

THOMAS
WILLIAM
ROBERTSON

His Plays and Stagecraft

— BY —
MAYNARD SAVIN

BROWN UNIVERSITY
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

1950

822 R65zs

66-11083

Savin

T 822 R65zs


66-11083

Savin \$4.00

Thomas William Robertson

MAIR

--	--	--	--



kansas city public library
kansas city, missouri

Books will be issued only
on presentation of library card.
Please report lost cards and
change of residence promptly.
Card holders are responsible for
all books, records, films, pictures
or other library materials
checked out on their cards.

THOMAS WILLIAM
ROBERTSON:

HIS PLAYS AND STAGECRAFT

By

MAYNARD SAVIN

TRINITY COLLEGE

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
BROWN UNIVERSITY
1950

*Copyright 1950 by
Brown University*

PRINTED BY THE WILLIAM BYRD PRESS, INC.
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

TO MY
MOTHER AND FATHER

6611083

PREFACE

ALL that a fellow student of mine, specializing in Anglo-American literary relations during the Colonial period, recalls from a one-time exposure to *Caste* is that Thomas William Robertson is the man who put locks on doors. As labels go, this one passes muster, for if having expanded our definitions, made our qualifications and reservations, and drawn our conclusions, we compress our expenditure of research into a portable, mnemonic unit, we shall come back to something rather close to my friend's epithet.

To stop short with such tags, however, will prevent us from learning what we can of the development of the theater. We may, of course, reduce the dramatic output of the Victorians to barren waste and move on to the playwrights of the eighties and nineties, with whose aims and techniques twentieth-century readers feel a more congenial, if patronizing, kinship. If we disdain the much-maligned early and mid-Victorians, it may be because we think that we have, dramatically speaking, arrived, that we have found the magic formula for creating lasting theater. Yet while the shifting emphases of the twentieth century, its faddism, its periodic lamentations, its critic-writer tilts give healthy signs of life, they lend credence to the picture of our running like children at a fair from booth to booth, stopping before each only long enough to yell louder "ooh's" and "ah's."

The half-way mark of the twentieth century finds us groping. We have not solved the problem of the theater's being throttled by the economics of real estate. Dramatic arts have entered the media of film, radio, and television and function rambunctiously but confusedly and disappointingly. We have not been able to award satisfactorily the custody of the problem children of art and propaganda. The clock, to which Henry Arthur Jones in 1906 compared Anglo-American drama, still does not go.¹ We still theorize about why great tragedy is not being written. I point out these aspects of the contemporary dilemma in an attempt to discourage a mind-set which refuses a survey of the road we have come.

¹ *Foundations of a National Drama*, London, 1913, p. 45.

The questions I raise in regard to Robertson's contribution are applicable to that of every pioneering practitioner in the theater. A consideration of the particular dramatic cycle of which Robertson was *primum mobile* may help us gain necessary perspective in our own confusing times. It would be profitable to sum up the elements of Victorian dramaturgy against which Robertson rebelled. What was the extent of his rebellion? What were the limitations? Can we account for such limitations?

Contemporary critics hailed Robertson as revolutionary. With the inauguration of the cup-and-saucer school of drama, he was the first to have created a tempest *with* a teapot. In the eyes of excited reviewers, Robertson was wiping the stage clear of early Victorian debris and constructing sets and plays which belonged to a new realism:

"Society" and "Ours" prepared the way for a complete reformation of the modern drama, and until the curtain fell on Saturday night it remained a question whether Mr. Robertson would be able to hold the great reputation which those pieces conferred upon him. The production of "Caste" has thrown aside all doubt. The reformation is complete, and Mr. Robertson stands preeminent as the dramatist of this generation. The scene-painter, the carpenter, and the *costumier* no longer usurp the place of the author and actor. With the aid of only two simple scenes—a boudoir in Mayfair and a humble lodging in Lambeth—Mr. Robertson has succeeded in concentrating an accumulation of incident and satire more interesting and more poignant than might be found in all the sensational dramas of the last half century. The whole secret of his success is—truth!²

By the nineties, however, the ardor which had greeted his *coup* had subsided. Latter-day critics reduced his stature to that of a transitional figure linking the theatrical claptrap of the first half of the century with the drama of the eighties and nineties, which was grappling with idea and psychology. The value of practicable doors was very meaningful where there had been no attempt at realism, but with the further evolution of dramatic truth, practicable doors came to be seen in the light of surface realism, and critics sobered as they saw from new vantage grounds the survival in Robertson's plays of what was patently false. Typical of such reassessments is the following by William Archer:

² From a review following the opening of *Caste*, quoted by Ashley Thorndike, *English Comedy*, New York, 1929, p. 535.

Not long ago "Society" was revived at the Haymarket, and the performance was altogether melancholy. It confirmed the observation that it is not always pleasant to meet an old friend after a lapse of years. Time has probably changed both him and you, and pleasant recollections are apt to be rudely effaced. There was still much to be amused at in "Society," but there was more to be wondered at, if not mourned over. There were touches of dialogue and character still fresh and true, but it was quite evident that the play as a whole was to be regarded mainly as a curiosity. It is at least half-way on its journey towards that haven of rest for theatrical *invalides*, Mr. Hollingshead's "educational" repertory. Anything more threadbare in the matter of construction it is hard to conceive.³

In accounting for shortcomings in Robertson's art, I have attempted to analyze the particular ingredients of the man and his milieu which precluded a thorough-going break with the past. In spite of the fact that I have focused attention on his limitations, I have neither desired nor have been led to detract from his achievements. For when we have come to understand the reasons underlying Robertson's limitations and his reduction from revolutionary to transitional significance, we shall still be left to marvel at the eternally mysterious emergence of creative leadership.

I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Robert Gale Noyes for the stimulating and painstaking direction he has given me in my research. I have benefited from Professor Benjamin W. Brown's ever-illuminating comments on the nineteenth century theater. I am grateful to Professor Leicester Bradner and to Professor Albert Jacques Salvan for their encouraging and helpful suggestions. To Dr. William Van Lennep, Curator, and his assistant, Miss Barbara Jones Casey, go my thanks for facilitating my way among the rich treasures of the Harvard Theatre Collection. I am greatly indebted to Miss Angela Dolores Hughes for her kind and critical comments on my presentation. I must assume final responsibility, however, for reprehensible acts of omission and commission.

³ *English Dramatists of To-day*, London, 1882, pp. 22-23. See also C. Penley Newton, "Frivolous Comedy", *The Theatre*, vol. IV New Series, November 1, 1881, p. 269.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER ONE	
BEFORE THE TEMPEST <i>The State of the mid-Victorian Theater</i>	3
CHAPTER TWO	
ROBERTSON'S LIFE	20
CHAPTER THREE	
THE POTBOILERS <i>Translations and Adaptations</i>	45
CHAPTER FOUR	
THE TEMPEST <i>The Six Successes Produced at the Prince of Wales's</i>	58
CHAPTER FIVE	
ROBERTSON, THE SOCIAL THINKER	104
APPENDICES	
I IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE OF THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTSON	
ROBERTSON	119
II UNDATED PLAYS BY ROBERTSON	120
III CHRONOLOGY OF ROBERTSON'S PLAYS	121
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138

“Throughout the act the autumn leaves fall from
the trees.”

a stage direction in a promptbook of
Ours, quoted by William Archer in *The Old
Drama and the New*, New York, 1929, p. 260.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Courtesy of Harvard Theatre Collection

	FACING PAGE
Thomas William Robertson	34
Manuscript page of <i>David Garrick</i>	50
Squire Bancroft	60
Program for <i>Society</i>	72

THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTSON:
His Plays and Stagecraft

CHAPTER ONE
BEFORE THE TEMPEST

A FAVORITE device in Robertson's plays is the inclusion of a struggling writer, whose bitter invective against the old order of dramaturgy affords Robertson a mouthpiece. We shall later see how his own painful struggle to gain recognition made the writer's problem of breaking into the theater an obsession, but for the moment we are less concerned with biography than we are with dramatic theory. In tone and import, a typical outburst is Jack's soliloquy in *Birth*:

Comedy! It is a domestic drama. (*rises and tears notes, throwing them into the old-fashioned fireplace*) It will never do. I must give it up. If I am to write for the stage, I won't attempt anything new. I will write in the good old conventional groove in which my good old great-grandfathers wrote before me. (*as if inspired*) I know what I'll do! I'll write a good old legitimate comedy on the good old legitimate principles. I'll crush these modern imposters! It is so pleasant to crush a modern imposter. It's an odd thing, now; but why should it be more pleasant to crush a modern imposter than an old one? Let me see. In my new comedy, that is, in my new *old* comedy, there must be a baronet—and, of course, being a baronet, he must be an old man. In old comedies baronets are always old men—a young baronet would have smashed any old comedy—and he must have a son who is old enough to get married. Let me see—shall the baronet be bluff and hearty, or shall he be senile and tottering? I'll have him bluff and hearty. (*imitating the bluff and hearty in the old conventional comedy*) "Blood and thunder, sir! You shall marry her—don't talk to me! Capons and flagons! Don't talk to me; you shall marry her—to-morrow—to-morrow, sir! Do you hear me? And by gad, sir, if I wish it, you shall trundle her from church in a wheelbarrow. You dog! you rascal! you puppy! you-you-you-you-you-wagh!—wooh!—booh!—bash!—bosh!" That's the sort of thing. Yes, very good—very good, indeed. I must pepper it with impropriety, and make it hot and strong with Holywell Street wit. Then the baronet's son: because he is five and twenty he must flourish his pocket-handkerchief, talk in a high falsetto voice, show his teeth, and wag his head. (*imitating light comedian of the past age*) "'Fore Heaven, if my old dad and her guardian cannot agree—

4 *Thomas William Robertson: His Plays and Stagecraft*

rope ladders and Gretna Green!—by Cupid and Hymen!—by Mercury and Mars!—I'll order a post-coach, and with Sacharissa by my side, and my man in the rumble, ride, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour to endless happiness. Ha! ha! ha!" (*crosses the stage, laughing*) Then the guardian, who has the care of the young lady, and who is in love with her himself—a young rascal about ninety. (*imitating a tottering old man*) "Aye, aye, aye, aye, aye, but it is a pretty one, and its guardy will make it happy, and it won't think of the young men. It shan't think of the young men. Adad! If it does I'll lock it up, and give it bread and water; I'll sta-a-a-rve its pretty flesh, and when—and when it's cured of love, I'll take it to the church and marry it. Adad! I feel as young as any wanton boy of fifty of them all." La! la! la! la! (*dancing*) Oh, yes, I'll go in for a new-old comedy; it's very easy, and one likes to be a bulwark against modern innovation. I'll make out a list of characters. Sir Furious Fiftybottle—yes, good. (*taking notes*) That's the baronet. Sir Skeleton Skagglemaggle—that's the miser and the guardian. Then a virtuous farmer—um! Pleasant Weathers, a shepherd.¹

"The good old conventional groove", the tried even if not true, constituted the magic key to early and mid-Victorian drama: stereotyped characters in situations so exhaustively worked over that they could no longer evoke surprise. Jack's soliloquy shows how easily the formula might be mastered. Stock types, such as the heavy old man, the young hero, and the ingénue, were brought into the same play as inevitably as the line-up of tenor, soprano, and bass in grand opera.

