is up. Well, sir, said Whiteley, appoint your night, and you shall have a fair trial, though the part is a favorite one of my own.

This was done, and Hurst, upon the whole, was well received. The receipts of the house were shared, and the book put into Hurst's hands, for his inspection. The nightly, or incidental charges, he lightly passed over; but when he came to the line which informed him of the prodigious number of shares which the residue of the cash was to be divided into, his blood ran cold, and with a look of astonish-

ment he demanded of the manager, whether there was not some mistake in it? What, fifty-six shares!—Yes, sir, says Whiteley, and if there are too many, you may blame yourself for it: we were but twenty-seven, 'till you came to us.——No! No, sir. Why, sir, does the single addition of me—— Come, sir, says the manager, I'll relieve you from your surprise, by explaining to you the cause of our being so seemingly overloaded with people.—I allow, honestly, that one half is but ideal.— Well, sir, and do you call it honest to— Pray, good sir, says Whiteley, don't interrupt me till I have done: I promised you an explanation, and you shall have it. Did you not, good sir, demand two shares for your performance? and did I not promise, in my answer, that you should have them? I have most religiously kept my pro-

mise to you. Now, sir, would you wish me to injure the interests of all the other members of my company, and deprive them of their just rights, to gratify your vanity? I was resolved to have you at all events; I sent for you, and that I might strictly keep my word with you, two shares you have got, and so have we all.—This unexpected trick, Mr. Whiteley—Trick, sir! You gasconading scoundrel—you dish of water-gruel—you superior to any gentleman in my company! You are not fit to bring on a message to the lowest member of my company. So, sir, if you will not conform to the established rules of my company, which are as irrevocable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, you may take your course; but if you will remain, you must expect, young Barry, not to swell and bounce, in such parts as Bajazet,

any more. No, no, Mr. Too-good, you must be put upon the shelf 'till you mend your manners, as well as your mode of acting.

This sample of Whiteley's humour was far from being agreeable to the crest-fallen Hurst, who, finding his superior excellence thus slightly regarded, abruptly closed his engagement with the facetious manager, Whiteley.

But to return to myself. In a few days after I left Doncaster, I made my first appearance in Herbert's company, at Sheffield, in the part of Castalio. I fancy it was my figure at that time, and being a tolerable likely young man, that induced the managers to throw me into the line of acting, which I was always very incompetent to.

There was a young gentleman in the company, one Glassbrooke, that, had he lived to the present period, must,

in my opinion, have classed with the first tragic performers of this day. He died at Lincoln about 1766, much regretted by a numerous acquaintance of the first respectability, which his public and private worth attached to him.

After being two years in this happy and respectable company of players, I began to think myself a fixture; made exceeding good benefits, the sharing was always superior to any company of that day, and I enjoyed every thing I wished for.

It was at Sheffield, and in this company, I first attempted the character of Harlequin; and on a night of my benefit, the enthusiasm I caught for the patched hero had nearly cost me my life. To this day the accident is there well remembered. The scenes being so over-crouded on that night by those

who could not get into the front of the house, that many stood on the stage, and, at the moment I was going to take my leap, I perceived a woman standing directly at the place through which I was to escape. The audience saw this before I did, and was calling out " get away, get out of his way;" I waved my hand to her to stand aside, but having my mask on, she could not perceive whom I was addressing. The audience all the time in painful agitation for me, seeing her head was nearly parallel with the bottom of the hole I was to jump through, and quick almost as thought, I took one traverse round the stage, went over her head through the hole, and like a shot over the carpet that was prepared to catch me, and lighted on the floor, which was stone, being the extremity of the stage.

To account for the position I fell in, I must explain, that I always turned myself when through the leap, and fell on my back, with my head towards the audience. In this situation was I found on the flags, and being motionless, was at first supposed to have been dead; the audience all the time applauding in an uncommon manner. But a stop being put to the entertainment on this account, and the chasm being longer than their patience would allow, not knowing the cause, they made a violent uproar for the pantomime to go on, when Mr. Miller, late manager of the Shrewsbury company, went on the stage; for some time they would not hear him, at last procuring silence, with the loss of his temper, he exclaimed—Damn you all; what would you have? the man has killed himself! My cala-

mity was soon buzzed through the house, and a general sympathy took place.

Though twenty-six years have passed since that misfortune befel me, I at this moment feel a lively sense of gratitude, and ever shall, for the kind assistance afforded me by my friends at Sheffield; and particularly to the present Duchess of Norfolk (then the Honourable Mrs. Howard) for her tenderness and anxiety on that occasion. I was two months confined to my room, and one month before I could bear the rays of light, so violent was the concussion. However, my reputation as an Harlequin reached the metropolis, and I was invited by a letter from Mr. Beard, to a situation in Covent Garden theatre, as second Harlequin to Mr. Woodward, which I embraced.

But before I enter upon my royal

progress, and how it has ended, I must give my readers some of the eccentricities of my two years itinerancy. Herbert, the manager, who was generally known by the name of Doctor Herbert, was celebrated by the lovers of the nipikin, through the counties of Norfolk, Lincoln, and Nottingham, for the incredible number of half pints of beer and ale he soaked up in a day, no less indeed than ninety-two, from five in the morning (he was an early riser) till nine at night, always finishing the night with the ninety-third for supper.

This extraordinary gentleman was blessed with a provident wife; she gave him a daily allowance of half a crown for pocket-money, a plentiful supply you must allow, but thirsty Dennis Herbert frequently found it too little. Shame would not suffer him to apply

to his wife for any additional allowance; but as he wisely foresaw that the half-crown would be insufficient for the expenditure of a whole day in such a town as Lynn, he made use of an ingenious stratagem to enlarge his stock. The necessary attention required at the theatre caused Mrs. Herbert to sleep soundly during the morning, which put a scheme into old Dennis's head of supplying himself liberally, without being detected, or accused of being more extravagant than there was a necessity for.—I said before he was an early riser: a thirsty spark that must be quenched was his sole motive for it. Not for the reason some silly wise people give, as the means of prolonging life: but to obey the calls of the present moment. His spouse's pockets were always carefully tied up together, and deposited under her head. Dennis, tak-

ing advantage of her whilst she was under the dominion of the drowsy god, would artfully draw away the depositary of her cash, and purloin from thence such sums as he thought proper, carefully restoring the bags to the place from whence he took them. This trade of filching from himself he followed for a great while, and chuckled with the thoughts of having such a safe resource, without casting one thought on the ruinous consequences which might ensue to his family by such an extraordinary procedure. But the time drew nigh for a fatal stop to be put to this unnatural fraud. Mrs. Herbert was most punctual in the payment of all the tradespeoples' bills any way connected with what concerned the theatre, as the tallow-chandler, carpenter, painter, &c.; their demands she made a rule to discharge every

morning after play-night; but the sensible deficiency she often found, on examining the contents of her pockets, surprised and shocked her. She could not possibly account for it but by her pockets being picked, and who could do that? None but her old chamber-mate, Dennis. She therefore resolved to detect him; for which purpose, on the next play-day, she took a comfortable nap, to qualify her for the intended vigil. Her plot succeeded. About five next morning, just at the glimmering of daylight, Dennis stole softly out of bed, and ere he drew on his small clothes, he fell to rifling the never failing budget. But as soon as he began, the watchful wife cries out—O curse upon you, you old fumbling rascal; have I found you out?—What's the matter, Moll? D—n it, I believe my breeches are bewitched, I can't get my

feet thro' 'em; have you been sewing them up at the knees for fun, Moll?—Here he kept grunting and tugging to get on the pockets, or money bags, which he pretended to mistake for his breeches. But his spouse was not to be imposed upon thus: she told the whole of this iniquitous transaction to the highly-diverted company at next rehearsal.

Mr. Herbert related to me the following:—Bridge Frodsham, who was called the Roscius of the North, one night in the year 1758, was playing the part of King Richard the Third at Hull, and in the course of that solemn speech of "'Tis now the dead of night," he was alarmed with the sound of a coarse brogueneer voice from behind the scenes, with—Arrah, Bell, what have you done with your husband's thurty shirt? Frodsham's consternation

can only be conceived by other capital actors in such circumstances. The shouts, the convulsive laughter of the audience in all parts of the theatre, threw the dismayed Richard into such an agony, that he could not speak more of the soliloquy that night; so he quitted the stage abruptly, with a hearty curse on all Irishwomen; but his auditors continued in good humour, and highly applauded his succeeding efforts.

In this company was Mr. Thomas Brock, an excellent comedian, and many years the associate and congenial companion of the facetious George Alexander Stevens. Brock was not only esteemed the best comedian in the country, but was also plentifully endowed with a more than ordinary share of wit; yet too frequently had that talent, by a wanton use of it, involved him in very disagreeable scrapes. How-

ever, the following fabrication of his, by the cunning and innocent use he made of it, will by its pleasantry, I trust, gain him a pardon for advancing a falshood. For a long course of years, through carelessness in the players, or inattention in the manager, Herbert's company was reflected on for the slovenly manner they conducted their rehearsals; but after repeated animadversions on this want of respect to their friends, the public, they one and all agreed to a laudable regularity in that necessary preparation for the business of the night, and under a considerable penalty to begin their rehearsals every day (Sundays excepted) at the hour of ten, allowing, at the same time, ten minutes grace. This new broom swept clean for some time, and its unremitting severity had pinched the stipends of many of them, both

male and female. Tom Brock, who seldom relinquished pleasure for business, was hailed by some jovial companions as he was steering towards the playhouse about the proper time for rehearsal; he was easily prevailed upon to outstay his time a full hour, and his part being a busy one, he forfeited a small sum for several scenes which had been read for him. But being at length permitted to depart, he entered the theatre with a most rueful countenance, and was saluted with loud shouts and sneers by his brethren of the sock and buskin.—I give you joy, Tommy—welcome to your half ounce, my boy—we commend your generosity—pluck up your spirits, Tommy.—Gentlemen, says Brock, you may shew yourselves as merry as you please; but had you seen what I have beheld within this half hour, you would not be so jocular,

I believe.—Why, what's the matter, Tommy?—I am afraid, says Brock, we shall all feel the loss of the worthy man as well as his family, and all that knew him.—What?—Why there's Mr. ——, whom you all knew to be one of our staunchest friends, has dislocated his collar bone, and broke his right leg, by a fall from the scaffold that was erected for the repair of his house, as he was unfortunately overlooking the workmen. I am sure I shan't be able to muster spirits sufficient to go through a single scene today, the shock has so affected me. This dreadful relation of their general benefactor's disaster produced a sensation of another kind, and hurried the whole corps, men and women, out of the house, to the place mentioned by Brock, who took care to lay his scene at a considerable distance that he might profit

the more by their credulity. As soon as they were gone, Tom took up the prompt book, and read on for every absent person; and by this droll stratagem he not only worked himself whole again, but had a surplus to regale with the Saturday following, when the forfeits were levied.

It was in this company of Herbert's that his son Nat shewed me the following curious and laconic letter of Mr. Collins's, better known by the name of Brush Collins:

"SIR,

"Fortunately for your company I am disengaged; I am up to Melpomene, down upon Thalia, twig Farce, and smoke Pantomime: they say I am a very good figure, and I never saw a looking-glass that contradicted that report. To have me, now is your time or never.

"Your's, &c."

I think this is the true French *nine shillings*, as I once heard Lord Trinket express himself ignorantly, instead of *non chalance*. This gentleman many years ago played Captain Plume at Covent Garden Theatre for a trial part; it so happened that he laboured that night under a very severe cold and hoarseness, solely on account of which his performance was not impressive. Being volatile, he bid adieu to Covent Garden, and rusticated till within these very few years, when he again introduced himself in the metropolis in a very entertaining evening's amusement, called the Brush, composed of pleasant old theatrical stories well told, with humorous songs well written by himself. His Date Obolum Bellisario is an indubitable proof of his talent in the serious and interesting, and is never given by him but with wonderful effect, by which he has acquired a well-

earned easy competency, and I hope will long enjoy it. But as this gentleman is on the carpet, I must, without his leave, make free to brush up a few stories in my way, that may have been under his polishing. Having been witness to many of them above thirty years ago, they are surely as fair game for me as him. Mr. Collins knows they existed from twenty to thirty years before ever he rummaged them, and are now the standing green-room jokes of every theatre in England, Ireland, and Scotland—so *sans ceremonie.*

STROLLING EMBARRASSMENT.

At Lynn, in Norfolk, a very imperfect performer, one Crouse, came forward to give out the play for the next night; it being by particular desire, for the benefit of the box-keeper, and the last night of performing that season, which he gave out literally in the following manner:

"Ladies and Gentlemen—above and below, to-morrow eve—no—that's a lie—to-morrow's Sunday——on Monday evening will be performed the celebrated comedy of—of—of— the tragedy of—of—of— no, the opera—opera—opera of—of—of—the play—the play—of—of—of—the play-bills of to-morrow will let you know all about it. To which will be added—the farce of the—the pantomime of the—the—entertainment—of—what's to be done after the play, being by desire of the box-keepers, and for the benefit of the last season."

The late Isaac Sparks, of facetious memory, and of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, was used to say as many good things as most comedians upon record. I trust the following anecdotes will not be unwelcome here, as they are the groundwork of similar matter ingeniously brushed up by Mr. Collins, in his Brush.

During the halcyon management of Mr. Thomas Sheridan, in Dublin, Mr. Sparks was the stock Lord Mayor, both in the Beggar's Bush, and Richard the Third, and being a dignified figure, had some blank verse dukes palmed upon him, which he ever looked upon as a hardship; and to get rid of them, without downright quarrelling with his interest, he turned them into downright drollery. Mr. Sheridan, who was the Richard, and was ever averse from mirth mixing, and intruding on his serious scenes, where capitally concerned, addressed honest Isaac thus one morning: Mr. Sparks, you are an excellent comedian; in most of the parts you undertake you are unrivalled. But, sir, I hope you will pardon me for what I have done; I have taken the liberty to set down Mr. Packenham for the Lord Mayor in to-morrow's bills. You know,

my dear sir, that the extraordinary good humour your very appearance throws the whole audience into, without any sinister design in you, so totally disconcerts the gravity and proper attention, that should attach to so interesting a scene of the play wherein you are concerned, that my feelings are discomposed for the whole evening after.—Very well, mighty well, Mr. Sheridan; I thank you, sir, for many holidays I am likely to enjoy, during this suspension from my civic office.—But mark the consequence of this change of magistrates—no sooner did the new Lord Mayor make his appearance, than the gods above began to shew their fierce resentment, by shouting out off! off!—accompanied with whole vollies of potatoes, &c. which obliged Richard himself to apologise for the affront he had put upon them, by the removal of their fa-

vourite; and all was hushed for that night.

Richard was taking a run—and Sparks was summoned for the next rehearsal. Mr. Sheridan once more solicited his pardon for the indignity he had innocently put upon him.—Psha! psha! my dear sir, you did me no injury at all; but I was sure you would never have a big loaf till I was chosen your Lord Mayor again.

I mentioned that Mr. Sparks was the tragedy stock Duke, which very little suited his talent, or his inclination. So he resolved to get rid of those troublesome honours by a *coup de main*, which he thus effected.

One night presiding in the senate scene, in Venice Preserved, he thus addressed the conspirators—instead of

"You, Jaffier, are free, the rest must wait for judgment"—

he, with unusual gravity, delivered himself thus :

" You, Jaffier, are free—to go to jail ;
" As for the rest, let them wait till the day of judgment."

ROGER KEMBLE,

Father of the present meritorious and extraordinary family, was bred a hairdresser. In the course of his peregrinations he stopped some time at Canterbury, where he ingratiated himself into the good esteem of many of Smith's company of comedians, then performing there; and conceiving it to be an idle, pleasant life, he soon formed a very tender connexion with the celebrated Fanny Furnival, who was then performing there. The lady was struck with Roger's nose and athletic make; they were recommendations she thought sufficient to qualify him for a good husband. In re-

turn for his tender affection she flattered him with the promise of making an actor of him, and no woman on the British stage was better qualified for giving instructions in theatricals, at that time, Ann. Dom. 1752. She was far superior to any of her predecessors, possessing an elegant figure, an uncommon share of beauty, a perfect knowledge of every part she undertook, and an execution scarcely excelled by any actress of that day, Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Cibber excepted. But this brilliant had many flaws; her merit as an actress deserves to be noticed; it is singular that under all the disadvantages of private character, she was invited to the first families in every town the company visited, in consequence of her being a polite and agreeable companion, and superior in merit to all her theatrical sisters.

Whiteley, on the night of her first

appearance at Stamford, received the thanks of the Cecil family, who, at the same time, congratulated him on having such an inestimable actress. She set about the arduous work immediately, but so dull and untractable was Roger, that Fanny was full seven weeks in driving the part of Serjeant Kite into his head.—In this character Roger made his *debut*, but so coldly was he received in it, that notwithstanding Mrs. Kemble was Smith's principal support, he could not be prevailed upon to allow her husband any encouragement. This disappointment determined Mr. Kemble to take the advantage of an advertisement in one of the London newspapers, signed John Ward, Birmingham, offering the most flattering encouragement to any number of capital performers, or other useful people to join him in said town. This invitation was occasioned by a for-

midable opposition to Ward, by Messrs. Yates and Palmer, of Drury-lane theatre, who had the audacity to build a new playhouse in Moor-street, under his very nose, which was looked on by that pompous despot as an invasion of his long possessed territory, and often provoked the haughty monarch to make use of very indecorous language, such as rascals, upstart peasants, drawling face-making puppies. "I'll teach," says he, "the poverty-struck scoundrels to avoid my steps. I'll work the dogs a pen-'north for daring to cross my circuit." To this determined chief Mr. and Mrs. Kemble were resolved to make their approaches; they trudged their way down to Coventry, and there found a Mr. Quelch and company, who warmly solicited them to stop and perform with them. Being grievously afflicted with what the French call the *maladie du poche*, they at

first consented to this proposal, but recollecting they had pledged themselves to Ward, they jogged on to the land of promise; but it proved a wilderness to the faithful Fanny: she, poor soul, was rejected, and Roger kept upon trial.

Their separation appeared unavoidable; prudence, however, prevailed, and Roger assisted Fanny to step into a waggon then ready, and she was carried to Coventry, where she was welcomed by Quelch and his corps. This amazing meteor caused a great and sudden amendment in their business: as the hitherto neglected stable at the Half moon, was now crowded nightly with the genteelest families in town. The third Saturday after the unnatural separation of Mr. Roger Kemble from his Fanny, behold, he comes, without previous notice, to pay her a visit: it was at dinner time: his name was announced by a servan

of the house; the lady paused, and was for some moments irresolute, whether it might not be prejudicial to her feelings to admit the ingrate; and having at table with her at this very juncture, a rude sturdy Irishman, she was much perplexed for an apology; as not knowing but Roger's tender passion had so far outrun his discretion, as to quit Birmingham for the enjoyment of her society. However, the young Hibernian, guessing the cause of her present embarrassment, bounced up and flew to the door, and demanded of Roger what his business was with the lady?—The lady is my wife, sir.—I believe you lie, sir, replied the youth of Liffy's banks; did not you desert her? That is fair talk, you most barbarous lack-lather, you.—That is nothing to you, Mr. Shillala, quoth Roger; I am now come to make a lawful claim of my wife.—You are? Why then take

it out of those handful of fingers, there is the *manuum digiti* for you, giving him at the same time, a blow that demolished the gnomen of poor Roger's face, and tumbled him down a whole flight of stairs, and caused him to roar most hideously. A mob was soon gathered about him, who, upon inquiry, was informed, that a raw-boned wild Irishman kept him from the sight of his wife, and had pushed him down stairs, and falling on his nose, was the occasion of the great effusion of blood they saw. Fanny, now more than ever charmed with the intrepidity of the gallant Greek, was resolved to vindicate the avenger of her slighted beauties, and boldly stepped forth to defend him, against any violence that might be offered him by the rabble that was by this time collected, and turn the tables on her pseudo husband.—Gentlemen, said she, I beg you

will not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by that cowardly caitiff: as I am an honest woman, and I hope a christian, I never was his wife. This was spoken in such a stiff, puritanical, tone of voice, and coming from the lips of a very fine woman, won over that blatant beast the mob, who now turned all their indignation on the unfortunate Roger. He was forced to fly, pursued by the vociferous rout, with vollies of execrations from the females, and low jibes and bitter jokes from the male unruly mechanics. Thus disappointed, foiled, and entirely defeated in his attempt to procure an interview with this adored lady, Roger returned to Vulcan's favourite residence, and from that hour laid close siege to the adamantine heart of Miss Sally Ward, who had often vowed she would never wed an actor; she did not infringe upon that vow, for she espoused Roger.

Win gold and wear it, says the adage; when we see merit deserving the good things of this world, we should not envy them the rank they hold in life. The following anecdote happened on the arrival of Mr. Kemble in England from the Continent, Ann. Dom. 1775. On the Christmas eve of this year, we find him at the city of Gloucester, in search of his parents. Being informed at Bristol, where he landed, that a company of players were enacting there, 'twas natural as well as necessary for the poor scholar to make inquiry for what he sought for, of those he thought could best inform him. Here let us pause and drop one tear, in pity of the anguish the destitute, forlorn, and hopeless John Kemble suffered, by disappointment. He soon found that Carrick and Crump's company, had remov-

ed from thence to Wolverhampton. What was to be done? the forlorn academician wandered through the town, indulging such thoughts as are enjoyed by those who keenly feel the sting of poverty. Fortune, however, as if foreseeing he should be ranked among her darling sons at no distant period, threw in his way the celebrated author of an unlucky paper, that went under the signature of HISTRIOMASTRIX, in 1773, an occasional work, that cost Ryder, the Dublin manager (that being the place where it was published), many bitter pangs, as it never failed, on the morning of its publication, to cause the demolition of a valuable set of china, or the breaking of a poor servant's head with the heel of her shoe, by his amiable spouse, Lady Oonah Maglothery, as Tom Shatford, the wicked author of that mischievous paper, was pleased to style her.

This man of various capacities, luckily for poor Jack, soon recognised our disconsolate wanderer, having formerly been a member of his father's company, and invited him to a seasonable regale; informed him of his parents being then at Northampton, and though he had not sufficient cash to spare him, he proposed taking him with him to Wolverhampton on a hazard. The offer was eagerly accepted, and our adventurers set off from Gloucester that very evening, the 24th of December. Notwithstanding the roughness of the weather, the Lawn House received them: they were accommodated with a bed, and other refreshments, but not having wherewithal to discharge their bill next morning, and it having occurred to them, that Christmas day, from time immemorial, was particular for the expansion of the hearts of English Christians, after a little con-

sultation it was agreed, that two letters should be written, one to the parson in Latin, the other to a worthy lawyer of the neighbourhood, which was undertaken by Shatford. They both luckily succeeded: Io Pean was chaunted by our heroes, and they in a short time reached Wolverhampton. Shatford was a member of the company, and after some animadversion on his being a little dilatory in coming to perform at their opening, he was received, but Mr. K—— was not admissible; however, he got intelligence of his sister S—— being at Liverpool, to which place he went. His stay there was short. We next hear of him at York, where he played many respectable weighty characters, but on some difference of opinion between him and some part of the audience, he hung out a flag of defiance, and *pro tempore*, commenced

methodist preacher. Watson, the manager, told me that he advised K—— to this, and at his first oration, Watson held the plate at the door, and being gouty and upon crutches, with a most impressive *œillade* from the white of his eyes only, and a dexterous conveyance of half a crown into the plate out of his own pocket, he caused a very spirited collection.

The following whimsical account of Mrs S——'s first appearance in Dublin, is taken from an old Irish newspaper:

"* On Saturday Mrs. S——, about whom all the world has been talking,

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* When this curious account first appeared in Dublin, the lady's friends were outrageous against the author.

The humourist kept himself snug, while a number of literary Irishmen in London and Dublin were claiming the praise due to him, which, in-

exposed her beautiful, adamantine, soft, and lovely person, for the first time, at Smock-Alley theatre, in the bewitching, melting, and all-tearful character of Isabella. From the repeated panegyrics in the impartial London newspapers, we were taught to expect the sight of a heavenly angel, but how were we supernaturally surprised into the most awful joy, at beholding a mortal goddess?

"The house was crowded with hundreds more than it could hold, with thousands of admiring spectators, that went away without a sight. This extraordinary phænomenon of tragic excellence! this star of Melpomene! this comet of the stage! this sun of the firmament of the muses! this moon of blank verse! this queen and princess of

deed, they have continued to do to this hour, though the pleasant fugitive is now well known to be the offspring of the facetious Peter Seguin.

tears! this Donnellan of the poisoned bowl! this empress of the pistol and dagger! this chaos of Shakespeare! this world of weeping clouds! this Juno of commanding aspects! this Terpsichore of the curtains and scenes! this Proserpine of fire and earthquake! this Katerfelto of wonders! exceeded expectation, went beyond belief, and soared above all the powers of description! She was nature itself! she was the most exquisite work of art! she was the very daisy, primrose, tuberose, sweetbriar, furze-blossom, gilliflower, wall-flower, cauliflower, auricula, and rosemary! in short, she was the bouquet of Parnassus!