Theater managers encouraged the deepening of established grooves by maintaining small companies of actors whose specialties were typed and on tap. Thus the policy of the managers and the hack work of the playwrights followed each other in a vicious cycle of economics, the managers demanding and the playwrights supplying plays constructed to order, and both intent on exploiting the acting range of a particular company.

The policy could only stifle creative energy. Actors went on year after year, playing the same kinds of roles, falling deeper and deeper into the sin of relying on external tricks of characterization, of reducing characterization to a system of humors crude enough to constitute the lowest common denominator of immediate audience recognition. Edmund Yates, for example, commenting on stereotyped interpretation, says: "In former years, the actor personifying them [stage dandies] would have put on a palpably false moustache, would have worn spurs,

¹ Thomas William Shafto Robertson, *The Principal Dramatic Works of Thomas William Robertson*, London, 1889, I, 33-34.

carried a riding whip everywhere—the whole personation representing a creature such as had never been seen by mortal man off the stage.”²

It was Eugène Scribe who more than any other single person strait-jacketed the English theater. His conspicuous success, based on a ratiocinative technique allied to bourgeois themes, convinced every dramatist that *la pièce bien faite* contained the secret of playwriting. Scribe's enviable mastery of technique produced an eager school of followers, ready to turn the Scribian formula to their own advantage. His nugatory influence, however, cannot be made out to detract from Scribe's native genius. As is so often the case, the disciples belied the teacher. Thus Gallic example encouraged reliance on stock types and the mechanical manipulation of action to produce suspense. The resulting blight on the English stage lasted long. Translations and adaptations followed pell mell.

In the watered-down English versions of Scribe we find artifice and theatrical expediency to an extreme. Victorian adaptors went about their business with the mechanical proficiency of a Hollywood studio conference. Describing the complications surrounding the transportation of French plays to England, Squire Bancroft pauses to observe:

Though the press was almost unanimous in praising the skill with which a French play had been transformed into an English one, there was naturally some repining that we had not been able to find an original English comedy to our liking. Of course it was a matter for serious concern that while a management existed which was on the look-out for novelty, and prepared to pay a price for it which a few years before would have been pronounced fabulous, no dramatist had arisen to supply work of a kind that justified the speculators in the preliminary outlay. But so it was.

It was during this successful run [*Peril*] that I heard Sardou was about to produce a new play at the Théâtre du Vaudeville called *Dora*, and made plans to be *en rapport* with the première. My part in *Peril* was too important to allow me to give it up so early in the run, but I was represented in Paris by B. C. Stephenson. He returned extremely nervous as to the new play's chance of success in England, although much impressed by one or two of its scenes, an incomprehensible timidity which in these days would have cost me the play. I pursued the matter further, on the strength of a criticism I read in a French newspaper, and found that the author had already sold the English and American rights to a theatrical agent. With him I proceeded to treat, inducing him to give me the refusal of the play

² As quoted in Squire and Marie Bancroft, *The Bancrofts: Recollections of Sixty Years*, London, 1909, p. 194.

6 Thomas William Robertson: His Plays and Stagecraft

until the approaching Ash Wednesday—a day on which London theatres were then closed by order of the Lord Chamberlain. This was arranged. I went over on Ash Wednesday and saw the play. At the end of the famous *scène des trois hommes* I told the agent I had seen quite enough, whatever the rest of the play might prove to be, to determine me to write him a cheque at the end of the performance.

Another fine scene followed in a subsequent act, and I felt assured there was ample material for a play in England, whatever the difficulties of transplanting it from Gallic soil might be. I gladly gave him fifteen hundred pounds, then by far the largest sum ever paid for a foreign work, for his rights, and was quite content with my bargain.

Soon afterwards we placed the manuscript in the hands of Clement Scott and B. C. Stephenson for consideration as to the line to be taken in its adaptation; with them, as was our custom with all French plays, we worked in concert. A long time was spent in considering the plan of action before the work was begun. Happily the chief solution of many difficulties came to me in suggesting the diplomatic world as the main scheme; I took the adaptors again to Paris, and on the return journey, in a coupé to Calais, the whole subject of the new play was well threshed out between myself and my fellow workers, and we saw our way to what eventually became *Diplomacy*.³

Bancroft's account continues, but the above self-congratulatory passage illustrates sufficiently the emphasis on business acumen and efficiency—and this on the part of the management which had first recognized Robertson's worth and whose little theater on Tottenham Road was the acknowledged leader in artistic integrity!

French models dominated the English stage during Robertson's entire career; they were not to be scrapped until the last decade of the century. It is no wonder, then, that stereotyped plots and characters held sway. French influence continued even after Robertson passed from the scene. He himself was caught up in it. He, too, was forced to adapt and translate. He witnessed London newspapers advertising as a matter of course his *Ours* as *L'Ours*. He learned to capitalize on the fashion. He finally rebelled and attempted to fight its hold.

The absence of copyright laws at once encouraged the wholesale importation of French plays and discouraged native writers from the profitless pursuit of playwriting. A ready-made French play, tested at the Comédie Française could be had for the few pounds it cost for the services of a translator. Managers could pick among a variety of cur-

³ *The Bancrofts*, pp. 217-19.

rent offerings in Paris and cart home with them whatever they liked, much in a manner of a merchant shopping for gowns to retail to home consumption.

Boucicault put the case graphically:

The usual price received by Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, and Talfourd at that time for their plays was £500. I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy 'London Assurance,' £300. For that amount the manager bought the privilege of playing the work for his season. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London theatre. The manager offered me £100 for it. In reply to my objection to the smallness of the sum he remarked, "I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed, I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me £25. Why should I give you £300 or £500 for your comedy of the success of which I cannot feel so assured?" The argument was unanswerable and the result inevitable. I sold a work for £100 that took me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at £50 apiece. This work afforded me child's play for a fortnight. Thus the English dramatist was obliged either to relinquish the stage altogether or to become a French copyist.⁴

Methods of acting and staging reflected the moribund state of play-writing. Repertory companies, unforgettably caricatured in the Vincent Crummles chapters in *Nicholas Nickleby*, encouraged actors to emote by conditioned reflex. One role was very much like another. There might be variation in lines and the characters' names would be different, but the interpretation was a constant. "Each artist's line was so defined that at the reading of a new piece each individual could tell what part was allotted to him before the characters were given out."⁵ Such conditions led to stylized acting, with emphasis on elocutionary power and gesture. The set speech and special business were ripped untimely from an organic piece.

Ensemble playing, which insists on the subordination of every actor to the totality of the play, was a conception which was to make its way painfully into the theater. The star system minimized rehearsals, the *sine qua non* of ensemble playing. Members of a company took it for granted that they were not to interfere with the virtuoso display of the leading performer. The star "painted his own picture" and expected

⁴ Brander Matthews and Laurence Hutton, ed., *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States*, New York, 1886, V, 89-90.

⁵ Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*, I, 73.

8 Thomas William Robertson: His Plays and Stagecraft

the rest of the cast to remain at arm's length. Costume, scenery, and the blocking out of action were given scant attention. The star held the show together; the play limped along between the big moments when he dominated the stage.

The attitude of actors trained in the star system persisted in Robertson's day. Robertson's first dramatic success, *David Garrick*, was a vehicle for Sothorn, and in *Society*, which he designed as a second vehicle for Sothorn, Robertson was careful to include another drunk scene. Fortunately, as we shall see, Robertson was not subjected to the necessity of catering to the system. If he were, such demands as the following from Sothorn in regard to *Birth* would have frustrated his efforts to secure ensemble playing: "If I might suggest, I would say, give me a few more of your telling lines through others' conversation. If you can, don't let me, whilst I'm on the stage, be much of a listener."⁶

An evening's entertainment in the early Victorian playhouse was a pot pourri, commingling the stock in trade, the hastily-got-up, and the impromptu, the whole served up to the accompaniment of music to uninhibited patrons. Mrs. Bancroft, who in her role as Maud Hetherington in *Society* evoked delighted surprise by her change of costume between acts, speaks of the visit of a former manager of the Prince of Wales's Theatre to a Bancroft rehearsal:

Dear, dear, what trouble you give yourselves! In my tin-pot days we were less particular. When in doubt as to how to end an act, I sent two men on in a boat, dressed as sailors, with a couple of flags. They waved their Union Jacks, I lit a pan of blue fire at the wings, the band played "Rule Britannia," and down came the curtain!⁷

Charles Reade, who at least in theory joined Robertson in condemning the old order of acting, includes in his historical novel *Peg Woffington* some local color of the Green Room. In one episode⁸, Reade makes a significant analysis of acting style, which, as far as he was concerned, had prevailed until the middle of the nineteenth century: acting was stilted, declamatory, heroic—in short, completely stylized.

In the complete absence of ensemble playing, rehearsals were casual

⁶ From a letter quoted by T. Edgar Pemberton, *Life and Writings of T. W. Robertson*, London, 1893, p. 269.

⁷ *The Bancrofts*, p. 67.

⁸ Library edition, London: Chatto and Windus, 1906, p. 28. The passage does not occur in the dramatized version, *Masks and Faces*, which Reade wrote in collaboration with Tom Taylor.

affairs. The director simply assigned roles, without discussing the relation of one part to the total play. Although actors might be instructed in the broad effects sought, they studied their parts independently.⁹ Theatricality was thus crowding drama off the boards.

Clement Scott, who in his recoil from Ibsenism, tended to be nostalgic over early Victorian drama, somewhat reluctantly confessed the shortcomings of leading houses.¹⁰ Managers such as Buckstone and Webster held no brief for aesthetics; interested solely in reaching audiences via the most inexpensive and immediately accessible means, they maintained slipshod standards of costuming, staging, and acting.

Hardly conducive to dramatic subtlety were the size and atmosphere of the playhouses. Catcalls, hisses, and verbal exchanges between members of the audience and the actors were the accepted handicap. The "Old Price" riots and the Forrest-Macready riots, which had roots in economic and national pressure, were simply more spectacular than the usual, unrestrained participation of spectators. So far this side idolatry of the theater were actors, that professional jealousies were apt to explode on the stage in asides not contained in the play. Samuel Phelps relates how he and Macready, who brooked upstaging from no one, crossed swords in *Macbeth*:

As to Macduff, I don't know how often I played him; I think every Monday night during the season. Of course you've heard of the row during the fight. "Mac" let fly at me, nearly giving me a crack on the head, as he growled—

"D-n your eyes! Take that!"

For the moment I was flabbergasted, but when he returned to the charge I gave him a dose of his own physic (adding to the oath not only his eyes, but his limbs too!) He returned the compliment by heaping maledictions on my seed, breed, and generation. Then he "went" for me, and I "went" for him, and there we were growling at each other like a pair of wild beasts, until I finished him, amidst a furore of applause.

The audience were quite carried away by the "cunning of the scene," and shouted themselves hoarse, roaring on the one side "Well done, 'Mac!' on the other "Let him have it, Phelps!"¹¹

Before the Victorian theater won its hard-fought battle for respectability, the social standing of actors was on a par with that of prosti-

⁹ Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*, I, 72.

¹⁰ Pages 359-60.

¹¹ John Coleman, ed., *Memoirs of Samuel Phelps*, London, 1886, pp. 164-65.

tutes, and the atmosphere of the theater was more closely akin to the Elizabethan than to our own. Frequenters of the pit sat on benches, badgered by the *entr'acte* screams of hawkers, and for programs fingered broadsides whose printer's ink was still wet.

Managerial cupidity frustrated any advance. The rant-and-rave level of acting, the low quality of plays, and the disreputable aura attached to the theater¹² are in large part traceable to the strangle-hold of theater-lessees. The fight between the so-called majors and minors is indicative of the shortsighted commercialism from which the drama to this day has not succeeded in freeing itself. Before the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 legitimized the minors, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket jealously guarded their exclusive prerogative. Their managers maintained a scrutiny over the activities of the minors, ready to report to the Lord Chamberlain any encroachment on legitimate drama. At the same time that the patent houses were prohibiting the minors from performing the function of theaters, they themselves were moving further and further away from legitimate drama. They rebuilt their houses larger and larger, until the seating capacity of each hovered about three thousand.

Covent Garden, for example, rebuilt in 1809 after a fire the year before, boasted an auditorium fifty-one feet by fifty-two; four tiers, each with twenty-six boxes; a proscenium arch forty-two feet wide and thirty-six feet high; a stage sixty-eight feet by eighty-two, and a seating capacity from 2800 to 3000.

Such barns were hopelessly unfit for drawing-room subtlety, psychological nuance, or the play of discussion. They encouraged the development of melodramatic plots, spectacle, a declamatory style, and sweeping gesture. The reactionary spirit of the managers endured even

¹² The following is Charles Dickens' description of Sadler's Wells before Samuel Phelps took over its management: "Seven or eight years ago, this theatre was in the condition of being entirely delivered over to as ruffianly an audience as London could shake together. Without, the theatre by night was like the worst of the worst kind of fair in the worst kind of town. Within, it was a bear-garden, resounding with foul language, oaths, cat-call shrieks, yells, blasphemy, obscenity—a truly diabolical clamour. Fights took place anywhere, at any period of the performance. The audience were, of course, directly addressed in the entertainments . . . It was in the contemplation of the management to add the physical stimulus of a pint of porter to the moral refreshment offered to every purchaser of a pit ticket, when the management collapsed, and the theatre shut up." Quoted by Coleman in *Memoirs of Samuel Phelps*, pp. 201-2.

after the Regulation Act made the direction of the theater movement perfectly clear. They retreated without grace, playing dog in the manger with any kind of house unprotected by the Act.

The minor houses were given to spectacle, ranging from aquatic and equestrian displays to the ambiguous burletta, a form which, not always successfully, skirted the legal definitions of the Lord Chamberlain, by restricting itself to less than five acts and including at least five songs in each act. Planché's vogue with the extravaganza during the thirties and forties can be understood as an ingenious adjustment to theatrical conditions. Bringing together fairy-tale material, song, ballet, and display, Planché managed to keep dramatic appetite at starvation level.

In addition to these repressive elements was the matter of censorship, an office performed by the Lord Chamberlain, from whose decrees there was no appeal. Arbitrary and capricious as they might be, he was under no necessity to justify his decisions. He communicated directly with the manager, and the playwright often went in ignorance of the exact nature of his offense.

The Lord Chamberlain's supervision of the drama's morality was notoriously narrow-minded and gnat-straining.¹³ Playwrights were dis-

¹³

"23rd January, 1832.

"Please to omit the following underlined words in the representation of the drama called

THE RENT DAY

ACT I.

SCENE I. 'The blessed little babes, *God* bless 'em!'

SCENE III. 'Heaven be kind to us, for I've almost lost all *other* hope.'

DITTO. 'Damn him.'

SCENE IV. '*Damn business.*' 'No, don't *damn* business. I'm very drunk, but I can't *damn* business—it's *profane.*'

DITTO. 'Isn't that an *angel*?' 'I can't tell; I've not been used to such company.'

SCENE V. 'Oh, Martin, husband, *for the love of heaven!*'

DITTO. '*Heaven help us, heaven help us!*'

ACT II.

SCENE III. '*Heaven forgive you, can you speak it?*' 'I leave you, and may *heaven* pardon and protect you!'

SCENE last. 'Farmer, neighbours, *heaven* bless you—let the landlord take all the rest.'

DITTO. 'They have now the money, and *heaven* prosper it with them.'

"G. Colman."

"To the Manager, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane."

W. Blanchard Jerrold, *The Life of Douglas Jerrold*, London, n. d., p. 108.

Jack Randall, the would-be playwright in Robertson's *Birth*, in a fit of inventive

couraged from facing up to any significant truth in human relations and fell more and more to relying on the accepted variations of violations of the criminal code. The overt cruelties of man to man, of course, could mean only the constant reworking of a melodramatic vein.

As we read the careers of Victorian playwrights, we discover that only those who understood theatrical conditions at first hand, who were willing to work within the limitations imposed upon them, and who were prepared to accept miserable financial rewards stood any chance of seeing their work produced. As we shall see, only the propitiously timed advent of the Bancroft management made Robertson's success possible.

Dion Boucicault is one of those who by their willingness to jump on the bandwagon gained tremendous popularity. He possessed sure-fire inventiveness and sure-fire theatrics. His famous *London Assurance*, performed at Covent Garden in 1841, scintillates superficially in the Restoration tradition, but the sophisticated flare is carefully guarded by a Victorian screen. Such familiar types as the squire tally ho-ing after the fountain of youth, the pettifogging lawyer, and the social parasite only remind us that Boucicault was scraping the pot, while the moral seasoning sprinkled over the characters makes them ludicrous by contrast with their prototypes in Restoration comedy.

Lady Gay Spanker, carrying on a flirtation with Sir Harcourt Courtly, acts the typical faithless wife of stage convention, but at the crucial moment she reneges on her characterization, apologizing limply: "Just to show my husband how inconvenient it is to hold the ribands sometimes, I made him send a challenge to the old fellow, and he, to my surprise, accepted it, and is going to blow my Dolly's brains out in the billiard room."¹⁴ And the play ends on the following out-of-character speech by Sir Courtly, the roué:

musings, reminds himself of a theatrical taboo: "Lord Ravendevil meets Peter Fryingirons at a public dinner, and the noble lord pulls Peter Toastingfork's nose because Peter began his soup before the Archbishop of Evenysee had said grace. Good! That's social and fashionable. Peter retorts with a butter-bowl full of lobster-sauce, misses Lord Bantampoodle, and hits the Archbishop. (pausing) No. You couldn't have an Archbishop on the stage, except in an historical play. The Lord Chamberlain wouldn't license an Archbishop. It won't do. (*tears leaves out of book*). *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, 12.

¹⁴ *French's Standard Drama*, No. 27, p. 65.

Charles, permit me, as your father, and you, sir, as his friend, to correct you on one point. Barefaced assurance is the vulgar substitute for gentlemanly ease; and there are many, who, by aping the *VICES* of the great, imagine that they elevate themselves to the rank of those, whose faults alone they copy. No! sir. The title of gentleman is the only one *OUT* of any monarch's gift, yet within the reach of every peasant. It should be engrossed by *Truth*—stamped with *Honor*—sealed with *good-feeling*—signed *Man*—and enrolled in every true young English heart.¹⁵

Sophisticated, fast-paced, epigrammatic, the play withal is a lifeless thing, for the locus of the satirical spirit is confused. Restoration comedy in the hands of Victorians is like Eliot's sterile hollow men, form without substance, shape without manner.

His melodramas, such as the *Octoroon* (1859) and *The Colleen Bawn* (1860) rely on stage property, elaborate scenery, and physical action. The dialogue, containing new incursions into dialect, has a more realistic flair than anything previous in the century to *Society*, although at emotional moments it assumes an elocutionary turn.¹⁶

It is not difficult to conceive how Victorian attitudes towards the theater and drama were being conditioned. Both majors and minors were cheapening taste; the minors, because of their fight for survival, associated theater with a Roman holiday atmosphere; the majors, because of their physical giantism, associated drama with the grotesque and the declamatory. Spectacle, whether superimposed on extravaganza, melodrama, or Shakespeare, held sway. The antiquarian passion for historicity in the staging of Shakespeare, set by Macready and the Keans, conditioned spectators to expect the grandiose in scenic design. Ingenuity in melodramas was taxed to provide thrilling escapes. The extravaganza, like the seventeenth century masque before it, exhausted its physical resources. Meanwhile the top-heavy growth of spectacle could only dwarf the actor.

Thus far we have seen how economics played the major part in inhibiting the growth of dramatic art. We have seen how styles of

¹⁵ Page 71.

¹⁶ It is difficult to gauge elocutionary flavor in Victorian drama, for Victorians in the drawing room as well as on the stage were elegant and perfectionist in style. The affected balanced constructions, piled up laborious series, and strained at circumlocutions. And the style seemingly stiffened in ratio to emotional intensity. Diarists and letter writers afford about the most faithful reproduction we have of Victorian speech patterns.

acting depended upon the physical demands of the houses and how the types of plays produced were dependent upon the war between the majors and minors.

An important aspect of the old order was the Victorian veneration of Shakespeare, fertilized and watered by the romantic stream of poetic drama. The romantics, writer and critic alike, persisted in seeing Shakespeare apart from the stage and apart from his historical background. Leaders of the movement were most deeply struck by Shakespeare's probing of the emotional, intuitive, and psychological faculties of man. Critics stimulated the Victorian penchant for recreating entire personalities from the shades and shadows which flitted across the stage.

Imitating playwrights overlooked the bustling mugging of clowns, the intermingling of the portentous and the prosaic. They felt they had captured the essence of Shakespearian style in the impassioned, climactic speeches. They assimilated Shakespeare's stylistic trick of injecting references to minute, everyday detail in speeches of emotional intensity, and they exploited the monosyllabic. Shakespearian style as adapted by the romanticists and their followers emerges, utterly deficient in pacing, as a sustained scream.

James Sheridan Knowles' *Virginius*, performed at the huge Covent Garden Theatre in 1820, typifies the kind of melodrama which was patterned after Shakespeare. Its theatricality proved so effective that it remained a star vehicle for James O'Neill in the early twentieth century. The blank verse bears a heavy freight of moralizing and Shakespearian fireworks. A sample of self-conscious Victorian didacticism at its worst is the following:

Remember, girl,
The first and foremost debt a Roman owes
Is to his country; and it must be paid,
If need be, with his life.¹⁷

Essaying to capture the incoherent flavor of Lear's inflections, Knowles places the following highly derivative declamation into the mouth of *Virginius*:

Patience! Patience!
Nay, prudence, but no patience. Come!—A slave—
Dragg'd through the streets in open day! My child!

¹⁷ *The Dramatic Works*, London, n. d., p. 74.