"Where expectation was raised so high, it was thought she would be injured by her appearance, but it was the audience who were injured: several fainted, even before the curtain drew up! but when she came to the scene of

parting with her wedding ring, ah! what a sight was there! the very fidlers in the orchestra, "albeit, unused to the melting mood," blubbered like hungry children crying for their bread and butter; and when the bell rang for music between the acts, the tears ran from the bassoon player's eyes in such plentiful showers, that they choked the finger-stops, and making a spout of the instrument, poured in such torrents on the first fidler's book, that not seeing the overture was in two sharps, the leader of the band actually played in one flat.

"But the sobs and sighs of the groaning audience, and the noise of corks drawn from the smelling bottles, prevented the mistake between the *flats* and the *sharps* being discovered.

"One hundred and nine ladies fainted! forty-six went into fits! and ninety-five had strong hysterics! the world

will scarcely credit the truth when they are told, that fourteen children, five old women, one hundred taylors, and six common councilmen, were actually drowned in the inundation of tears that flowed from the galleries, lattices, and boxes, to increase the briny pond in the pit. The water was three feet deep, and the people that were obliged to stand upon the benches, were in that position up to their ancles in tears!

"An act of parliament against her playing any more will certainly pass, for she has infected all the volunteers, and they sit reading the Fatal Marriage, crying and roaring the whole morning, at the expectation of seeing this Giant's Causeway, this Salmon Leap of wonders at night! An address has been presented to the good Earl of Charlemont by the principal volunteers, and backed by Dr. Quin, and the faculty of Dublin,

praying him to stay at home the evening of her appearance, else they are convinced she'll tear his infirm frame in pieces with her terrific screams, when she's dragged from the corpse of Biron, and they'll lose the greatest general that ever headed an army. Nature, most assuredly, in one of her bountiful moments, in one of her charitable and humane leisure hours, in one of her smiling days, in one of her happy weeping months, and in one of her all-sorrowing gladsome years, made this human lump of clayey perfection.

"Oh! happy Hibernia, blessed Ierne, sanctified land of saints! what a hearse load, what a coffin full, what a churchyard tree of the brightest excellence of excellences, now stands on the turf of thy fruitful earth.

"From Cork, from Killarney, from Galway, from Ballinasloe, from Eyre-

court, from the east, from the west, from the north, from the south, from Island Bridge, from Lazor's Hill, from the banks of the canal to the new road at the back of Drumcondra, shall millions come to Smock Alley, to see this astonishing woman!

"The streets round the theatre shall be crowded, and the very gabbards that carry coals to Island Bridge, shall stop at the Blind Quay, and land their unpolished watermen, to spend thirteen pence for a seat in the upper gallery when Isabella is performed.

"O thou universal genius, what pity it is, that thy talents are so confined to tragedy alone! No age, nay the Roman theatre,—the stage at Constantinople,—Nero himself never performed the scene of madness, of grief, of joy, of woe, of distress, of sorrow, and of pity, so well as Mrs. S——!

"May the curses of an insulted na-

tion pursue the gentlemen of the college, the gentlemen of the bar, and the peers and peeresses, whose wisdom and discernment have been so highly extolled, that hissed her on the second night. True it is, Mr. Garrick never could make any thing of her, and pronounced her below mediocrity;—true it is, the London audience once did not like her; but what of that? Rise up, bright goddess of the sock and buskin, and soar to unknown regions of immortal praise, for

"Envy will Merit as its shade pursue."

And here I am enabled (as I was in the kingdom, and know every particular, gathered partly from inquiries, and partly from observation) to throw some light upon as dark a transaction as ever was practised against innocence and merit: I mean that, I must call it, infamous combination, carried on against Mrs.

S——, and which raised that opposition she met with in Drury-lane theatre, in the year 1785, to the disgrace of that part of the audience who were deceived into it, which were but few after all, in comparison to her friends who opposed them, and who, on the second night, silenced them entirely. In the summer of 1783, this lady was engaged by Mr. Daly, the manager, to perform a certain number of nights in Dublin, I believe twelve: her terms were, half the receipts, the charges of the theatre being first deducted; which charges were called sixty pounds. At the latter end of June, she began her career, which was as brilliant here as in London. At the conclusion, she very much wished to perform for the benefit of the Marshalsea prison; but being pressed for time by her engagement at Cork, and hoping to have that opportunity another

season, she sent a sum of money to the conductors of the above prison, and had the thanks of the debtors, as well as an acknowledgment from the managers in the public papers: though by her own wish, it was not ostentatiously put at full length. Thus ended her first season in Dublin.

In the summer of 1784, she engaged herself again for twenty nights, at a certain sum each night. The theatre was again crowded, and all things went on prosperously till about the middle of the engagement, when she unfortunately was seized with a violent fever, which confined her to her bed for a fortnight. In the course of my theatrical career, I have known several principal actresses, who have been suddenly seized with a variety of fevers; particularly one, which our fraternity know by the name of the

box-book fever.* Mrs. S———'s great attraction, however, wherever she has been, has made this unnecessary to her: and, indeed, to her credit be it spoken, I have heard, even from the London managers, that she was above such finesse and capriciousness. This conduct, which was but too often practised by her predecessors, at last drove our modern Roscius from his throne, long before he intended it; which circumstance produced the following triplet, from the brain of a veteran actor, (Mr. Moody.)

Three thousand Thracian dames, says Ovid's page,
With devilish arts threw Orpheus in a rage—
But three of our's drove Garrick from the stage.

It is enough that the names of these ladies are known amongst their brethren, I shall not publish them to the

* Sometimes when the boxes are not well taken, and there is likely to be but a thin house, the hero or heroine will have a violent cold, hoarseness, &c.

world. However, this fever began to arouse the venal tribe against our heroine; and rumours were spread, that her illness was put on for some interested purpose; she recovered, however, and went on with her engagement. And now we come to the principal incident, which introduced the injured lady into this part of my memoirs. As she was rehearsing the part of Belvidera one morning, the veteran, Digges, as he was standing for his part of Pierre, suddenly sunk down: it was no less than a paralytic stroke, which deprived him of the use of one side. He was taken from the theatre, and, I believe, never returned to where he had, "fretted and strutted so many hours." Mrs. S——'s engagement was coming to a conclusion, and she was advertised for Cork, a few days after; in the mean time a person came to her and told her, it would be a

charitable action in her, if she would perform in a benefit play for poor Digges. Her answer was, she was sorry there was but one night she had to spare, and for that, she thought herself engaged in honour to play for the Marshalsea prisoners, as she had intended it the year before. This was to be sure a denial to Digges, though not an uncharitable negative; and yet what an artful, fiend-like use was made of it, as will appear! The messenger had not been long gone before it struck her, that it would surely be more humane to lend her assistance to this old unfortunate, and immediately dispatched a person to Drumcondra, where Digges then was, (at the house of a printer whose name, I think, was Williamson,) to say Mrs. S—— had reconsidered the matter, and would be glad to perform for him; he was thankful, and the night

and play were fixed. There was a good house. The next day, while preparing for her journey to Cork, she received a note from Digges, expressing his gratitude. It will be proper to inform my reader, that while she was in Dublin, there was a little sparring betwixt her and the manager. At Cork the misunderstanding was renewed; and I there made my own observations. These little bickerings brought down many paragraphs upon her from the party; and, directly after, a paper war began to appear; then hints and inuendos, which at length occasioned the tumult I at first mentioned. She was accused with having charged Digges fifty pounds for playing at his benefit: a very artful letter, written by a Mr. F———y upon that subject, appeared in a morning print; and as it was inserted with a more mischievous intent than any of

the rest, so had it a greater effect. It was now said, that she was to be driven from the stage whenever she came on it: and among the rest appeared a paragraph, calling on any one of her profession to stand forth and say, if she had ever done a kind action? This was rather an unlucky challenge; for a few weeks before, even in the city of Cork, out of nine or ten nights that she performed, three of them, to my knowledge, were without any emolument to herself;—one for my benefit, one for Mr. F. Aickin, of Covent Garden, and one for the benefit of a poor-house. I should have thought myself base indeed to have remained neuter at such a time, and I immediately published this circumstance in several of the morning prints. Should not Mr. Digges have had gratitude enough to have done the same? But though called upon and

urged by many of Mrs. S——'s friends, he for reasons best known to himself, kept an obstinate silence, and even suffered a rumour to prevail, that she had taken money from him, but had begged it might be kept a secret. But at last being closely pressed, a letter was sent, in which he owned, that she did play for him gratis—but that she at first had denied him. He died soon after, and peace be to his manes. Mrs. S—— appeared, and though this confession of her having performed gratis was made public, there were those determined not to believe it, and absolutely insulted her; but, as I before said, they were but few in comparison with her powerful and numerous friends, and the vipers were soon crushed.

When Mrs. S—— visited Doctor Johnson, he paid her two or three very elegant compliments; when she retired,

he seemed highly pleased, and said to Doctor Glover—Sir, she is a prodigious fine woman. Yes, replied Dr. Glover, but don't you think she is much finer on the stage when adorned by art? Sir, said Dr. Johnson, on the stage art does not adorn her, nature adorns her there, and art glorifies her.

I have often admired and commended the ability of Mr. Collins, who was able, without the assistance of any apparatus, to give an evening's entertainment unassisted by any one; but we have seen that effected lately by the facetious, witty, and goodnatured

MOSES KEAN,

Who being disqualified by the loss of one of his limbs, for sitting cross-legged on a shop-board—(the *gentleman was* a taylor.) The necessary amputation of one of his natural pedestals was the cause of

his furnishing himself with a wooden substitute, and thus equipped, he sallied forth, and with amazing success, gave imitations of many of our most celebrated theatrical performers; not with ignorance or malice, but by a true and picturesque manner of conveying to his admiring auditors the pleasing gesticulation and modulations in the speech and person of the actor he pointed at. No frequenter of our London theatres needed the impertinent and irksome information required on such occasions, as is highly necessary when other imitators are playing their comic tricks; such as —Hey! who's that now? I'm at a loss to guess. No, Mosy was ever clear and happy in the vast variety of characters which he attempted. This entertainment was for some time confined to the risibility of a few convivial societies,

where, to use the hackneyed phrase, "Moses has set the table in a roar."

Encouraged by the applause he received in these convivial societies, our hero of the thimble was firmly resolved to stich no more; but to avail himself of his imitative abilities, and boldly to raise a livelihood out of his mimic genius.

Flushed with these hopeful reflections, honest Moses, after exhibiting his mimickry in large rooms at different parts of the town, with various success, resolved to go down to Ascot-races, one summer, to try his fortune, in hopes of attracting the notice of royalty, as well as furnishing him with means of present subsistence, being, as he found in London, *cucumber times*, as his quondam shop-mates used to call them. Mosy took a room to exhibit in at Epsom, and flattered himself with reaping a

golden harvest; but his fair hopes fell to the ground by the ill-timed interference of an over-careful landlady. The inn where our hero had put up at, the night before the commencement of the races, was uncommonly crouded; and Mosy, being looked upon in no higher light than a show-man, was obliged to sleep in a room where there were three other beds besides that he was to lie on. He was accompanied with two chums: comfortable accommodation you will say; but the inconvenience was in a great measure alleviated, or rather not felt at all, by Mosy's shipping in a great quantity of generous punch, which made him sleep most sound. When all but the vigilant were at sweet repose in these several dormitories, this prudent matron, with candle in her hand, and cautious step, went through each apartment

of the well-known house, to see whether all were safe. Every bed did she with care examine, fearing her guests might some of them be uncovered, and catch their deaths, as she used to say. The œconomy was all pretty regular, till she came to the side of the bed where Mosy lay, and saw the nether end of his wooden leg stick out. This phenomenon alarmed the landlady, and in a low voice, for fear of disturbing the sleeping crew, she said, what a careless jade is this chambermaid of ours, to leave the warming-pan here in the bed, among the gentlemen? She set down the candlestick, and seized Mosy by his ligneous limb, thinking for certain it was the handle of the warming-pan, and tugged most sturdily, till she waked Mosy, who, being frightened, swore a prayer or two, interlarded with hearty

curses, on his tormentor. The poor woman, terrified, ran off, and left the astonished Moses Kean to finish his pious ejaculations, to the diversion of all the Circean crew that surrounded him. The story got wind the next morning, and the tide of ridicule ran so strong against this pillar of brass, that though not apt to be out of countenance, yet did he decamp, his hopes all unaccomplished.

When I was at Sheffield in 1765, the company (Herbert's) were very much in want of a female performer in the line of sprightly girls. A lady had written to Herbert, who, from her own account, was perfectly qualified for those parts; she was solicited to lose no time in joining the company, and the morning arrived when she was to attend the rehearsal of Miss in her Teens; when, lo! Mrs. Workman entered, then aged 50. She had prefaced her appearance in Sheffield

with a fictitious name. When the astonishment of the company had ceased at the appearance of this old lady, it was again raised by the lively and active manner in which she pourtrayed the character of Miss Biddy. As there is not a female on the stage that I know, whose life involves more relative matter to it than this old lady's, I have taken great pains to investigate it, and shall continue my Itinerant Memoirs through the medium of this extraordinary actress, under the title of

'ORIGIN OF THE VULGARISM, "MY EYE BETTY MARTIN."

Although this expression is not only vulgar in its phrase, but insignificant in its apparent sense, I trust the following explanation will render it interesting.

The Irish Roscius, Mr. Thomas Elrington, left at his decease an only so-

who possessed his property. The stage dresses being very valuable, Richard, his son, was determined, against the intention of his father, to try their success with his own performances on the boards; having had a good education, and being possessed of a handsome person, many expected he would be distinguished in theatricals, but he and his friends were most egregiously mistaken. The part he chose was Brutus; a character in which his father was particularly excellent. This task, not very easy to a probationer, excited every allowance that an indulgent audience could, with propriety and justice, possibly bestow. His father they revered almost to idolatry. But, although he possessed all the old gentleman's assets, he inherited a very small portion indeed of his theatrical abilities. His reception, however, in the character of Brutus, was such as to con-

vince him entirely it would be most discreet never to attempt a second trial on the Dublin stage; but having a rich wardrobe, and scenery, which he could not dispose of at a tenth of their value, and being still ambitious of dramatic fame, in stable, barn, or town-hall acquired, he resolved to commence itinerant manager: but players being then not so plentiful as blackberries, at least in Ireland, he embarked with the whole of his stock, engaging only one of his performers, for England. The performer he engaged was a lady, who had been many years on the stage, and had proved her talents to be above mediocrity. This female was the original Miss Jenny in the Provok'd Husband, or a Journey to London. Her name at that time was Grace. Who or what the gentleman was, whose name she assumed, the writer has never learned:

and as he, if any such person existed, was too complaisant to interrupt any innocent conversation she might be inclined to have with a friend, she never failed having a numerous train of admirers. She was then young and handsome, and was considered by the playhouse loungers, particularly, as fair game; accordingly her levee was often nobly attended.

One gallant, a young gentleman of the name of Martin, and of a reputable family and fortune in the county of Meath, in Ireland, she had so far entangled by her arts and charms, that, in defiance of family pride and more advantageous matrimonial expectancies, he proposed to marry her. Shrewdly suspecting that no such person as Mr. Grace would ever appear to claim her, the lovely Elizabeth Grace soon after became Betty Martin; and this was the

lady to whom the public are so much indebted for the cant and common expression of " my eye" to Betty Martin.

Her husband being a younger brother, had not an inch of land, or an hovel for his inheritance; and the patrimony left by his father was nearly consumed, when he irrevocably bargained for his dear Betty. Instead of being raised to a high station, she soon found, to her bitter disappointment, she had wedded a battered rake instead of a man of fortune. But what chagrined her most was, the bitter reflection of his having married her for the purpose of sharing her salary, which was not more than a solitary weekly guinea. This happened in the year 1741. This poor pittance was found much beneath the exigencies of those who were neither of them inclined to frugality. Her husband's attendance at meal times soon

confirmed Betty Martin in her suspicions of being tricked. His pretence for his never failing attendance was, that his rich relations, if they found his other haunts, might possibly come and disturb the felicity he could only enjoy in her enchanting company. Such flimsy excuses could not long impose on Betty's discernment, for it must be observed, she was at least as discerning as he was contriving.

Her patience being exhausted, she one day pertinently questioned him where his estate lay? "My dear Betty (said ıe), I beg your pardon, but I have no state! Do forgive the imposition that ·as dictated by the excess of my affec- ɔn. I have not the most distant chance prospect of any, but by the death of r elder brother, who, for your sake, m sorry to add, is, at present, in a y good state of health."

This was a thunder-clap to Betty, she railed and reproached him in the severest terms; and having exhausted her spirits and her invective, she very calmly and deliberately desired him to find some other mode of subsistence, than that of eating her out of house and home. "For, may I never sleep more," continued the sordidly selfish baggage, "if you shall ever eat so much as a crust at my table again: so, my fine man of fortune, begone, and impose upon some other silly, innocent, unsuspecting creature, like myself, if you can; and ill-fate attend her who would prosecute you for having two wives. Hah! hah! Mr. gentleman, so I was to be made your property, and maintain you in idleness, was I? O, my eye for that, my dear. There, sir,—there's the door the carpenter made—Christopher Martin, esq. trouble me no more."

"And is this your love and tenderness for a husband, who doats on you, that you can deny him even shelter in your lodgings, and even after six weeks constant love?"

Betty was not to be thus persuaded into any forgiveness, or generosity for the man who had thus disappointed her in her fondest hopes of splendid enjoyments. For she aptly replied to him, out of her part of Millwood, which she often performed to the greatest height of excellence.

"Whining, preposterous, canting villain," said she, "I am going to drink tea abroad—so, Squire Martin, good evening to you."

The cruelty and unabashed impudence of his irritated spouse, confounded his senses as much as hurt his sensibility; and rather than expose a wife whom he really and tenderly loved, he

even forbore to assert that power, to which he as a husband was entitled. Although he thus avoided exposing her to a censorious world, yet she still remained indifferent to his necessities.

In this hopeless state of indigence, he knew not what course to adopt for present relief. He, however, at last recollected a school-fellow, whom he had not seen for some time, and to whom he applied for immediate assistance; but rather than render himself liable to the rebuke of his friend for having been guilty of so imprudent an act as his marriage with Betty, he entirely concealed from him the cause of his distressed situation.

Here it may be necessary to observe, that Martin was so much a man of the world as almost to rank among the most common sharpers. But such is the fascinating power of beauty, joined

with that consummate guile which has produced too many Millwoods in real life; that, with all his address and experience, he was the dupe of Betty Martin.

Martin, having succeeded with his school-mate far beyond his expectations, returned to his wife's lodgings, where he waited most anxiously a considerable time before she returned from her visit.

Entering the apartment where he was sitting, her eyes, at seeing him, darted on him looks uniting rage and disdain, while his beamed on her those of infinite joy and tenderness.

"I little thought," said she, "after what had passed to-day—"

"Pray don't be angry now, my dear Betsy," he replied: "Hold your hand; there are five guineas for you, my girl; and for this gift, I ask no more than a

smile, and a kiss, instead of being received with that ugly frown which destroys those charms which otherwise render your countenance matchless and irresistable."

The money presented pleaded more his cause than all his complimentary eloquence.

The dame, being thus disarmed of all power to continue her rage, behaved with her accustomed fondness and affected sincerity of attachment, while the money lasted. But no sooner was it gone than her sordid temper displayed her characteristic cruelty and insolence. Kit Martin was notwithstanding so infatuated, that instead of despising her principles, he exerted every means that he could possibly devise to satisfy her with money. To effect this purpose, he so importuned his friends for pecuniary assistance, that he

exhausted their patience, if not their purses; and thus at last reduced himself to the point of not having a single friend to whom he could apply.

Mortified with distress and shame at the many repulses he met with in his numerous applications, and his ways and means failing in Dublin and its vicinity, to obtain any further loans for his selfish wife, he resolved to ask a trifling sum of his richer brother. For this purpose, he walked to his brother's mansion, near the famous town of Balroothery, in the yoke of Fingal. But his brother having heard of his imprudent marriage, refused him admittance. He was, however, kindly accommodated for the evening by an old tenant of his father's, who also presented him with all his little store could spare, which was two shillings,

in order to defray his road expences back to Dublin.

The unkind and unexpected usage of his brother, drove him to the desperation of robbing a gentleman of his watch and money, after having knocked him off his horse, near Turvybridge, about ten miles from Dublin. With this booty, he pursued with all expedition his way over a bog that led to the Neul, in order to escape through Finglass to Dublin.

Thus did this man, against the pleadings of nature and education, commit in open day-light an act defying the laws of God and man, and merely to satisfy the avarice and vanity of an unprincipled wanton. Knowing that this woman would not see him without money, love and disappointment prompted despair to dictate and execute the

above enormous act of social delinquency.

Although he fled over the dangerous morass, with all the expedition natural to a man in such imminent danger, yet he was very soon overtaken and conveyed bound to prison. The whole of the stolen spoil being found upon him, and this operating to his conviction, he was sentenced to die: but this sentence, from the powerful interest and interference of friends, was changed to that of transportation for life.

During his imprisonment, his gentle and generous spouse was delivered of a son, who was christened Thomas. This son was, not many years ago, a musician in Mr. Stanton's company at Bridgnorth. The disgraceful voyage which poor Kit Martin was sentenced to take, being known to have been instigated by Betty, although no proofs

could be produced sufficient to affect her life or liberty, yet was her native country rendered too alarming for her safety; she, therefore, with Dick Elrington, set sail for England.

It is here proper to state who were the rest of her companions, whom, besides the son of Kit Martin, she brought with her to this country.

She had, beside the child by Martin, a daughter by one Davis, an eminent sadler of Christ Church-yard, in Dublin. The girl was well reared to maturity, and married, in 1756, to a very worthy man, by whom she had several fine children, one of whom is at this moment a female ornament to the British stage in London, where she is enjoying a fame, equally merited and distinguished. Indeed, the whole of this family, which are numerous, are such patterns of moral excellence, and so en-

tirely exempt from the disgraceful vices of their grandmother, it would be insulting to detail any further particulars respecting them, amid what relates to the shameful proceedings of Betty Martin.

On their arrival in England he made her his wife, and she soon became mistress of a company of comedians. She many years governed a most unruly and unsteady people with some credit; and, perhaps, more advantage, to herself as a manageress., Elrington being rather indolent, and Betty sharp and active, he acted well in resigning to her the entire sway of his theatrical sceptre.

In their stage sovereignty she had the taking of towns, and supplying the chasms of desertion, and other arduous vocations of theatrical concern. In this continuance of management she led her dramatic troop to Buxton, where they

had several summer campaigns, to the great diversion of such polite company as generally visit that place.

Their ill stars led them to Manchester at the beginning of the year 1754. In this town Elrington took a new-erected theatre of a Mr. Magawly, a famous short-hand writer. With some difficulty Elrington obtained (from not the best tempered magistrate) a license; and there not having been a company in the town of the kind for a considerable time, and great advantages being expected from a theatre that might be called regular, when compared with those which had preceded it; Elrington and his busy lady lost no time to prepare and decorate the house for opening.

The guileful and penetrating Betty mistook for once her own interest. There having been an hospital erected

by subscription, a little before their arrival in Manchester, she thought appropriating the first night to the benefit of this new foundation, would considerably recommend her to the patronage of the town and its vicinity. With this hope she caused most conspicuous posting-bills to be stuck up at the corners of the popular parts of the town, and every place of public resort, beside furnishing the most respectable private and public houses with hand-bills. Particular care was taken in these bills to remind the inhabitants of the company's generous and humane intention. But who can describe the amazement of this body theatrical, when they saw, on the morning of rehearsal, the high constable, followed by his municipal subordinates, come upon their virgin stage, and carry the

whole company before a quorum of justices, then sitting in Market-street-lane? Not being acquainted with their offences, they were at first greatly alarmed; but their suspence was soon ended by a surly justice asking them, "how they dared (after being granted the privilege of performing) to insult a numerous body of respectable subscribers to the hospital, by offering to play for its benefit their vagabond performances?"

Elrington, as was his duty, very justly replied, "that they had been often applied to by the gentlemen, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor, in many corporate towns, to give a benefit play for the maintenance of the paupers in the several parishes; and that, without the least intention of offence, they naturally thought"——

"You thought!" answered the justice, interrupting him—"What, because the parish officers of a beggarly borough or corporation were so contemptibly mean as to solicit and accept the favours of a parcel of vagrants, that the independent gentlemen, traders, and manufacturers of the flourishing town of Manchester, were to be wheedled into generosity by such a grossness of insolence? But we must teach you the difference, honest friend—Our indulgence must not encourage you to the repetition of a similar insult, or to call it by the softest name, of such an unpardonable presumption.—Hear, therefore, the fixed and final determination of this meeting. Some gentlemen conceiving you might not intend to insult them by your gratuitous performance, they have been so

lenient as to resolve that you shall (having first discharged all debts that you may have contracted in our town) make an immediate retreat from our borders. Should any of you murmur, delay paying your debts, or linger in our neighbourhood, Bridewell shall be your habitation. Go to some other place, where the inhabitants may be glad to receive the bounty of your unsolicited benefit. No reply! our decree is unalterable."

"Oh! stay, your worshipful justice, stay!" exclaimed the almost frantic Betty, who had by this time pressed (unsent for) into the attending crowd. "Oh! most worthy, worshipful, sirs! dear gentlemen, recall your cruel sentence. O hear the prayer of a poor wretched, undone woman, who is now kneeling before you. On my knees,

and for my dear company, I beg you will soften the rigour and severity of your sentence."