My daughter! my fair daughter, in the eyes
 Of Rome! O, I'll be patient!—Come!—The essence
 Of my best blood in the free common ear
 Condemn'd as vile!—O, I'll be patient!—Come!
 O, they shall wonder—I will be so patient!¹⁸

William Archer¹⁹ has effectively demonstrated the pretension and pious morality which informs Knowles's poetry, by juxtaposing a speech of Virginius and one of Lady Macbeth:

At the generous
 And sympathetic fount, that, at her cry,
 Sent forth a stream of liquid living pearl
 To cherish her enamell'd veins.

I have given suck, and know
 How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.

In *William Tell*, produced at Drury Lane five years later, Republican sentiment struggles vainly against the repressive artificiality of the verse. Characterizations remain as indistinguishable as the free mountain tops which Tell romantically apostrophizes. Morality, melodramatics, and rant win the day. Staging taxes the designers; a direction in act three reads: "*It grows darker and darker—the rain pours down in torrents, and a furious wind arises—the mountain streams begin to swell and roar.*"²⁰ In the face of such exacting demands, audiences, incidentally, might be justifiably vexed to discover that in the apple-shooting scene, Albert, the son, takes up his position off stage!

Archaisms, puns, and stichomythia continued to mark Knowles's style as he happily held up the flashcards of Victorian morality. In 1832, the year of the great Reform Bill, Knowles voiced in the Drury Lane première of *The Hunchback* the kind of bourgeois sentiment which was to dominate the theater to the end of the century, which was to set the pattern for theatrical apologetics in behalf of the nascent ruling class, and which was oriented in a direction most apt to woo middle classes to the theaters:

¹⁸ Page 93.

¹⁹ *William Charles Macready*, London, 1890, pp. 53-54.

²⁰ *The Dramatic Works*, London, n. d., p. 141.

Walter: You were trained to knowledge, industry,
Frugality and honesty,—the sinews
That surest help the climber to the top,
And then will keep him there.

.....
Walter: . . . Your fortune, I have heard, I think, is ample!
And doubtless you live up to't?

Clifford: 'Twas my rule,
And is so still, to keep my outlay, sir,
A span within my means.

Walter: A prudent rule!
The turf is a seductive pastime?

Clifford: Yes.

Walter: You keep a racing stud? You bet?

Clifford: No, neither.
'Twas still my father's precept—"Better owe
A yard of land to labour, than to chance
Be debtor for a rood!"²¹

In plays such as *Ion*, first produced in 1836; *The Athenian Captive*, and *Glencoe*; or, *The Fate of the Macdonalds*, first performed in 1840, T. N. Talfourd affected the Shakespearean manner, but his imagery is faded. No soaring imagination came to assist what remained pretentious, sentimental dramas. Cardboard men and women move about in an operatic atmosphere. It is as though the Knowleses and the Talfourds of the time had just discovered the instrument of the speaking voice and were afire with its possibilities. Imagine opera without music, a play designed to exploit an actor's range of elocutionary art, replete with spoken arias, and you have poetic drama at its Victorian nadir.

Bulwer Lytton, who captured the laurels from Talfourd, significantly dedicated *The Lady of Lyons* (1838) to "The author of '*Ion*,' whose genius and example have alike contributed towards the regeneration of *The National Drama*." Lytton worked within the flamboyant, recklessly theatrical heroics of the tradition, succeeding in winning favor by his richer psychology and his surer instinct for what communicates rapidly over the footlights.

His *Lady of Lyons* illustrates strikingly the way in which the Victorians handled the theme of love and the class struggle. Lytton reflects Victorian paternalism with regard to the working class. He allows the

²¹ Pages 236-37.

Republican and sentimental values inherent in a love between members of two classes to receive its full dramatic exploitation; then, Lytton smothers the democratic implications of the play by awarding the badge of class to his low-born hero.

The plot tells how Melnotte, a peasant, poses as a foreign prince in order to win Pauline. When she learns of his poverty, she is aghast. Melnotte's remorse at his deception, however, extends to his treating his bride as a guest on their wedding night; and his ridiculous nobility of character leads Pauline to recognize her false values and to love him for himself. The unnecessary final act, however, obscures the democratic vista thus disclosed, for Melnotte, grieved at having concealed his true station and filled with the desire to do penance, joins the army. Winning rank and fame, he finally returns to Pauline as her social equal. Thus Lytton flirts with the princess and the beggar theme without removing the portcullis.

A word must be said for the progress towards realism before the advent of Robertson; for before the tempest he stirred, there had been some anticipatory waving of trees. Foremost among the progressive elements in the English theater stood the versatile Madame Vestris, aided by her husband Charles Matthews. While her efforts towards natural staging were limited, she set a new tone for beauty in the theater. Insisting on suitable costume and settings, the Matthewses made inroads on the threadbare, lacklustre spectacles to which London audiences had been subjected. Unfortunately Madame Vestris' reforms did not extend to the point where she consented to subordinate her own physical charms to the demands of a role, with the result that her own costume as a soubrette might outshine that of her mistress.

Regardless of the misplaced fidelity to antiquarianism, the Shakespearean managers contributed considerably to the expectation of spectators of enjoying elaborate pageantry and detail. Playbills boasted of research at the British Museum for authentic costume and setting. Scholars were consulted and lavish sums spent to merge instruction and delight.²²

Finally in the evolution of theatrical realism should be mentioned the influence of the novelists. The angling for idiosyncrasy, and the

²² See George C. D. Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*, New York, 1920, II.

objective and painstaking photographic quality in Thackeray, Dickens, and Reade had their impact on the stage. Reade himself was both novelist and playwright, and his *modus operandi* was contagious.

Because Tom Robinson, in *Never too Late to Mend*, was to be a gaol-bird, he visited the prisons at Durham, Oxford, and Reading in search of local colour. Another character, Geroge Fielding, had to make a voyage to Australia.

'I know next to nothing about a ship, but my brother Bill is a sailor. I have commissioned him to describe, as he would to an intelligent child, a ship sailing, with the wind on her beam, then a lull—a change of wind to dead aft, and the process of making all sail upon a ship under that favourable circumstance.'

This he intended to use for Chapter XXXVI of the novel; probably it was used, but in the process of revision it was ruthlessly deleted as unnecessary to the story. In Chapter XXII of *A Terrible Temptation*, where he describes himself in Rolfe, 'the writer of romances founded on facts,' he mentions the presence upon the table of the fair copy of a MS. 'half margin, and so provided for additions and improvements, but for one addition there were ten excisions, great and small.' When he drew in outline the character of Isaac Levi, he declared 'it will be my business to show what is in the head and in the heart of a modern Jew. This entails reading of at least eight considerable volumes; but those eight volumes will make my Jew a Truth, please God, instead of a life.' He then adds:

'My story must cross the water to Australia, and plunge after that into a gold mine. To be consistent with myself, I ought to cross-examine at the very least a dozen men that have formed, dug, or robbed in that land. If I can get hold of two or three that have really been in it, I think I could win the public ear by these means. Failing these I must read books and letters, and do the best I can. Such is the mechanism of a novel by Charles Reade. If I can work the above great system, there is enough of me to make on of the writers of the day; without it, No, No.'

It was towards the perfection of this 'system' that he began that amazing collection of notebooks and scrap-books, which accumulated so rapidly with the passing years that the indexes to the notebooks, as he described in *A Terrible Temptation* in 1871, had themselves to be indexed in 'a fat folio leger entitled *Index ad Indices*.' From the earliest of these books which have survived, showing that he began to collect newspaper cuttings in 1848, it is clear that his 'system' was not a sudden inspiration or eccentric idea; it was a scheme suggested by conviction and carried out by conscience, at first

spasmodically and unsystematically, as if shirking the drudgery of the formidable task, then with regularity and method as he settled to his work.²³

The impulses towards realism, however, were sporadic and never completely realized. Such tendencies required a synthesis of dramatic arts, a guiding principle behind the efforts of playwright, director, actor, and stage designer—a theater united in aim. The mid-Victorian theater suffered from accumulated clutter and debris. Its moribund state rested on managerial monopoly, commercialization of playwriting, the grip of convention and censorship, and the decadent resurgence of the poetic tradition. Let us now learn something about the man who, by brewing a tempest in a teapot, scalded many of the idols of the old order.

²³ Malcolm Elwin, *Charles Reade*, London, 1931, pp. 86-88.

CHAPTER TWO
ROBERTSON'S LIFE

THOMAS WILLIAM ROBERTSON, born January 9, 1829, at Newark-on-Trent, belongs to that group of nineteenth-century mad folk of the theater, nursed in dressing rooms and cradled in costume trunks. Hence Robertson, like Ellen Terry, grew up thoroughly at home in the theatrical tradition and atmosphere. His youth witnessed the declining era of theater circuits, traveling repertory immortalized by Charles Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Show business was dynamically alive, with all the disarrangement of personal lives, the emergency patching, and resourceful make-it-do that touring stock connotes. Until Robertson turned his talent to playwriting, he toyed with the idea of becoming a teacher, a soldier, a tobacconist, but always returned to his native element. By turn actor, stage-carpenter, painter, scene-shifter, prompter, stage-manager, writer, he knew from first-hand experience with the exigencies of stagecraft what "goes."

Tom's grandfather, James Robertson (1713-1795), had been of the stage. Admired by Tate Wilkinson, he handled leading comedy parts in the York circuit until he retired at the age of sixty-six.

Tom's two uncles, Thomas and James, were of the stage. Uncle Thomas, manager of the Lincoln circuit, was later to come to the aid of his famous nephew by offering him a job in his company. Uncle James was to carry on his father's fame as comedian in the York circuit.

Tom's father, William Robertson, was of the stage. More than once, he evidently resolved to have done with its hectic existence. His daughter, the future Dame Madge Kendal, refers to an unpublished article he once wrote on "The Actor's Social Position," in which he laments that "The most painful penalty of an actor's social position results in its isolation from every community of interest with others that form and cement the elements of mutual protection."¹ His grand-

¹ *Dame Madge Kendal by Herself*, London, 1933, p. 7.

son, Thomas William Shafto Robertson, tells us he once apprenticed himself to a Derby lawyer. But William Robertson succumbed to the family tradition, joined brother Thomas's company, married an actress, Margaret Elizabeth Marinus, and begat the most famous members of the Robertson theatrical family tree, Tom and Madge.

Thus we are dealing with the product of an acting family, one whose associations and traditions are engrained in the very fibers of his being.

In a scrambling, caravansary existence², we would not expect to discover a placid boyhood. Attic, backyard, and magic cave; the rhythm of school and play and bed; the devotion and attachment to household gods are not in the picture. Since his parents were constantly on the move, Thomas was placed in the care of his Aunt Fanny Maria, who in spite of a doting, sentimental nature, was able, with the help of Tom's father, to assume the management of the Lincoln circuit when she was widowed the last day of August, 1831, by Thomas Robertson. Apparently childless, she lavished affection on her nephew:

How I anticipated seeing pretty little Thomas with his golden curls, on my arrival. How I reckoned on his little feet pattering about my large room and his fine eyes looking up to me for approval, assistance, or joy. Alas! he was ill, very ill, all the time. We were laying plans how we were first to see him and if he would recognize us; what a change did reality produce in the mind, to see the sweet child in one short week of absence so reduced, his eyes heavy and clouded, fretful at being out of his mother's arms a moment; but he is better, thank God! he is better, and I pray humbly that he may be spared, for I truly love him!³

On June 13, 1834, at the age of five, Thomas made his debut in one of the inevitable Victorian benefit performances. The play was *Rob Roy*, and Thomas played Hamish, the hero's son. Launched as a juvenile, he was shipped through the Lincoln circuit.