"Away with that woman!" exclaimed the inexorable justice.

"Ah, sir! behold this moving posture! behold my falling tears! I am certain your heart is not so flinty as not to feel for me; would you but suffer it to attend to my extreme affliction—my property! My property—mine and my childrens' present and future subsistence—all, all, depend upon this day's determination. Can you see my pangs—my agonizing pangs, and still continue deaf, pityless, and inexorable.—And will you not extend some small alleviation of your hard sentence to a woman—

"Steep'd in poverty to the very lips?"

"If I must rise unsuccessful, let me

first, in this humble posture, add to my entreaties for your favour and forgiveness, my sincere and fervent prayers for your present prosperity and future happiness—

" When Priam kneel'd, the great Achilles wept."

" You are an arrant impostor, woman," resumed he, " to prate so much about your poverty and wretchedness, while you are garnished out with a gold-lac'd jacket and petticoat: such a sturdy beggar as you have proved yourself, should be sent to our Bridewell without further words."

" Yes," said the artful Betty, " let me be instantly manacled, shackled, or closed up in such a brazen bull, as the infernal tyrant Phalaris used, as recorded in Grecian story."

She had no sooner said this, than she rose and tore a valuable wig from

her bald pate, which had long before been despoiled by a cruel disorder of its flaxen locks. Thus in a state of affected distraction she ran like a fury about the room.

But this well-acted scene had no other effect on the inexorable justices, than to stimulate them to order that the company should leave the town in twenty-four hours from that instant.

Poor Betty's heroic frenzy was, (to use her own pathetic phrase), in this instance, "all my eye."

So great a disappointment almost ruined poor Elrington; but having convened his company, he proposed a trip to Ireland, to which they all readily consented. The company accordingly marched to Liverpool, where they found a vessel ready to sail for Belfast.

Having made their passage to this

town, and represented to the inhabitants their cruel usage and disappointment at Manchester, they had the satisfaction of finding themselves received with the same kindness and humanity, as if they had been cast upon the shore by the calamity of a shipwreck. Although Mr. William Lewis, the father of the deputy-manager of Covent-garden Theatre, and Mr. James Love, (alias Dance), had visited Belfast three times in the space of two years, preceding their landing, which was at the beginning of the winter 1754; yet the respectable gentlemen of that opulent town accommodated them with a spacious wine vault, and encouraged them in every other manner they possibly could during four months.

The next place they went to was Lough, from whence they proceeded to

the Maze races, where they terminated their peregrination in Ireland; for the evil genii which were continually prompting Betty to adopt some project of her fertile mind, suggested to the company, that, if they would undertake a voyage to Carmarthen, in South Wales, their fortunes would certainly be made.

She was, moreover, secretly tempted to this voyage by one of her company, who was a most restless and eccentric theatrical adventurer. This gentleman is the well-known Alexander Fisher, who, I believe, is still living. He has been famous for leading several companies many wild, absurd, and extravagant journies, through France, Flanders, Denmark, and even into Russia. He stated to her, in the most alluring colours, the immense wealth of the place, the generous and boundless hos-

pitality of its inhabitants, and the great plenty and cheapness of all kinds of provisions.

This flattering description of the Welch *el dorado*, made a deep impression on the covetous heart of Betty, and her husband had little rest until he consented to sail for this golden coast. They took shipping, and arrived at Carmarthen, where Mr. Elrington soon found he had brought a heavy company of useless performers; for the better part preferred a journey to Dublin to a sea voyage to a country where they were strangers.

The more sensible inhabitants of the place observed to Elrington, that the rich lace and embroidery of his stage-dresses, could not compensate for the bombast fustian, and ignorance of his intolerable company. "You are, we must all acknowledge, Mr. Elrington,

yourself, a very sensible and well-bred man: It is, therefore, inexcusable in you, to attempt such an imposition upon our understandings, as if you really thought we were a herd of mountaineers, as wild and uninformed as our mountain goats. But you have found yourself mistaken; however, we are resolved not to resent, as it deserves, such an insult. We have, therefore, agreed to make you six good houses, and then to wish you better success in some other town, where the merits of your performers may be better suited to the taste and knowledge of the inhabitants."

The generosity of the intention softened the severity of the lecture in the mind of Elrington. He had no sooner informed his companion of the kind promise, than the *grateful creature* be-

gan to utter the most unmannerly invective against all ignorant pretenders to judgment of theatrical talents.

"How should such stuttering, sputtering creatures," exclaimed she, "with their barbarous Welch dialect, set themselves up for theatrical censors? But let these six nights be over, and then they shall hear their own from an *Irishman*. Shall we be thus harassed and driven about from pillar to post, and wasting our substance, and all through the caprice of a parcel of hottentots, who can't for their souls speak one word of plain English?" This threat, however, from the well-timed interference of Elrington, was never put in execution.

These six nights proved so very productive, that they did not leave the principality before they had played in several towns of both the northern and

southern counties. Among these they performed at Carnarvon, where Elrington, who had regularly corresponded with his mother, residing then in Dublin with a second husband, an Englishman, a dealer in horses, and of great property, received a letter from his father-in-law. This proved an invitation to return, in order to marry an only daughter which the old gentleman had by a former wife. In the letter he observed, that he was well acquainted with the connexion his son-in law had been seduced into; but he hoped he had by this time had sufficient experience of his wife's disposition, to induce him to conform to the wishes of him and his dear mother, by resolving to leave his present pursuits, and settle with a virtuous partner for life. And to induce him the more to this

separation, he told him that the reversion of his mother's jointure, with the immediate possession of a plentiful fortune which he had, by the blessing of God, honestly acquired, awaited his acceptance.

Elrington was not long in deciding what was to determine either his future happiness or misery. He certainly had some kindness for Betty, and it was not without some reluctance, he determined to leave her. But fortune prevailed over his (not very deep rooted) passion, by holding him a picture with a beautiful Lavinia inviting him with one hand, and the other pointing to houses, lands, tenements, and money-bags, as waiting for his possession. He therefore left his Betty, and sailed again for his native Hibernian shore.

It is proper to observe, that Mr. Elrington had the prudence to preserve

his morals and affections from being entirely corrupted. Before he separated from Betty Martin, he deposited in the care of a clergyman, at Carnarvon, one hundred pounds to be given to a natural son (his son is still living, and known in many parts of the country by the appellation of *Dancing Dicky*), when he should arrive at age. As he was not in debt, and had an excellent stock of clothes and scenery, he judged Betty, with her worldly prudence, might support herself and son comfortably, without being obliged to disturb his repose by any future application for further assistance.

Matters being thus arranged and settled in his mind, honest Dick, like Æneas, unknown to his mate, made his escape, and took his departure for Dublin: he had trusted none with his intention, but the above-mentioned

clergyman, and one Robert Longfield, a member of his community, and a fellow collegian.

When Betty missed her partner, although not suspecting the real cause, yet she foreboded evil. Three days and as many nights passed without any tidings of the runaway; but on the fourth, which was market-day, a farmer, who put up at the inn where she lodged, informed her that he saw her lord and master going, two days before, on board a little Irish sloop, from a small fort or creek that was in sight of his house. The united jarrings of ten thousand screech-owls could not have put her senses so much to torture as did the single innocent voice of the farmer. —She stamped, stormed, tore off her cap, and threw her wig in the fire—while she bellowed in hideous exclamations—"I am undone!—I am undone!

—Who had he with him, fellow?—What sort of a hussey was she?—Speak, thou devil in man's clothes!"

The wild actions of this Tisiphone so terrified the farmer, that he could not answer her. Mad with rage and impatience, she seized the astonished peasant by the collar, and demanded most furiously a particular description of the woman who had stolen her *lawful* husband.—"Was she black?—was she fair?—was she brown?—Speak, thou dumb tormentor.—What! not a word, thou silent aggravator of misery?"

"Tam hur knuckles!" cried the farmer, half choaked, "Let hur loose womans—I seed no womans with him, not I—hur had, I to pelieve, enough of thee, Got's splutter hur nails!"

"Why thou clod-pate of a clod-hop-

per," cried she; "have you the impudence"——

"Look you, womans," said the Welsh farmer, "if you don't keep off hur tamn'd claws, hur shall lay hur whip across hur shoulders.—Fine times inteet, Got pless us, when hur can't come to hur inn without peing assaultet by mad show-womans!"

At this moment came in Elrington's companion, Longfield, who, seeing the passionate trim of Betty, soon guessed the cause. Seeing Longfield, she ran to him, and asked, "whether he knew of her Dick's elopement to Ireland with a trollop?"

"That he is gone," answered Longfield, "is certain; but not *with* a woman, I assure you—he is gone *to* a woman."—

"To a woman!" exclaimed Betty

with encreased rage—" Thou pander! —Who is she?—Charlotte Charke—what the jade that had a sham quarrel with him at Denbigh, and left the company in a tiff?—So she went before him to Ireland, I suppose, instead of going, as she artfully pretended, to Exeter. But I'll follow the wretch. I have many rich friends in Dublin; and although I have not been there for many years, I am sure I shall be well remembered by many.——Aye, aye—you may sneer——but honest Betty Martin——I mean Elrington—will be spoken of there, as long as Christ Church will stand in Christ Church-yard. But I am low-spirited. Landlady, bring me a drop of your reviving cordial. I beg the farmer's pardon, I hope he will partake and be friends with me."

" Not hur, pelieve hur," answered

honest Taffy; "nor would hur advise you to take the liquor inwartly, thyself; for, as St. Paul sayeth, 'tis unseemly and unpecoming in a woman to stand uncovered: hur wou'd recommend to you to rub your bare head with the strong spirit you have ordered, look you."—

"The farmer is very right, in my opinion," said Longfield; "put something on your head, and call a meeting of the company to consider what is most proper to be done in this exigency."

"I'll proceed immediately for Dublin," exclaimed the infuriate manageress, resolved to pursue her treacherous spouse, which she did, without a moment's delay; but judge of her sensations and distracted behaviour, when she found that he was actually married to his mother's daughter-in-law. The

disconsolate, deserted fair one, exerted all the arts she was mistress of, to promote an interview, but to no effect—the resolute Elrington sent her word, that he could not, consistently with his own reputation, or her safety, comply with her solicitation. He likewise humanely and generously supplied her with money to defray her expences back to Carnarvon: but the outrageous spirit of this fierce Amazon was not to be soothed. Finding, however, all her arts and entreaties fail to obtain access to him, she was compelled to relinquish the inexorable Elrington, and resolved by the first opportunity to return to Carnarvon, where she had left what was dearer to her than even her great favourite Elrington. This object nearest to her heart was her stage and other worldly property! which she had acquired with as much meanness

and baseness as she retained them with avarice.

Betty had now to begin the world once more. Being deserted by Elrington in the year 1760, when she was in her 44th year, she might, as many of her sex more moderate than herself would have done, have thought no more of ungrateful man. But her partiality for mankind was not to be resigned at what she conceived too early a period for such a species of self-denial.

Fortunately for the widow, there happened to be what is frequently called a scalping party at a village near Carnarvon. Having dressed herself in her green and gold jacket, with a red feather in her hat, she mounted an hired palfrey, and set off to reconnoitre this groupe of Thespians. Enquiring at the inn for the manager,

she was informed there was none.—"What, no manager!" exclaimed Betty with some surprize: "Well, landlord," continued she, "perhaps the company is directed by some discreet woman, whom, if you please, we will call a manageress, although that's in my mind downright nonsense!

"A woman, my lady!" replied the landlord—"Oh! yes, my lady—there's three of that sort of cattle; but they're of little worth, God knows."

"Well, landlord, (continued Betty) could you send for one of the gentlemen of the party, that I may just speak to him?"

"Ah! my lady," said the landlord, "God defend you, there is not a single gentleman in the whole kit of them."

"Well, sir," returned the lady, "if they are not single, I suppose they are married."

Oh dear! my lady; you mistake," answered the host, "that there were no single men among them. But when you ask'd for a gentleman, ecod I was right in telling you there was not one among them—yes, I lie though—there's a young man, a painter, who works at a gentleman's house in our neighbourhood, and who was formerly much given to playing handycraft tricks upon your cards, and your cups and balls, and such like tricks and fancies; and so, because he's a genteel zort of a man, they *gets* him to play the fool with himself, and idle away his time with acting speeches among them?"

"Can I see the gentleman you talk of?" asked Betty, with no little impatience.

"Oh! yes, my lady," he replied—"Aye, he's fit to be seen—but for the playmen that don't work, Lord! Lord!"

The painter being sent for, came directly; for he was told that a great lady wanted to see him.

Betty Martin being thus called my lady, and ladyship, assumed airs of importance; she inquired with an air of dignity respecting the names and the property of the company with whom he associated. Finding from his satisfactory answers that they were in low circumstances, she resolved instantly to take advantage of their necessities. She engaged the whole troop; and as the painter *might be serviceable*, she offered him a guinea a week, and a share for playing, painting, &c. &c. as she might find occasion.

This unexpected proposal was by the young man immediately accepted; and Betty having desired to see the forlorn troop, he ran and brought them to an interview with her ladyship. They had

no sooner been in her august presence, than their ears were most agreeably saluted with the sound of promise. Terms were immediately proposed by her, and accepted by the company, with this condition, that she would grant them leave to perform that night the play of Theodosius, or the Force of Love, which was bespoken by a great Roman Catholic lady in the neighbourhood. This Betty most generously granted, but not without expressing, that it was her particular desire to see and hear the performance.

The young painter, whose name was Workman, made a tender impression upon the too susceptible heart of his tender mistress, who, full of the vigour of fifty, wished to change once more her name. For this purpose, she selected him from the herd to dine with her that day, to which honour he cor-

dially agreed, being "nothing loth" to be thus distinguished from the rest of the Thespian brethren.

At this *tête-à-tête* very little passed but discourse on common concerns. At the proper time the lady manageress went to the play, of which she has frequently given the following droll and whimsical description.

"Instead of one curtain in the front of the stage, they had two, which, at the ringing of the bell, were instantly drawn aside by two of the players, who stood behind them for the purpose. These curtains were hung or suspended from a cord nailed up at each side of the room, and by the rings she perceived they were a suit of bed curtains, which had been ingeniously contrived for this purpose. The high altar, as expressed in the play-bill, was composed of no other materials than a middling

sized deal box, with a smaller placed upon it, so as to raise this temporary sacred edifice to a proper state of convenience. This was to represent what the priests called the tabernacle. The largest was covered with a sheet from the ostler's bed, and the small one with a napkin, ranged in order, as becoming as the nature of the decorations would admit. Six iron candlesticks, with halfpenny lights in each, were placed on the sacred pile. No kneeling Constantine was seen, as was promised in the theatrical bill of fare, nor bloody cross, in conformity to the legend, appeared to the most Christian Emperor, who is also said to have seen written underneath the cross in the sky—

IN HOC SIGNO VINCIS.

Betty thought this omission was unpardonable. Some of the words of the

solemn hymn with which the tragedy opens, provoked from the risible temperament of Betty a most unmannerly laugh, which caused her to be severely reprehended by the lady who had bespoke the play.—She, good creature, mentioned something of *ludere cum sacris*; and that grinning Betty, although in a laced jacket, ought to have been turned out of the place. The words which caused the untimely and indecent mirth were—

> " The temple with new glory shines,
> " Adorn the altar with the shrines,
> " And purge the place from sin."

" This passage so operated upon the wickedly witty Betty, that she could not, as she said, for the life of her, prevent the risible idea, which " washing the shrines" raised in her mind, of washing the sheets.

"Atticus, the high priest, and successor to St. Chrysostom, had on a ragged shirt, which being tolerably clean, and worn over his coat, served the double purpose of entirely covering his own much soiled one, and serving also as a surplice and vestment. Leontine, the Athenian philosopher, was dressed in a shabby great coat, buttoned down to the very bottom, and that for more pressing reasons than even the high priest could offer for his tattered vestment; but a tattered philosopher is not so out of character. As for Betty, she was better pleased to see the humble Leontine in his long surtout, than to see him absurdly and fantastically dressed in a sable gown and a scholar's cap, or square trencher, agreeably to the whim of modern decoration. Beside, the leathern belt

round his waist, secured from the sight of the audience the ruined state of his small clothes, which she had observed in the day-time, when he and his companions visited her at the inn.

"After the necessary dialogue of the high priest and the sage Leontine, Varanes and Athenais entered, who came to make love, and admire the beauties of the gorgeous temple. The youthful and innocent victim, Athenais, was represented by a woman of at least fifty years old; she had a face inflamed and ruddy as the rising sun. She was, however, tolerably dressed in a dark cotton gown, the property of the good-natured chambermaid of the public-house, where this grand and favourite tragedy was represented. The chaste modest virgin being a learned damsel, knew better than wilfully and impro-

perly to wear white satin shoes or pumps, as most of our modern heroines of the buskin practise; plain brown and leather shoes she was convinced were the best in which she could appear. Her train was a Scotch lawn apron, without stiffening; and to complete her dress, she wore no veil: her native beauties required no disguise.

"All the decoration of her head, and mahogany shoulders, was simply the grisly, or to speak more gallantly, the silver tinted ringlets, which nature and time had conjointly exerted themselves to bestow upon her.

"The young Persian prince, Varanes, was the gallant painter, Mr. Workman. His Sunday clothes were fresh, tight, and becoming. They were, however, not of the Persian fashion; but to remedy this defect, he gave them a fo-

reign air, by pinning a rose-coloured window-curtain on his left shoulder, and fastening the other extremity to his right hip. This contrivance, with a cocked-hat and feather, gave the blustering hero spirits, not only to make love, but to knock about with great fury the gods.

"Theodosius, the soft headed and meek hearted emperor of the east, although he had kings from all nations of the conquered world continually flattering and offering their incense at the shrine of his royalty, was not so decorously dressed as his school-fellow Varanes, his coat and waistcoat not being so fresh and entire. Lest any unseemly fractures should perchance be discovered in his breeches, he had with prudent caution covered them with a woman's scarlet cloak, which, tied

round the waist, completely served him for lamburkeens.

"In the front of the stage were eight lumps of clay at equal distances, perforated with holes large enough to hold a candle of no greater dimension than their income could afford; the magnitude of these was equal in size to those which so uncommonly illuminated the high altar."

All the above passed the observation of Betty, without any other reprimand than what is mentioned. She was, however, in great apprehensions that she could not behave with moderation any longer, when she heard Varanes telling his fair mistress, that

"'Tis strange, O Athenais! wond'rous all,
"Wonderful the altars, and wonderful the shrines."

She has often confessed she could

not, by any means, restrain the laugh which the casual irony of the above lines, directed to the construction and embellishment of the high altar, prompted. But in order to prevent a repetition of rebuke, she affected a cough, in which she drowned the audible effects of her risibility. In a word, neither the satyrical application of the speeches, nor the ridiculous appearance of the performers, disheartened Betty. She thought that she knew how to make them useful. As to the necessity of cloathing her new raised troop, she knew that she could dress them sumptuously in the wardrobe left her by the generous Elrington. With this assurance she returned to Carnarvon; but before she left the village, she took care that her prepossessing blandishments should win the heart of

the fortunate Mr. Workman. They were consequently married on the road.

Arriving at Carnarvon, she assumed her accustomed and characteristical assurance, and introduced Mr. Workman to her landlord and landlady, and all her acquaintances. The bells rung merrily, and the astonished company of players arriving some time after, partook of the wedding-dinner, which the lovely and loving bride had ordered, to render the day as joyous as possible.

This was the fifth time Betty had the pleasure of seeing the stocking thrown in celebration of her nuptials. The first was, when she joined hands with Mr. Grace, the second with Mr. Barnes, the third with the unfortunate Christopher Martin, the fourth with Elrington, and the fifth with the

jolly painter, who now shared her felicitous endearments. Next day, the blooming bride evinced, that the connubial comforts had not entirely divested her of her attachment to matters of more worldly nature. She wisely exerted herself to obtain the patronage of the town for a play or two, in which she succeeded. She also augmented her company, and afterwards pursued the beaten road of matrimony with her new espoused mate, with various success.

Her fifth husband, however, did not live long to enjoy his happiness, a circumstance not imputed by his acquaintances to his excess of conjucal felicity. But others, more charitable, considered, and with some probability, that his premature death was occasioned by the deleterious quality of the white lead which he used in his

business of house-painting; for, as the emoluments arising from stage management did not always prove sufficient for his exigencies, he was obliged to follow, rather too closely, his own unhealthy profession.

Poor Betty, being now once more a widow, and the two sons she had by Martin and Elrington being arrived at manhood, she had them both taught to play on the violin, which proved of considerable advantage to both herself and them, while she remained mistress of a company: this, however, did not long continue after the death of Workman. Dancing Dicky arriving at a proper age, received the hundred pounds from the Welch parson, with whom it was left by his father. This bequest Betty had viewed many years with a jealous affection; but all her arts and contrivances to obtain her wish could

not prevail on the honest divine to betray his trust.

Fortune having for a long period frowned upon her schemes, she resigned all present thoughts of management, and joined James Augustus Whiteley.

Whiteley, however, understanding she was possessed of considerable stage property, was rather alarmed lest she might, at a future time, prove his rival. Being assured that her restless ambition could ill endure subordination, longer than she was obliged by necessity, he resolved to deprive her of the only means she had of reinstating herself on the Thespian throne. With a determined air he informed her, that, unless she parted with her scenery and theatrical wardrobe, she must part with him; this dictatorial mandate raised symptoms of passion, which, however, she prudently stifled, until an oppor-

tunity offered more favourable for its effective indulgence; she, therefore, desired he would grant her sufficient time to find a proper purchaser. But Whiteley peremptorily told her, that the disposal of herself or them would admit of no excuse or delay; and lest she should accuse him of cruelty, he offered to buy instantly the greatest part of her property himself. Knowing the alternative, she disposed of the whole of her scenery, and many of her laced embroidered clothes, and her valuable shapes to this manager, for ready money.

Betty being now possessed of a little money, and still retaining an ardent love for mankind, she once more threw her eyes on a brisk young man, Mr. Richard Wilson, the late celebrated comedian, who happened at this critical time to join the company. He was

a native of the ancient city of Durham, and being rather inexperienced in the arts of life, he was the more proper object for her arts. To effect a prepossession in her favour, she began by attending most minutely to all his wants at the theatre, and lending him occasionally several stage ornaments, &c. &c. These arts at first proved ineffectual, and had she not spread a net of more solid texture, she had never completed her fond wishes.

This lure was no other than an elegant tragedy waistcoat, which she had artfully spread on the coverlet of her dressing table, and invited her enamorato to feast his eyes with its splendid and untarnished embroidery. Wilson was transported at the sight of the gaudy lure; he gazed, he praised the curious workmanship, and by his eyes soon told her the longing desire he had

to be its master. Finding he was caught, she pursued her conquest by desiring most earnestly and tenderly that he would try it on. To please the lady, he most willingly complied. Thus dressed, he strutted, vapoured round the room, and surveyed himself in the pier glass which happened to be in the chamber; his youthful pride was all on fire: but the gaudy vesture was not yet his own, and to take it off again was the difficulty. "To keep, or not to keep it," was the question which rather perplexed his feelings. After some hesitation, he, however, ventured to ask the enamoured widow if she would part with it; for, as he thought it became him mightily, he preferred it to any waistcoat he had yet seen in the much boasted wardrobe of Whiteley.

"Part with it, my dear young friend," said Betty, in one of her most

soft and impassioned tones—"yes, and my whole store to one so deserving of a woman's favours as you are, my dear friend. We are both single, thank God; and if you will consent to marry me immediately, my purse, my person, and my extremest means, lie all open to your occasions. Look into the contents of this chest. Whiteley was mistaken, when he thought that his jealousy had compelled me to part with my whole wardrobe. Nay, do not pause; as I have before told you, they are all your own, upon the honourable condition of simply marrying me; that's all."

"'Tis resolved," said her Orlando; "let me have the money; I'll fly upon the post horses of love for a licence, and by this kiss, I will make you my lawful wife ere noon to-morrow."

Through her eagerness to receive the kiss, and his aukwardness in giving it, her *wig* tumbled off—but he was so closely *tête-à-tête*, that he luckily did not perceive this accident of her FALSE TETE.

He instantly left his intended, and with a becoming diligence performed his promise. To communicate this very important affair to Mr. and Mrs. Whiteley was assigned to the impatient Dicky, who readily accepted of the commission, which he executed so well as not only to receive their approbation, but also the consent of Whiteley to stand as the father, to give away the almost worn-out sinner, *Multorum Nominum*, alias Betty Six Names, to this thoughtless, giddy boy. But it may be averred without presumption, that Mr. Whiteley was not doomed to everlasting pu-

nishment for that crime, for he was never known to speak of this unequal, this truly unnatural match, without the most sincere symptoms of repentance. They were, however, next morning joined in the bands of matrimony. Strange as it may appear, when the honey moon had passed, the fondness of the bridegroom rather encreased than diminished. Thus loving and beloved, Wilson passed away several months in Mr. Whiteley's company.