His first direct exposure to the theater lasted about two years. When he was seven, his sporadic formal education began. Aunt Fanny sent him to Henry Young's Academy at Spaulding. Robertson's first biog-

² See Percy Fitzgerald, *The Romance of the English Stage*, London, 1874, I, 56-103, and Coleman, *Memoirs of Samuel Phelps*. Phelps played the York circuit from 1827 to 1829.

³ From the diary of Fanny Maria Robertson, as quoted by Thomas W. Robertson in the "Memoir" prefacing *The Principal Dramatic Works of Thomas William Robertson*, I, xix.

rapher, his own son, describes the high-spirits and high-jinks of a youngster who could command hero-worship by spouting lines from thrillers in which he had acted.

At the age of twelve, Tom moved to Moore's school in Whittlesea. But the unpredictable ledger of the Lincoln troupe made short work of his schooling. Book learning was postponed. It was time to push the fledgling out of the nest. For a while, Tom had played roles during school holidays⁴; now he had to become a regular, dependable part of the company.

There is no reason to suppose that young Tom left Whittlesea in 1843 with regret. He seems to have plunged with zest into the alluring chaos of the Robertson traveling menage. From fourteen until nineteen, he served his apprenticeship. In a shoestring venture, everyone had to lend both hands. Madge Robertson describes her assignments as a young actress in *Macbeth*:

My duties were strange and numerous. After tinkling the bell and drawing up the curtain, I went on the stage as one of the witches; then, removing my rags and wig, I spoke Donalbain's lines in the next scene and became a guest at the banquet of the Macbeths until I heard Lady Macbeth say, "Feed and regard him not," when I had to leave suddenly to become a witch again. In the dark during the cauldron scene I left the stage to appear as the child who speaks the lines beginning, "Be bloody, bold and resolute," after which I made another quick change to become the ghost of one of the eight kings who appear to Macbeth.

Finally, in the battle scene my duty was to clash two rapiers to help suggest the conflict between the two armies.⁵

In *Fifty Years of an Actor's Life*, John Coleman takes us back stage to a rehearsal of Robertson's Lincoln troupe:

The Farmer's Story was what is called a "stock piece;" consequently my scenes were the only ones rehearsed, and it was quite evident that the company, who knew their parts backwards, and had played them over and over again, wished the newcomer at Hong-Kong or anywhere but Horse-Fair Street. The rehearsal was so slipshod and perfunctory that it was enough to have upset an old stager, let alone a novice.

"Mrs. Robertson!" called the Prompter.

⁴ Once, in Stamford, during a provincial tour of Macready, Tom played François to his Richelieu.

⁵ *Dame Madge Kendal*, p. 38.

"Mrs. Robertson is looking out the checks. Read for her," grimly remarked Mr. Robertson.

"Gabble-gabble," commenced the Prompter—"gabble! Now, sir, that's your cue: on you come from behind the centre arch."

"Where will the arch be?"

"Where will the arch be, Casson?" inquired the Prompter.

"Second grooves," replied the master-carpenter.

"It will be a drawing-room. Here is a chair; there is a table," continued the Prompter.

"But I don't see either the one or the other," I replied.

"No, but you will at night."

"Shall I?"

"Oh, yes! it will be all right at night."

Oh that "all right at night"! From that day to this I've been fighting against it. I've killed it a million times, but it always comes to life again. . .

"Gabble gabble—squeak. Cross to right, then to left and up centre. Mind you give Mrs. Robertson the stage: she wants plenty of elbow-room. Now, Mr. Rogers, if you please."

Mr. Rogers, a short, thick-set man of fifty, with an enormous head and a huge bull-neck, who was known for many years after that at the Haymarket as a sound sensible actor of old men and character parts, is the interesting hero, Stephen Lockwood. This gentleman sits upon me, warns me to give him the stage and to keep my eye on him, and begins to gabble and growl. I respond to the best of my ability, and am about to make my exit on the left-hand side.

"No, my good young man, not that way," interposes the adipose tragedian with dignity.

The "good young man" is intended to be patronizing, but it is reassuring, for he calls me a man, at any rate.

"Which side is it, Norman?" inquires the great Rogers.

"Right hup-her hentrance."

"Then I will cross in front to the left, and you, sir, go up to the right. No, no, not that way! Don't turn your back to the audience. Whatever you do, don't turn your back to the audience."⁶

It was inevitable that the manager's son be made to feel his especial responsibilities. One minute he painted scenery; the next he might be pounding nails; and all the while, he was conning parts or maybe composing a song to be used in a play. Come curtain time, if he was not performing, he was prompting or lending a hand backstage. Meanwhile, under his father's encouragement, Tom kept up his studies, in-

⁶ London, 1904, pp. 146-48.

cluding French. Did he or his father at this early period see the commercial possibilities of adapting French plays? At any rate, Tom's knowledge of French was a peculiarly appropriate tool in the equipment of a theater-apprentice.

We are indebted to Edward Stirling for recording the following off-stage incident in Tom's boyhood. Made to feel a man's estate in the company, at home he was still a boy with a boy's bag of tricks, pitting his resourcefulness against the greater resourcefulness of his elders.

Gainsborough, Lincolnshire.—Acting with Robertson, father of Tom Robertson, afterwards the distinguished author of '*Caste*,' etc. On the arrival of Robertson and his company about once in two years, it was customary for the landlord of the 'Bull Hotel' to present him and his numerous family with a large cask of home-brewed ale for their Christmas enjoyment. Old Mrs. Robertson, noticing that the ale disappeared uncommonly fast, resolved to watch Master Tom at the barrel (it was his office to draw the ale for dinner and supper). She found him drinking heartily. An ingenious invention of the old lady's stopped Master Tom's indulgence. She always waited at the top of the cellar-stairs, and if she heard a pause, called out:

'Whistle, Tommy, whistle!'

The poor lad was done. Many a mournful ditty answered grandmother's 'Whistle!'⁷

Traveling the circuit was an exciting life, even though the Robertsons were finding it hard to keep the show on the road. Edward Stirling on one occasion lent them eighteen pounds ten shillings to enable them to produce a benefit. Tom's father was unable to pay his debt and Tom, the factotum, addressed the following letter to their creditor:

Sheffield, October 2nd, 1846.

Dear Sir,

My father regrets that he could not keep his promise, but his benefit did not turn out as well as he anticipated. His friend the sergeant-major brought the soldiers, but he was obliged to trust them for admission. He now finds great difficulty in getting the money. In a few days father will send it. With grateful thanks, mother's best regards, and all.

Yours, etc.,

Tom Robertson.

E. Stirling, Esq.
Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.⁸

⁷ Stirling, *Old Drury Lane*, I, 100.

⁸ Pages 144-45.

Several weeks later, Stirling again asked for his money, and once again, Tom dropped a paint brush to pick up a pen:

Sheffield, Nov. 10th, 1846.

Dear Sir,

Father desires me to say, that he is in so much distress that he cannot at present send you a shilling—in fact he is giving up management to take a situation. The sergeant-major never paid the soldiers' money!—Mother is greatly grieved about it, and wishes to know if you will take the money out in knives and spoons? A friend of hers would send them to you.

Yours obediently, sir,

Tom Robertson.

E. Stirling, Esq.

T. R. C. Garden.⁹

The second letter sounds the senior Robertson's chronic rebellion. Actually the circuit struggled on for two more years. By the time it finally disbanded in 1848, Tom saw performed in Boston his adaptations of two of Dickens's short stories, "The Battle of Life" and "The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain" and had held everything from a spear to Yorick's skull.

In 1848, the family plans were in the air and Robertson, yearning to strike out on his own, came up to London. He made the rounds of theaters, but managers were unimpressed by his Green Room pedigree. The fact of the matter is that Tom was not a spectacular actor.¹⁰ Discouraged, he muddled through, supporting himself on scattered engagements. All the while, as was his father's experience, the decision to escape the insecurity of the theater grew stronger.

Respect for letters had been as deeply engrafted as acting on the Robertson family tree. Grandfather Robertson had published a volume of *Poems*. Tom's father had wrestled briefly with the law and, according to his grandson's memoir, was "an exceedingly well-educated and learned man . . . literary in his tastes" who "had he not been tied down by the fact of an ever increasing family there is little doubt . . .

⁹ Pages 145-46.

¹⁰ Page 42.

William Frith, the artist-friend of Robertson, declares that Robertson confessed to him his lack of acting ability. See *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, New York, 1888, II, 309.

Godfrey Turner speaks of Robertson as "an indifferent actor." "Robertsoniana," *The Theatre*, New Series, Vol. XIV (Dec. 1, 1889), 285.

would have broken away from the toilsome trials of theatrical life to the more self-reliant work of literature."¹¹ And we have already stolen a glimpse into Aunt Fanny's diary.

Accordingly, Tom decided that travel and study might open new doors. The advertisement in 1848 for an English-speaking teacher in Utrecht looked like the ideal opportunity. The fact that he left England without telling his family, however, suggests that he was a little frightened at his initial defeat in London and unsure of the wisdom of exiling himself as an usher in Holland. The experiment was a sharp break with Robertsonian tradition.

His academic invasion of the Continent failed miserably. His role as teacher lasted six weeks, leaving him bitter recollections of a Squeers-like establishment. The other usher was a sniveling brute, whom Robertson never forgot. When he wrote *School* in 1869 he incorporated his colleague as Krux, painting him as a mealy-mouthed, pushing rascal who deserves and receives a thrashing. The following excerpt illustrates Robertson's belated retaliation:

Krux: Upstarts! I hate those people; but then I hate most people. I think I hate most things, except Bella, and when I look at her I feel that I could bite her. Here she is.

Enter Bella, i E. L., she crosses to R., reading a book.

Krux: Bella, where are you going?

Bel: Mrs. Sutcliffe has sent me to fetch her goloshes.

Krux: Stay one moment. Sit down. (*sits on bench, L. C.*)

Bel: Mrs. Sutcliffe told me I was not to loiter.

Krux: What are you reading?

Bel: A fairy tale. What are you reading?

Krux: Hervey's Meditations. A different sort of literature. Do sit down. (*Bella sits on bench, R. of Krux.*)

Bel: (*reads*) "The king's son, the handsome young prince, was continually by her side, and said to her the most obliging things imaginable."

Krux: What a beastly world this is, Bella, isn't it? Attend to me for a short time, I want to speak to you particularly.

Bel: Be quick then.

Krux: Dr. and Mrs. Sutcliffe are getting very old.

Bel: They are not getting old, they are old.

Krux: And, therefore, must soon die.

¹¹ Robertson, *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, p. xviii.

Bel: Oh, Mr. Krux, what a dreadful notion.