But this all-observing and penetrating manager, perceiving some suspicious symptoms of pious Betty's tampering with a discontented party in his company, he without ceremony discharged her and her husband. A manager, whose name was Leister, being then at Leeds, and in great want of performers, induced the discharged

hero and heroine to proceed to the said town, where they had no sooner arrived, than they were most readily and chearfully engaged. Mrs. W. having been so long upon the stage, was consequently very well studied, and notwithstanding her age, performed in a tolerable manner several capital parts in genteel comedy; her features being rather *petite* preserved a juvenile appearance, which, aided by certain cosmetics, gave an *eclat* to her person, which she could not expect to have retained at her advanced period of life.

At this time, 1767, there was in the Leeds' company a complete Captain Bobadil, who frequently amused not only his Thespian companions, but several companies of the townsmen, with stories of the sieges he had been at, of the battles he had bravely and

hardily fought. In all these accounts, he never failed making himself the hero of each marvellous tale. This self-conceited and formidable braggadocia's name was M'George. He had been some time with Mr. Foote, at the Haymarket, where he proved himself to be of no consequence, except in his own opinion. He was, indeed, one of those performers whom the late king of grief, Philip Lewis, of discontented memory, most wittily and aptly called, Foote's company of bladders, which he took particular pains to blow up for the summer season to entertain his ancient guests. There are numbers living who remember the orators produced by Aristophanes in 1762, when he collected a company who would have been rejected by old Noll, Carr, or his rival Linnet. But some of that very corps hav-

ing appeared since that early period on the London stages, it is proper to discriminate between the incorrigible, and those who have been excellent in their several walks; and as it is not meant here to hurt the feelings of any gentlemen who were then but young upon the stage, and who are now in a manner unrivalled in their line of performing, there will be related only another remark of the above cynical critic, Mr. Philip Lewis. This was his comparing Foote's groupe to a faggot. He explained the propriety of his simile by observing, that a faggot contained only three or four good sticks, while the rest was composed of nothing but the mere rubbish of brushwood; and, although with grief it may be observed, it is certainly true, that many companies of the present time, exactly correspond with old Phil's simile. This mark, it should

be understood, is meant to be confined to the provincial troops of the drama, for such reflections cannot surely be applied to our well-paid, well-fed, and well-cloathed pretorian bands, whose head quarters are in the capital of the kingdom. *Qui capit ille facit.*

But to return: the vapouring Bobadil, M'George, was called by all who knew him, the most noble *The Marquis of Hatchet*, which name he obtained from throwing that metaphorical tool further than most of his competitors in the art of lying, with an unembarrassed countenance. This modern Mendez Pinto possessed a beautiful scymitar, which, in the rural greenrooms, he would often kiss with the greatest extacy. These senseless salutations of the equally senseless blade, he accompanied with asseverations of the following import.

"Ah! my dear bit of sweet-briar, many a time and oft have you saved my life when in the most imminent danger; when you were in my company, a whole host of foes, armed with shining spears, never wore the face of terror in your master's sight; get you into your sheath, my preserver from peril and danger. God be with the day, though it was a most bloody one, when I wrenched you out of the hand of the infidel captain of a Barbary corsair, who, with his infernal crew, boarded the Leghorn ship in which I was a passenger, at the time we were sailing through the Gut of Gibraltar. Oh! that was a day, a day indeed, my boys—a day, that none of you could forget while you had an hour to live. I think I've deserved well of my country."

"Well," says the sarcastical Betty

Wilson, " I will say that for you, and of you, that you do throw the hatchet with the best grace of any man I ever knew."

" The hatchet, madam !" says Mrs. M'George, not a little affronted at seeing her husband made the risible sport of the whole company, by the ironical sneer of such a woman as Mrs. W., " Do you think, ma'am, that Mr. M'George was telling a lie? Why, I have heard him tell the same story a hundred times, without varying or omitting a single circumstance of what he has now related."

" And so have I," said the manager with a sly grin, " if what I vouch can serve for a proof of his veracity."

" Lord, ma'am !" said Betty, " you need not be so short with a body, the Marquis of Hatchet may be as valiant as the Marquis of Granby, God bless

him, for aught that I know, or care. But 'tis no great proof of his bravery, to be always drawing his sword before a parcel of women, and continually boasting of his feats and prowess."

There was such a roguish pointing in Betty's delivery of the latter part of the above reply, that she set the whole green-room in a loud laughter, which so provoked the yet unmoved Mac George, that he strutted up to her with his right hand upon the hilt of his Damascan blade, and fiercely demanded to know her meaning for affronting him thus unprovoked? "Were you a man, madam, you should not escape my just vengeance: but as you are what you are—damn me, madam, you are not worth my resentment."

This bravado speech roused Betty's husband from the apathy with which he bore the blustering of M'George

and his wife; and having first surveyed with eye severe, the doughty Marquis, he bravely challenged him to single combat, with what weapons he should think proper.

"O, O!" says M'George, "are you for sport in my way then? Give me your hand, my boy. Damme, you are not the young buck I took you for—To-morrow morning then, my lad o'wax, we'll meet, if you keep in the same mind, in the snug meadow at the bottom of Brigate. What say you, my stripling, to taking a cool breakfast in the open air, with a hardy and approved veteran? You'll be sure to meet old Clytus; ha! my young Hephestion?"

"Yes, by Jupiter Ammon, will I," says Wilson.

Now it is necessary my readers should know, that the pretty pistolian

language of the noble Marquis was rightly construed by the stripling, as his antagonist contemptuously called him, to be the effusions of arrant cowardice. He, therefore, without the least fear for consequences, determined to meet him.

The manager, Leister, with one Morgan, a step-son of the late Mr. Younger's, with the noble Marquis of Hatchet, adjourned from the theatre to the sign of the Woolpack, in the market-place, to take some refreshment. Morgan, who was a mischievous fellow, and loved and practised fighting as much as the famous Buckhorse, kept all the evening exciting the courage and resentment of the Marquis.

"Meet him by all means," said Morgan, "I'll be your second, or your bottle-holder. What the devil—*you*, who have mowed down in your time

so many circumcised, and turban'd Turks!"

"Why, my dear friend Morgan," said this redoubted Mac, "I grant you, that *you*, Mrs. M'George, and I, have been cursedly run down by his vile wife; but the poor easy lad was not much to blame, you know—the mortal sin of making her a widow would not sit so heavy on my conscience, as the continual reproaches of having deprived his mother of a darling son; for, I am well-informed, she loves him with the most tender affection."

"Damn it," said Leister, "let him alone, Morgan—his heart is not in the right place. Throughout the whole of his excuses, he proves himself to be a coward in grain."

"A coward!" answered Mac; "let that be seen in the field to-morrow, whether I or Wilson is the poltroon."

Wilson at this time entered the room, and not having the least idea of meeting his antagonist, the Moor-killer, was surprized at seeing him, but not intimidated. Being armed with a good ashen plant, he defied the other's scimitar, which he perceived in the hand of Mac, but not out of its scabbard. Dick commenced the business, by asking him, if he still was inclined to perform the matin exercise he had proposed about two hours before?

"Why, as to that," said Mac, "I—I—was always a man of my word; and if I said I wou'd do any thing two hours ago, it would be, I think, impossible for one who has studied two-and-twenty lengths from night to night, to forget any thing said or done so lately."

"Come, come," says Wilson, "no evasion or equivocation; will you meet me according to agreement?"

"Why, faith," says Mac, "if I said I would, to be sure I will."

"Poh! damme," says fighting Morgan, "I see this will come to just nothing at all. To convince us you are both in earnest, no more words, but look here (holding out a supple jack he had in his hand horizontally), let the best of you spit over this."

But Wilson, not entirely comprehending the meaning of the well-bred Morgan, spit in the face of the Marquis, instead of over the stick, which Morgan meant he should have done. This behaviour excited the immediate resentment of the fiery Morgan, who, with a blow in his chest, levelled poor Wilson upon the floor.

Betty, who had followed her *cara sposa* to the house, no sooner saw him lying on the floor, than she engaged with the ruffian, whom she considered

to have murdered her husband. Like a fierce Amazon, as she always proved herself to be on such occasions, she flew at Morgan with both hands open, and at the first assault, made an impression much resembling the *ten of diamonds* upon his face.

Morgan being too manly to contend ingloriously with a woman, and that woman an old woman, only used his best means to disengage himself from a contest in which he should lose as much blood as credit. Betty being, however, at last greatly alarmed at the sight of so many purple currents, which she saw streaming in every direction down his disfigured countenance, desisted from clawing any longer his visage. She contented herself with only fastening upon his hair, which she unmercifully tore by handfuls from his devoted head.

Morgan kicked and swore, while the company were delighting themselves with this scene of "precious mischief," as they termed it. They, however, had the charity to release him from the fury of this wild woman. His favourite locks, which had ever been his peculiar care, to be thus torn from their "seat of propriety," gave him no little uneasiness; but the unexpected revival of the prostrate Wilson obtaining him an entire respite from his complicated dangers, he began to solace himself, as much as he possibly could, with the prospect of future peace. Although he had been the first aggressor, he was indebted to Wilson chiefly for his manly and generous interposition in his favour.

Betty, who had, during the engagement, confined herself to offensive war,

did not entirely escape from wound or contusion; for, whether from design or accident, she received a most scandalous black eye, and a slight wound upon the upper lip, which, on account of her acting that night, had been fortunately shaved. This was an operation she was obliged to suffer three times a week, in order to remove a few loose hairs that obtruded themselves upon her upper lip, and thus to avoid that monstrous indelicacy of wearing a beard, in such characters as Lady Townley, or Miranda, unless she had to join with the former the part of John Moody, as the celebrated Mrs. Charke has been seen to perform. If the incumbrance of a beard is the least disgrace to the appearance of a fine lady, nature might be blamed, were not such a censure the greatest impiety.

It is here necessary to observe, that Betty owed considerable obligations to a pumice-stone, with which she very frequently rubbed the lower parts of her face. But what was to be done to conceal the disgraceful appearance of her eyes. There was, fortunately for our Thalestris, in the room a young man belonging to Leister's company: his name was Wortley, who made some pretensions to the art of painting. Although he had daubed the fronts of houses, I never heard he had attempted to paint the human face divine. He had humility enough to acknowledge, that he was neither an Apelles, a Titian, or a Reynolds; but as the lady was in distress, and chose to trust herself to his skill, he was willing to try what he could do for her accommodation. He therefore took a little pul-

verized rose-pink, mixed neatly *secundum artem*, with some whiting or common chalk, and covered the sable disgrace with a tolerably natural flesh colour. Having praised the skill and gratefully acknowleged the kindness of the artist, she was preparing to make her exit; an incident as droll as unexpected prevented her departure.

It has been observed that M'George, the most noble Marquis of Hatchet, had by his ill-timed show of courage, provoked Mr. Wilson to challenge him, in consequence of some severe reflections on his youth, and some sly insinuations of his being afraid to encounter a man who had cut his passage through so many formidable impediments. The Marquis had not the least serious intention of breaking the peace. During this tremendous storm, the Marquis was

himself in the greatest agitation of fear and trembling. He was, however, so peaceably inclined, that wisely considering the more he engaged in such a fracas, the more mischief would ensue; he prudently avoided the least interference. The first insult being given, he ran about the room rubbing his eyes, and stamping as if in the most afflictive agony with the smarting of the salt rheum which the clownish Wilson had discharged upon him. In fact he so well affected the appearance of severe suffering, that the company thought nothing but the loss of his sight could occasion such pitious emotion and distortion. Indeed Morgan had been impelled to give the downfall blow to Dick, in consequence of supposing the Marquis must have received some very material injury, if not a total deprivation of sight.

When the engagement became general, he took the opportunity of withdrawing himself from the scene of battle; but seeing the bandage of black crape over Betty's eye, he rose from his lurking place, which was under a large square dining-table, that stood against the wainscot of the room where the conflict happened. Quitting his uneasy situation, he was instantly saluted with the vociferous shoutings of the company. "Here's the tremendous Matadore!" cried the sarcastical Tom Leister, "who slew so many Saracens. Twenty more—kill them; twenty more—kill them too—eh Mac! Why, damn it, Mac, you'll never be able to perform your morning rehearsal in the meadow with that rueful countenance. You see, Wilson, you can acquire no honour by vanquishing such a fellow as this, and if you are not

ambitious of being thought a bully or a braggard, let us hear no more of this contemptible business. We shall make ourselves the scorn and derision of the whole town, from which we shall be driven with all the disgrace such behaviour justly demands. Let me advise you, therefore, M'George, to go home; get you to bed and sleep, you terrible *Scanderbeg*. But according to appearances, I think, you will be troubled with dreams of dreadful nature."

The Marquis of Hatchet took his friend Morgan by the hand, and in a feeble, tremulous voice, thanked him for his kind and spirited interference in his favour, by chastising his insolent foe, at the time he was himself indeed so unfortunately incapable. This opportunity for retreat, he most anxiously embraced, and ventured to his own

apartment, even without an escort. His discreet wife received him with pleasure; for, although it is a just observation, that women are naturally fond of bravery, yet the want of it in M'George did not diminish the affection of his wife.

This predilection is not only common to the fair sex; it is a general principle of nature. The brave are respected and admired by both sexes; nor is it any impeachment of the modesty or delicacy of the female character; their tenderness of frame and constitution requires protection, and it is therefore accordant with their necessities and feelings, to admire those on whom they can most depend. Being too frequently liable to such insults as the best regulated police cannot always prevent, they must rely on the cou-

rage of man, and this is an additional reason for their admiration of bravery. The arm of man, neither formidable in nature or appearance, has frequently protected females from the purposed outrage of ruffians. But here it must be observed, that Mrs. M'George was not so different from her sex, as not to pay a proper deference to manly courage.

She had beside many inducements to affection. She was his conjugal companion in her early youth, had borne him many fine children, and as to his ridiculous style of vain boasting about fighting, she frequently derived the greatest entertainment from the whimsical pleasantry of his inventions.

Fate determined that Betty and her spouse should part here. Mr. Wilson, whether provoked at the asperity of a

certain lecture, left her at a very unseasonable hour, without giving her the least notice of his intended route, and formed a resolution never to live with her more, which resolution he kept with Roman strictness.

It appeared as if the fate of Betty to receive the merited punishment of her conduct to Martin, by the infidelity of her succeeding lovers. But, though deserted like Dido, she had no inclination to imitate the example of that queen. Instead of burning herself she d——nd her lover, and consoled herself that she was not as yet too old to try again.

The company decreasing by death, and other vicissitudes, affected her more seriously. Having now no dear relative near to comfort her, she was left without any other consolation than

the remembrance of her vices and follies.

Having had occasion to mention the manager Linnet, it may be necessary to observe, that Burford, Woodstock, and the never-failing Abingdon, he called his own; and, so greatly was he attached to these parts of his widely extended domain, that he seldom failed visiting annually each of the above towns. Burford, at the time of the races, was certain of having him and his company, for here he was sure of raising large contributions at these times of periodical festivity. But Abingdon, being in the vicinity of the seat of the Muses, and out of the jurisdiction of the principal acting officer of the university, was, if possible, more lucrative to him than Burford. Here two or three reflections naturally present them-

selves on the subject of plays not being suffered at the universities. The chief magistrate of the university claims, by statute and prescription, the right of preventing the exhibition or performance of any matter that may divert the minds of the scholars from their serious studies. This seems to have been one bad effect of the zeal of our first reformers, for such was the bigotry of these zealots, that, in performing this task, they swept away almost every vestige of chearfulness and instructive amusement. Although a reformation might be wanted, yet it was surely not to be founded on a system of preventing man from alleviating the unavoidable cares and distresses of life by innocent diversion, or polishing his manners by elegant entertainments. But nothing can check the course of those turbulent

passions, and the spirit of innovation, which usually, and indeed almost necessarily, animate a reformer. To spare the tree, whilst they lop the branches, is not the characteristic of a zealot.

These fruits of our first reformers must excite regret even in the well-wishers of their system. But the progress of reason purifies its new systems from the corrupting influence of the passions, and the first fervour becoming extinct, wisdom and moderation succeed.

The liberal and rational precepts of Christianity, were meant to inspire mankind with all the charms of hope, instead of depressing them with the gloomy reflection of being punished eternally for a temporary breach of moral rectitude. He who told us himself, that his yoke was easy and his burthen

light, should not be discredited by the practice of his disciples.

But a more liberal and rational system of reform being established among us, we should have been more happy had not the infernal counsellors of a bigot princess, disgraced the name of religion by so wantonly sacrificing human nature on the pile of cruel and persecuting superstition. But the martyrs, Cranmer and Latimer, although accused and convicted of heresy, were never known to inveigh against the harmless tragedies and comedies that were performed in their time. Although they had neither the purity of sentiment or moral tendency of those of a later date, yet they were encouraged. Happily for England, the immortal Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, and instantaneously wrested from these Van-

dals the reforming rod, and with it drove them from the stage of religious contest. But it is a melancholy reflection, that in consequence of old Harry's six bloody articles, and the frequent fires that were enkindled in Smithfield, and other parts of the kingdom, to roast men instead of cattle, numbers were driven from their native land to places where they received encouragement, and were allowed to exercise freely the use of their reason. The emancipated Cantons were chosen by many as the happy asylum from tyranny and persecution. But those who settled in Geneva imbibed such sentiments of intolerance, as to cause them, on their return to their native country, to disseminate with too successful a zeal, their destructive opinions. Although the matchless Elizabeth and her wise council, opposed as much as pos-

sible their illusions, they could not check the poison from spreading; but by the restraint of wholesome laws, they were prevented from subjecting us to that ruin which would have been inevitable, had these tenets been adopted without qualification or restriction. We should have experienced the same hapless fate, as that which attended a neighbouring nation, Scotland. For there, that single firebrand of discord, John Knox, of fanatic memory, at the head of a turbulent misled rabble, and aided and abetted by several noble malcontents, took the advantage of an unsettled reign, and under the pretext of eradicating the damnable doctrines of popery, had nearly extirpated Christianity itself. Now murders and devastations stalked with giant stride over that part of our island, and their zealous leader, presumed to assert, that he

wielded the sword of the LORD and *Gideon* against idolatry. Blessed God! how is thy holy name and authority prostituted, to serve the infamously interested purposes of artful and designing men! But though these principles were the chief cause of stage persecution, yet even in this enlightened age of liberality and refinement, we find the immortal works of Shakespear excluded from a representation in our great and distinguished seminaries, while the indecent productions of a Pretonius Arbiter, an Ovid, a Horace, and the dangerous doctrines of a Lucretius, are the classical studies of our young students at both the universities. "O shame, where is thy blush!" But thanks to a kind legislature, who having lately viewed with compassionate concern the indignities suffered by an actor, as a profession, have obliterat-

ed the shameful stigma with which they were branded by fanatic churchmen and haughty lawgivers.

The following Anecdotes, however singular they may appear, are, notwithstanding, authentic; they were communicated to me by one on whose veracity I could depend, and who was thoroughly acquainted with the parties principally concerned, from their *debut* on the stage of life, but more particularly on what in the modern phrase is called *the boards*.*

* This is to be understood as meaning a theatrical stage, where sometimes there is scarcely a single board or spar to tread upon; frequently this stage is no other than the floor of a malthouse, barn, or stable, where many who hold their heads on high in our royal theatres, "have done deeds to make heaven weep, and shock the faculties of eyes and ears."

MR. JOSEPH YOUNGER.

The late Mr. Joseph Younger, of truly respectable memory, related to me the following humorous circumstances, which happened to him at a place called Coot-hill, in the north of Ireland.

The winter season being finished at Crow-street, Dublin, in the year 1759, he engaged himself and his wife to go with a company of itinerants on a summer excursion, until Barry and Woodward should open again the theatre in Dublin.

Business proving very bad, and his little consequently decreasing very fast, he was afraid that what remained would be seized, according to a cruel custom with the low Irish, of rushing into the apartments of their lodgers who are in arrears, and taking what-

ever they can find that is worthy their attention.

Instances of this brutality presented themselves frequently to the hurt sensibility of Younger. A thoughtless young fellow, named Beattie Stuart, who was in the company, came one morning abruptly into his apartment, and exhibited so ludicrous, yet pitiable a sight, that the good-natured Younger, for the moment felt himself, contrary to his general disposition, more inclined to mirth than compassion. Who could forbear smiling to see a young man who was, but the day before, decently dressed, enter his room almost in a state of nature, and complaining that his coat, waistcoat, and shoes had been removed, while he held the wrecks of his small clothes, which had been so torn in the contest between him and

his delicate landlady, that he had scarcely so much left to conceal his nakedness as would cover a halfpenny ball. Compassion almost instantaneously resumed her empire in the breast of Younger, who, with as much haste as possible, immediately clothed the poor naked fellow with some of his own habiliments. These clothes being considerably too large for him, caused him to make so ludicrous an appearance as to raise the derision of the inhabitants, who followed and hooted him as he passed to the house of the magistrate, to whom he repaired for immediate justice. It will, however, please the sympathising reader to be informed, that this poor persecuted devil had ample satisfaction for his wrongs and the shame he suffered from his cruel hostess, by the magistrate peremptorily ordering his clothes to be returned,

and himself exonerated from the demand she had to claim for lodging, or to suffer the punishment of losing her licence, if she refused compliance. The indignant exciseman, in addition to the order of Coram Nobis, flew to her house, and with the assistance of Stuart, found a concealment of unentered whiskey, which they seized, and levied the fine with unpitying rigour.

The sensible and humane Younger, being unhappy at his own situation, and equally so for the distresses to which he saw the company constantly exposed, communicated their distressed condition to Mr. Coote, the late Lord Bellamont. The young gentleman was no sooner made acquainted with the circumstance, than he humanely ordered a play to be performed the next evening. He also, with some difficulty, prevailed upon the celebrated Geminiani, who

then resided with him as teacher of the violin, to accompany him to the rural theatre.

Preparations being made to receive with due respect the worthy squire and his company, the house * was opened, and very speedily filled. But oh! grief of griefs! the company had no musicians with them, and some harmony was indispensably necessary to prevent the impending wrath of the offended gods. After a long search in vain for any kind of scraper or bagpiper, their fears rather subsided on seeing a girl leading in a poor old blind man, with signs of a *crowdy* beneath his coat. He was immediately engaged, and placed on a stool behind the scenes.

* This house was no other than a back stable, with a new laid malt-house floor: there was no raised stage, in consequence of the place not affording room for such a convenience.

After thrumming his instrument to put it in tune, he drew from the strings such a series of discordant notes, as surely never before or since tormented the ears of mortals. All eyes were fixed on Geminiani, whose writhings of body and distortions of countenance were better to be imagined than described.

The poor fidler being informed by some wags behind the scenes, that the greatest violin player in the world was in the pit with Squire Coote, and that he was in raptures with the excellence of his playing, so exerted his skill and powers, as to cause the famed musician to start from his seat with the most rueful countenance, and with feelings almost bordering on convulsive agony. The harsh grating sounds, torn and rasped from the vilest of instruments, he at first avoided by stopping his ears;

but the encreased exertions of the *crowder* broke every barrier, and assailed his hearing with all the combination of irritating discord. His torment was so great that it became intolerable, which caused him, with a pitiful aspect, to request that Mr. Coote would order the carriage to convey him from this cave of Cyclops. But the young squire was too much diverted with the enraged condition of his poor old tortured master, to comply with his request. The banquet was too mirthful to suffer him to end it by any retreat of Geminiani.

Crowdero, considering the continual clapping of hands, the roars and shouts from every part of the house, as plaudits paid to his merit, imagined his fortune was made, especially as he was informed that Mr. Coote was highly pleased with his playing: this was true

information; for he was in a constant succession of fits of laughter to see the distressed son of scientific melody in an agony so unbecoming his age and gravity, while he accused his remorseless pupil of the greatest cruelty. Geminiani was however at last relieved, by an accident which threatened fatal consequences. Mr. Coote's violent fits of laughter were so great, and so continual, that he fell into a paroxysm of convulsion, which so alarmed his mother, who sat near him, that she immediately commanded the son of Carolan * to desist, on pain of her weighty displeasure.

The bell rang, the curtain drew up, and my friend Younger was seen seated at a table in the character of Lord Townley, in the Journey to London.

* The last and greatest of the Irish bards.

—His soliloquy being finished, Lady Townley entered, when he should have said—

"Going out so soon this morning, madam?"

But an unforeseen impediment suppressed his utterance, and withheld his approach towards his lady; the high heels of his stage shoes had made such an impression in the new made floor, and so tenacious was the clay of intruders, that although he extricated himself, he was obliged to leave his shoes fixed in the mire, until with might and main he compelled the earth to yield him up his property.

In this state of confusion, he ran off the stage, muttering curses and invectives against all the sluts and slovens in the kingdom. The tranquillity of the audience being thus broken again by this ridiculous accident, all attention

to the performance was entirely suspended, for the enjoyment of this more whimsical scene of humour. Even Geminiani forgot his own late ludicrous situation, and participated in the general mirth and jocund laugh. But what was equally pleasing was, the temper which Younger described himself to be in, at the moment he had extricated himself from this disaster. He declared he could have kicked Lady Townley out of the stable, horsewhipped his sister, the mild Lady Grace, and have pulled his friend Manly by the nose. Indeed, he was so irritated at the casualty, that every characteristic smile which appeared in the countenances of the audience, during the performance, seemed to him to be at his expence. However, to ease his chagrin, the Squire presented the company with five guineas, and his venera-

ble mother gave two; which, added to the regular prices paid at the door, cheered their hearts for that evening, and prompted the eccentric Beattie Stuart to write on the play-house-door next morning—WE EAT.

END OF VOL. I.

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