Krux: We are all worms, particularly the Doctor and Mrs. Sutcliffe. All men must die sometimes, Doctor and Mrs. Sutcliffe included.

Bel: Mrs. Sutcliffe isn't a man.

Krux: She ought to have been. But as I was saying, Bella, when they are dead and buried—

Bel: Mr. Krux!

Krux: They will no longer be able to keep on the school, will they? Then who is to keep on the school, eh?

Bel: I don't know. I don't like to think of such things.

Krux: I do. I repeat, who is to keep on the school? I am the only resident master. I am known to all the pupils.

Bel: Alas, yes!

Krux: I am known, and, I hope, loved.

Bel: No, feared.

Krux: It's the same thing in a school. Bella, you're a very good scholar—

Bel: No, I'm not.

Krux: Yes, you are, and you understand all about the kitchen-pies, and coals, and vegetables, and the like. You're an orphan.

Bel: Yes. (sighing)

Krux: So am I. You have no relations.

Bel: No.

Krux: Nor friends.

Bel: Oh, yes, Dr. and Mrs. Sutcliffe, and the school and the people in the village.

Krux: I don't count them—I have no friends.

Bel: No, not one.

Krux: When the Sutcliffes go why shouldn't we keep on the school?

Bel: (astonished) We?

Krux: Yes, you and I; we are quite capable. I am clever, so are you—we could enlarge the connection. You could manage the girls, I would manage the boys. Think how pleasant to make money, take in pupils, teach them and correct them; I should like to correct them—particularly the boys. We should get on, Bella, if we got married.

Bel: Got married! Who got married?

Krux: You to me, me to you. Mr. and Mrs. Krux, of Cedar Grove House. I love you, Bella.

Bel: (*jumps up, dropping her book and going to C.*) Oh, don't—on such a nice day as this too.

Krux: Eh?

Bel: Poor dear Dr. and Mrs. Sutcliffe, to think of their dying! it makes me cry. (crying) So kind as they've been to me.

Krux: She's a fool. (*rises*) Bella.

Bel: Go away, you bad man, do, to think of death and marriage and such dreadful things. (*picks up book*)

Krux: You won't tell the Sutcliffes, Bella, will you? I proposed it all for your good, and because I love you. You won't tell 'em, will you, dear, and get me into trouble? Promise me you won't tell 'em. (*carneying*) Promise me, do—do.

Bel: I won't tell 'em if you'll promise me never to mention such subjects again.

Krux: I won't, I'll take my oath I won't. Take your oath you won't tell them of me. Bella, take your oath, dear, will you?¹²

This chance to even the score, however, did not arrive until later. Meanwhile, stranded in Utrecht, he had to nurse his resentment and disappointment. Then, finally, at the end of a miserable six weeks the British Consulate rescued the dampened actor and he reappeared in the wings of Newark theater, startling the wits out of his sister Fanny, who was in the midst of a performance.

There was no place for Tom in the throes of provincial stock, then being strangled out of existence by the spread of railways. Again he turned to London, resuming the day-to-day grubbing. This time, however, he felt a little more anchored, for his friendship with Henry J. Byron, whom he met at an acting agency, must have consoled him that genius unwanted was not a unique phenomenon in the big city. Robertson was about twenty-two; Byron was slightly younger. Robertson had just seen another opportunity disappear before his eyes. His first play, *A Night's Adventure*, was produced by William Farren at the Olympic August 8, 1851. The playwright was sure that he had found his proper métier and that his fortune was secured. *A Night's Adventure* proved only a four-night adventure. Robertson did not accept his defeat gracefully. He antagonized Farren, blaming the Olympic's production for the play's failure.¹³

The resourcefulness which comes from theatrical training and the

¹² *French's Standard Drama*, No. 381, pp. 10-11.

¹³ Erroll Sherson in his nostalgically biased and undocumented *London's Lost Theatres* mentions on page 216 Robertson as a member of Copeland's company at the Strand in 1851, along with Edward Stirling and Charlotte Saunders. I find no support for Sherson's reference to Robertson in the capacity either of actor or writer. Robertson's first play at the Strand was *Peace at Any Price* in 1856. Edward Stirling, who was affectionately disposed to Tom, makes no mention of his association with Punch's Play House. See *Old Drury Lane*, I, 195-96.

elasticity of youth must be combined to account for the madcap pitchman episode in the Gallery of Illustration on Regent Street. The two irrepressibles hired a hall in the Gallery in order to present a week's series of monologues. They were to exchange stations between box-office and platform. On opening night, looking for some Chinese jugglers who were billed elsewhere in the Gallery, one customer wandered into the Byron-Robertson enterprise. The verbal exchange between Byron and his single auditor sounds too good to be true; as Robertson's son wrote it up, Byron started on a monologue called "The Origin of Man" with the sentence "In the beginning there was only one man."

"Yes, and I'm the damned fool," was the magnificent *ad lib* of the customer in the front seat.¹⁴

Robertson dwindled into the status of a Lacy menial, turning out translations and adaptations of French pieces. In 1854, he added to his hackwork the job of prompter at the Lyceum—a comedown for the youth who had watched from the wings his own first play. The current managers were Charles Matthews and Madame Vestris, and the pay, when it was irregularly doled out, came to three pounds a week. Greater reward came in his opportunity to study at close quarters the realistic techniques of the Matthews.

His hackwork at Lacy's and his nightly stint in the Lyceum prompter's box gave Robertson excellent schooling in the manufacture of Gallic bonbons. He concocted a series of original farces¹⁵, a few of which eventually saw the light of the stage, most of which Robertson sold to Lacy. In April of 1854, the managers of the City Theatre, Johnson and Nelson Lee, produced his *Castles in the Air*.

Rebuffs and set-backs engendered cynicism. We can get a glimpse of his war against London in a speech he puts into the mouth of Rudolph in the play *Dreams*, written after he had finally battered his way into the inner circle:

Rudolph: In England, yesterday is always considered so much better than to-day—last week so superior to this week—and this week so superior to the week after next—thirty years ago so much more brilliant an era than the present!—the moon that shone over the

¹⁴ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, xxvi.

¹⁵ *Photographs and Ices*, *My Wife's Diary*, and *A Row in the House* belong to this period.

earth last century so much brighter, and more grand than the paltry planet that lit up the night last past.

Clara: I don't quite understand you!

Rudolph: I shall explain myself better if I give my own personal reasons for making a crusade against age. In this country I find age so respected—so run after—so courted—so worshipped, that it becomes intolerable. I compose music—I wish to sell it. I go to a purchaser and tell him so—he looks at me, and says, “You look very young,” in the same tone that he would say “You look like an imposter or a pickpocket.” I am thirty years of age—so I think I am old enough to be trusted with pen, ink, and music paper, but I apologize, as humbly as I can, for not having been born fifty years earlier; and the publisher, struck by my contrition, thinks to himself: “Poor young man, after all he cannot help it;”—and addressing me, as if I were a baby, says, “My dear sir, very likely your compositions may have merit—I don't dispute it—but you see, Mr. So-and-So, aged sixty—and Mr. Such-a-One, aged seventy—and Mr. T'other, aged eighty—and Mr. Somebody else, aged ninety, write for us; and the public are accustomed to their productions, and we make it a rule never to give the world anything written by a man under fifty-five years old. Go away now, keep to your work for the next thirty years, during that time exert yourself to grow older—you'll succeed if you try hard—turn grey—if you can't turn grey, be bald—it's not a bad substitute—lose your teeth, your health, your vigour, your fire, your freshness, your genius—in one short word, your terrible, abominable youth; and some day or other—if you don't die in the interim—you may have the chance of being a great man.”¹⁶

Both young men were in a mood to junk the unending drudgery. They presented themselves before the enlistment office of the Horse Guards. Because of heart trouble, Robertson was rejected, and Byron refused to join without his friend.

It was back again to the theater. Robertson's first substantial acting engagement since he had struck out on his own in London was ironically due to family connections. William Robertson and J. W. Wallack in 1855 were managing the Marylebone Theatre. Robertson's brother Craven and his sister Madge were playing juveniles. Tom rejoined the family. They played a season. Then, whether it was because the touring instinct was overpowering or the Marylebone vein had been exhausted,

¹⁶ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, 197-98.

the Robertsons were off on another fantastic gamble—a visit to Paris to produce *Macbeth* at the Théâtre des Italiens. The company was impressive, including the Wallacks, the William Robertsons, Mrs. Arthur Stirling, and George Honey, but the name of the angel was prophetic: Monsieur Ruin de Fée. The foreign tour lasted less than three weeks; the company received one week's salary, and the actors straggled back to London as best they could.

During the same year, Robertson, taking part in a benefit performance, made his first acquaintance with the Prince of Wales Theatre. In 1855, it was called the Queen's Theatre. It had undergone a variety of christenings (the King's Concert Rooms, The Regency, The Tottenham Street Theatre, The West London Theatre, The Fitzroy), but until the Bancrofts took over the Tottenham Street Theater, it was unofficially known as the "Dusthole." Playing a bit part was Elizabeth Burton, a beautiful, nineteen-year old actress, who had been at the Queen's for three years. The two fell in love and were married August 27, 1856, at Christ Church.

The new Robertson team started a theatrical trek through Dublin, Belfast, and Dundalk, Mrs. Robertson taking the acting honors and her husband assuming the chores of stage manager. In 1857, they were back in London, filling engagements first at the Surrey and then at the Marylebone. On December 2, 1857, Robertson's son, Thomas William Shafto, was born. The next year, a daughter, Betty, was born to them, but died shortly after. Engagements followed; Robertson was enjoying for the first time a fairly steady income.

The old resentment at uncertain returns and the hardships of touring, aggravated by the loss of his daughter, nevertheless revived Robertson's determination to leave the stage. He remembered his facility at concocting English versions of French pieces. He had energy and ability. He felt the confidence that came from his steady acting engagements available to him since his marriage. Surely this was the time to make the break.

Accordingly, the Robertsons forsook the provinces and returned to London. His wife continued to act while he, using Lacy as the hub of his projected literary activities, attempted to crash the periodicals. Applying the same made-to-order techniques to articles and stories, he was able to branch out. Among the periodicals to which he contributed

are *Fun*, Sala's *Welcome Guest*, the *Porcupine*, the *Comic News*, *London Society*, and the *Illustrated Times*. In the last, Robertson followed Edmund Yates as drama critic. On February 14, 1861, his one act farce, *The Cantab*, which he had written back during his prompting days at the Lyceum, saw production at the Strand. In 1863, Robertson wrote his first novel, *David Garrick*.

Free-lance writing proved as insecure and distasteful as free-lance acting; again Robertson wistfully eyed non-theatrical life, this time flirting with the idea of becoming a tobacconist. What more appropriate pipe-dream, for Robertson later told Squire Bancroft that during these days, "I often dined on my pipe!"

His writing brought him into the circle of London hack-writers—the clubmen who made up the bulk of membership of the Arundel and the Savage.¹⁷ The set, including such men as the younger Tom Hood, W. S. Gilbert, George Augustus Sala, and Joseph Knight, constituted the closest approximation to university life Robertson experienced. The Bohemians afforded camaraderie and exchange of ideas. Robertson took to them with a heart. He incorporated the spirit of the group in *Society*. The old tricks by which he had assumed leadership at boys' school stood him in good stead. He could slap a back with the best of them and then dominate a gathering with a spontaneous overflow of theatrics. Writers are at their articulate best in print; an actor-playwright has an electric magnetism which draws the spotlight. No wonder, then, that Robertson loved his new-won friends and was, in turn, welcomed by them. "Indeed, Robertson was always the life and soul of every circle in which he moved, and in all wit competitions invariably came off best, and this saying a great deal when Henry J. Byron, in his best form, and Henry S. Leigh¹⁸, in his most satirical mood, happened to be present."¹⁹

The novel *David Garrick* held the greatest promise for the developing playwright. In play form²⁰, it so attracted Lacy that he took an option on it for ten pounds. Sothorn heard of the play, advanced Robert-

¹⁷ Robertson joined the Savage in 1861.

¹⁸ Henry S. Leigh (1837-1883) was a prolific adaptor of French pieces, specializing in comic operas.

¹⁹ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, xxiv-xxxv.

²⁰ The novel was published in March, 1865, after the successful stage version had been launched.

son the money to get the manuscript out of pawn, and arranged for a reading in his Regent Street rooms. Charles Millwood, the actor's friend, who had brought the two together, describes the evening:

Robertson was a punctual guest that night for when Sothern got home from the theatre he found him pacing the drawing-room with the precious manuscript under his arm. Tom looked hugely delighted over what was for him a golden opportunity. The supper party numbered five—Southern, Buckstone (his manager), John Hollingshead, Robertson, and myself. When the meal was disposed of, our host produced cigars—and no man kept better—and drinkables, and then proceeded to read *David Garrick*.

Long before he had got through the first Act, I could see that Sothern was favourably impressed. He frequently interrupted himself with such remarks as "Capital!" "First-rate!" "Strong situation!" and "I like that!" But when he came to the party scene, in which David acts like a madman, Sothern became so excited that he began to smash the glasses and upset the furniture. "I think *that* will do, Bucky?" he said to his manager. "Yes, it will do," replied Buckstone, "and I rather like that fellow Chevy." Before our party broke up *David Garrick* was accepted, and every playgoer knows how immensely successful it proved wherever it was performed.²¹

David Garrick had its première at the Prince of Wales's in Birmingham, April, 1864 and then moved to the Haymarket in London. Two months later, a new Dundreary farce, *Lord Dundreary Married and Done For*, was added to the bill.²² Now when Robertson and Byron walked on Regent Street they could afford to grin at the Gallery of Illustration. The incident of a decade ago was evidently still fresh in Robertson's mind, but he now joyfully capitalized on the nightmarish experience by turning it into a short story. In "Our Entertainment," which he contributed to the April, 1864, issue of *London Society*²³, two amateur actors storm an Irish provincial outpost called Shandranaghan, hire the dilapidated hall of the Mechanics' Institute, and after a hectic trial procuring a piano and posting bills, succeed in luring an audience of one.

The success of *David Garrick* marked the beginning of Robertson's path to glory, for elated over the idea of providing Sothern with another vehicle, he started *Society*. Written to order, the part of Sidney Daryl

²¹ Page xxxviii.

²² Henry Morley, *The Journal of a London Playgoer*, London, 1891, pp. 281-82.

²³ V, 304-17.

was designed for Sothern and that of Chodd Senior, for Buckstone.

The early history of the play was inauspicious. Buckstone who typified the crass, materialistic approach to the theater flatly rejected it, with the curt comment "Rubbish." Sothern took an option for thirty pounds to play Daryl but left Robertson to find a producer. The play made the rounds of London managers—Miss Herbert, Benjamin Webster, Alfred Wigan—but did not find a roost. When we come to analyze *Society*, we shall see the significance of the chorus of "no's" with which the traditionalists greeted the play. It was an unwanted child and had to be farmed out.

Byron deserves the credit for finally connecting the playwright with a manager. His first stroke was to interest Alexander Henderson of the Liverpool Prince of Wales. Clement Scott recapitulates the delightful Henderson episode in the history of *Society*:

Was there ever such pathetic ill luck as waited on poor Robertson? He suddenly got a message from the faithful Byron to say that Henderson would be in town from Saturday to Monday, and would be glad to hear the play read at Byron's house on Sunday evening.

But where was the play?

Robertson clutched at his red beard and danced about the room like a maniac. The only manuscript had been lent to his friends the Billingtons, who lived miles away at Highgate. There was no time to be lost, so Robertson took a cab, rushed into the room, and asked John Billington for his precious "scrip."

"Oh, I remember, Tom,—that play 'Society,' Mrs. Billington will know where it is."

Luckily for Tom Robertson he did not see the wife's frightened glance over his shoulder to her husband.

She had not the slightest idea where the manuscript was, or what she had done with it.

"Oh! yes! She would go upstairs and fetch it!"

Then followed an awful half hour. Robertson, the most excitable of men, fumed and fretted; and "John" contrived to keep him amused with some of his Yorkshire stories, all of which he had heard before.

At last came a mysterious call from upstairs.

"John!"

"Yes, my dear."

Then a whisper over the banisters.

"John, I cannot find the play anywhere. I have hunted high and low. I think I must have lost it."



THE LATE MR. T. W. ROBERTSON. THE DRAMATIST.

"Lost it! Nonsense! I tell you you must find it. The man will go roaring mad."

So back went John Billington to try and appease the infuriated dramatist.

Another awful half hour. The Yorkshire stories were almost exhausted. The situation was becoming dangerous. At last Mrs. Billington reappeared, beaming, with the manuscript in her hand. She had found the manuscript, saved the situation, and made the play.

"Society" was read to Henderson, who was delighted with it, and promised to produce it at Liverpool. But the career of ill luck was not over yet. Bohemia, in one of its brightest ornaments, had to come to the rescue. It was not a case this time of "lend me five shillings," but lend me £30, which was a very different thing in Bohemia-Land.

Robertson was ever the most scrupulous and honourable of men. The play was accepted, a production had been promised; but Robertson declared it would be impossible that any further steps could be taken in the matter until he had repaid to Sothern the £30 for which "Society" had been pawned.

Could Byron lend him the money?

Byron, with a rueful countenance, pulled his moustache, and frankly admitted he was terribly hard up at the time.

Back went Robertson in despair to the Arundel Club, where he found, as good luck would have it, William Belford, the actor. When he had related his misfortune to his old friend, cursing the demon of ill luck, who pursued him so relentlessly, his brave heart was comforted with these cheering words from a true "pal":

"Tom, my boy, cheer up! I'll get the money for you. I don't know where, or from whom, for the life of me. But, trust me, I'll get it. I've heard about the play, and how in the 'Owls Roost' you have hit us all off to the life, you satirical dog! The critics will be down on you; but never mind, you'll win yet."

Robertson received the £30 next day. Sothern was repaid. "Society" was free; and dear old Belford got his money back out of Robertson's first receipts for his successful play.²⁴

Society was first performed May 8, 1865. The punster Byron might have been able to say that as far as dramatic history was concerned there was a whale of a difference between the Prince of Wales's in Liverpool and the Prince of Wales's in London. *Society's* transportation to the Bancrofts' Theater marks the beginning of the tempest Robertson was to start in dramaturgy.

Before tracing the course of the tempest from Liverpool to London,

²⁴ Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*, I, 496-98.

we must record the loss of Robertson's wife on August 14 of that year. She had continued to act in spite of ill health. Now at twenty-nine, she died, leaving two children, Tom and Maud. Thus Robertson's first taste of fame was accompanied by a severe shock.

Byron had accomplished a great deal for Robertson by recommending *Society* to Henderson. His second and incalculably important contribution to Robertson's fame was his interesting Marie Wilton in the play. His career hung in the balance. Squire Bancroft describes the state to which the writer had come:

He was of a highly nervous temperament, and he had a great habit of biting his moustache and caressing his beard—indeed, his hands were rarely still. He was at that time thirty-six, above medium height and rather stoutly built, with a pale skin and reddish beard, and small piercing red-brown eyes which were ever restless.²⁵

In order better to appreciate the inestimably fortunate coincidence of the Bancroft management and Robertson, we must devote attention to the aims and methods of the new lessees of the Dusthole. The Bancrofts were set upon establishing a bandbox of gentility. *Das Weibliche* entered theatrical management by way of Marie Wilton. Marie Wilton, whose hand is clearly discernible in the interior decoration of the Bancroft theater, went all out for curtains, hangings, and statuary. Carpets and antimacassars decked the stalls, whose price was raised to ten shillings. Thus she encouraged the growth of stalls at the expense of the pit—a move which enhanced the dignity and profit of the house.

An evening's performance was no longer to contain a medley of offerings. The management advertised a single offering and moved up curtain time. It pioneered in establishing regular matinee performances. The quiet calm which pervaded the front of the house was reflected in the new atmosphere backstage. The Bancrofts, models of Victorian dignity in their personal lives, spread an aura of respectability over the Green Room. For example, Squire Bancroft inaugurated the practice of having the treasurer pay members of the cast individually instead of forcing them to congregate on the stage at a stipulated time.

The small theater and the loving attention the Bancrofts expended on detail combined to favor the meticulous staging Robertson wished for

²⁵ Squire and Marie Bancroft, *The Bancrofts on and off the Stage*, p. 81.

his plays. Equally important, the Bancrofts had arrived at a distaste for the star system. No less an actress than Ellen Terry, who knew the star system only too well in her association with Kean and later with Henry Irving, attests to this fact:

I have never, even in Paris, seen anything more admirable than the ensemble playing of the Bancroft productions. Every part in the domestic comedies, the presentation of which, up to 1875, they had made their policy, was played with such point and finish that the more rough, uneven, and emotional acting of the present day has not produced anything so good in the same line. The Prince of Wales's Theater was the most fashionable in London, and there seemed no reason why the triumph of Robertson should not go on for ever.²⁶

Liberated from the shackles of a star-dominated company, the casts at the Prince of Wales's were able to perform full-bodied plays, bestowing nuance on what was conventionally dismissed as adjunct or subordinate. For fully conceived presentation, Robertson's plays demanded actors who were not only free from theatrical feudal barons but who were free from a mind-set conditioned by the star system. The company was blessed with fresh, eager talent, untrammelled by experience in London theaters; thus a slow and painful conversion to ensemble playing was made unnecessary.

Everything about the Bancroft management was conducive to domestic comedy, and Tom Robertson's forte was domestic comedy. Byron asked Marie Wilton to read *Society*. She was immediately won.

The play was given the best production possible at the time in London. It opened November 11, 1865, with Squire Bancroft in the leading role, originally designed for Sothorn; Marie Wilton as Maud Hetherington; and John Hare as Lord Ptarmigant. Hare had seen Lord Ptarmigant performed in Liverpool, little thinking he himself would leap to fame with the part. The run lasted one hundred and fifty nights. Poetic justice smiled sweetly. The companion piece of the evening was Byron's burlesque *Don Giovanni*. The fellow dramatists shared billing. On the hundredth night of the run, Robertson took pleasure in sending Buckstone a private box.

Thus was initiated the Robertsonian reign in theater annals. Five plays, cast in the same mold, followed in swift succession: *Ours*, *Caste*,

²⁶ *The Story of My Life*, p. 109.

Play, Home, School. Playwright and managers shared in the glory. More than half the profits accruing to the Bancrofts came from Robertson's plays. Squire Bancroft testifies that his acting fame rested on his interpretation of Captain Hawtree. Critics argued about the Robertsonian role Marie Wilton best interpreted. Robertson was through with acting; he had found his niche. His study of French, his translations, his adaptations, his composing, his work for Lacy had led to this. He could look back at the days when he made the rounds of agents and stage-doors. Then he had one meal a day and three parts a night to play. "Now," he could say, "I have three meals a day and no part to play, and for this relief Providence has my most heartfelt thanks."²⁷

Robertson's share in the financial glory, however, was never commensurate with that of the management. Once having achieved recognition, he remained content with a royalty of five pounds a performance, even going so far as to turn down the Bancroft's proposal to increase his share in the profit. Robertson wrote the following letter during the first revival of *Ours*:

Wednesday Morning, December 7, 1870

Dear B.,—

Don't be offended that I return your cheque. I recognize your kindness and intention to the full; but having thought the matter over, I cannot reconcile it to my sense of justice and probity to take more than I bargained for. An arrangement is an arrangement, and cannot be played fast and loose with. If a man—say an author—goes in for a certain sum, he must be content with it, and "seek no new"; if he goes in for a share, he must take good and bad luck too. So please let *Ours* be paid for at the sum originally agreed upon. With kind love to Marie, and many thanks,

I am, yours always,

T. W. Robertson.²⁸

Ours saw production on August 23, 1866, at Alexander Henderson's theater in Liverpool; the Bancrofts brought their own company for the try-out. Robertson was anxious about the outcome. His luck with *Society* had been phenomenal. Would his dramatic recipe hold out?

²⁷ *The Bancrofts*, p. 118.

²⁸ *The Bancrofts*, p. 90. The arrangements spelled a new dawn in profits to playwrights. As an indication of the changing times, we need only compare Robertson's royalty of five pounds a performance with the lump sum of fifty pounds the prolific Tom Taylor received for each act when he turned over a play to a manager.

Charles Millwood describes the strain Robertson underwent on the opening night; the nervous reaction attending the opening of all his plays was, in his few remaining years, to tax his weak heart:

The theatre was crowded in every part, but Robertson positively refused to occupy the box the manager had reserved for him. He would first take a smart walk, he said, to enable him to "blow the steam off." He must have accumulated a large quantity of superfluous steam, for he was *non est* during the performance of the first and second Acts, and, although he had been vociferously called for by the audience, he was nowhere to be found. When the third Act commenced every soul in the theatre save the author knew that *Ours* was a thumping success. But where was Tom Robertson? Surely not still blowing the steam off? As we knew there would be a tremendous call for him when the curtain fell, we were bound to find the missing author dead or alive.

Messengers were despatched in all directions in search of him, and as I had frequently seen him during his nervous attacks, I joined in the pursuit. I dreaded the prospect of the play terminating before the author turned up, so I sought for him in the streets around the theatre. Ultimately I encountered him in Bold-street, walking at a furious pace, mopping the perspiration from his brow, in evening dress, and *bareheaded*. He had been pacing the streets, "blowing off," more than two hours. With great difficulty I induced him to return with me to the theatre, where we found the last scene on. When the curtain fell a tremendous shout arose for the author, and Marie Wilton dragged him across the stage, pale as a ghost, as limp and flabby a specimen of a successful dramatist as one could wish to see.²⁹

On September 16, *Ours* moved to Tottenham Street. The following year, *Caste* removed any lingering doubts of a flash-in-the-pan success. Robertson sent out a second company to tour the provinces, an historically inevitable theatrical practice, but one for which Robertson deserves credit for implementing. He knew the catch-all shortcomings of broken down traveling units. Here was an opportunity to set up a touring company from London, provide it with first-rate talent, sets, and costumes, and thus initiate the provinces to London standards. The eminence of the dramatist also served to help focus attention on the notorious absence of international copyright laws. When in the same year *Caste* was breaking records in London, a pirated version by an American, W. J. Florence, given wide circulation by the de Witt publishers, sent the play barnstorming all over the United States.

²⁹ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, li.

Robertson's second Continental trip occurred after *Caste* was set in motion. The Bancrofts presented Boucicault's *How She Loves Him*, thus freeing Robertson from the necessity of furnishing a follow-up to *Caste*. The fact, incidentally, that the Boucicault piece failed must have reinforced Robertson's confidence that he had arrived. The safely-enthroned domesticator of drama who crossed the Channel in 1867 was a far cry from the frightened, whipped adolescent who in 1848 had answered an advertisement for an English-speaking usher in Utrecht.

The present trip wound up his courtship of Rosetta Feist, of Frankfort-on-Maine, whom he had met the previous year at the home of her uncle, Joseph M. Levy, of the *Daily Telegraph*.³⁰ A quip which Robertson relished, *à propos* of the matter of foreign adaptations, was that he was marrying Miss Feist because she could translate from German. The wedding took place at the English Consulate in Frankfort on October 17. After honeymooning in Paris, the Robertsons settled at number 6, Eton Road, Haverstock Hill, South Hampstead.

And now Robertson concentrated on playwriting. While the tempest was brewing in the Bancroft teapot, Robertson was purveying to the tastes of other London managers. He turned out farces and melodramas galore, potboilers all, which partook but slightly of the ingredients of the "big six." For example, while *Caste* was endearing Robertson to theatre-goers at the Prince of Wales's, he provided the Princess's in February with *Shadow Tree Shaft* and the St. James's in March with *A Rapid Thaw*.

In 1868, he provided the Bancrofts with *Play* and the Theatre Royal in Hull with *Passion Flowers*, an adaptation from the French, with his sister Madge in the leading role. His fever-pitched activity, in fact, resulted in W. S. Gilbert's first crack at playwriting. Unable to furnish Miss Herbert of the St. James's with a Christmas extravaganza, Robertson won a commission for Gilbert, who came through with *Dulcamara*.

In 1869, Robertson wrote another vehicle for Sothorn, *Home*. Two nights after *Home* opened at the Haymarket, the Bancrofts were regaling first nighters with *School*.

Brother and sister crossed paths again in March of that year, for Madge Robertson played the leading role in the Gaiety's production

³⁰ Robertson dedicated *Ours* to Mr. Levy.

of her brother's *Dreams*. The next month, his *Breach of Promise* opened at the Globe.

Robertson's early disillusionment with the theater provoked in him a cynical temperament which rose quickly to the surface in acid streaks. When success finally arrived, "it came to a soured man in ill health, and addicted to cynicism bred of long-continued suffering and disappointment. This created a manner somewhat abrupt and unpleasant; but the manner was only skin-deep, and beneath it lay a good heart and a generous and sympathetic nature."³¹

In the theater, in his relations with actors and managers alike, his brusqueness disappeared. Nowhere do the Bancrofts hint at difficulty with him. John Hare, the actor³², Gilbert³³, and Pinero³⁴ give unstinting praise for his directing ability without mention of their having encountered temper. John Hollingshead, who produced *Dreams* at the Gaiety in 1869, wrote glowingly of his association with Robertson:

He was a most delightful author to deal with—kind, considerate, and liberal. I had known him in the days of his poverty, and found no change in him in the days of his prosperity. It was a pleasure to watch him at rehearsals. He was not the swearing, blustering stage-manager. When a stupid mistake occurred, he did not stamp and tear his hair; he quietly and effectively put the matter right. The little school-children in the piece *Dreams* loved him. He took them, one after the other, tenderly by the hand and led them to their places on the stage. He bore his reverse like an amiable philosopher; and when I proposed to revive the piece, he tried to dissuade me, but gave me full liberty to make any alterations I thought advisable.

I made a few, to the best of my ability, and he was kind enough to say they were manifest improvements and had enabled him to sell the piece for the country.³⁵

In 1869, the long-standing pique Robertson with some justice felt for the conservative Buckstone came to another head. Having adapted

³¹ Frith, *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, II, 309.

³² See below, page 68.

³³ "I look upon stage management, as now understood, as having been absolutely invented by him." As quoted in Ashley Thorndike, *English Comedy*, New York, 1929, p. 537.

³⁴ *Trelawney of the "Wells,"* a period piece recapturing Robertson's struggle to introduce realism, pays tribute to a warm personality.

³⁵ *My Lifetime*, London, 1895, II, 13.

Sardou's *Les Ganaches* as *Progress* for the Haymarket, Robertson listened to Buckstone lament, "My God, they are all old people in it?"

"Why not? I've written a play for your company," Robertson came back.³⁶ Needless to say, Buckstone rejected *Progress*, but at this point Robertson did not have to go begging for a theater.

It might have been better, on the other hand, if the theaters had been obliged to go begging for Robertson's plays. Nervous strain and a weak heart were taking their measure of the man. He was an indefatigable worker, approaching his craft with the calculating objectivity of an impresario:

He always sat in the same box on first nights of his comedies at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and during their progress rarely looked at the stage, but keenly watched the audience, glancing rapidly from one part of the theatre to another, to gather the different effects the same point or speech might produce on various people; while, between the acts, he would often push his way into parts of the theatre where he would not be recognized, and listen to the opinions he could overhear. He also made a point of having some one—entirely unconnected with theatrical life—in each part of the theatre, whom he would see on the following day and hold conversations with, carefully comparing the impressions and the remarks he drew from these different witnesses generally, he said, with valuable results.³⁷

Friends and associates urged him to take a much-needed rest. F. C. Burnand, editor of *Punch*, wrote:

I am sorry to hear such bad accounts of you, the only bad accounts you have, judging by your success, and I only hope that it's nothing more than what by care and rest may be entirely got rid of. You can afford to rest, and a six months' tour would set you up again and make you hurl comedies by cart-loads at us on your return. Come and take a house near here; there's a cottage near a plantation twixt this Edgeware and Hendon, with stables (no horses), a *well*, and lots o' things *better!* within easy distance of town, about seven miles' drive to Regent-street, and 20 minutes by rail. There's an idea for you and Mrs. Robertson 'cum multis chickibus.'

Hoping to hear of you as soon as "little all right"—I am yours,
F. C. Burnand.³⁸

His last Bancroft comedy, the last scenes of which he dictated from

³⁶ Page lxxv.

³⁷ *The Bancrofts*, pp. 118-19.

³⁸ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, lxxvi-lxxvii.

a sick bed, was *M. P.*, which opened April 23, 1870. Because he was unable to attend rehearsals, the Bancrofts conducted them at his home. These last few months, he waited at home for messengers to report the progress of opening nights of his plays, act by act. Continuing to haunt the theater when strength permitted, he refused to admit that ill health could stand between him and the fame for which he had so long fought.

Through the summer and autumn of that year (1870) Robertson continued to grow worse. His sufferings were very great—indeed, as he once said to us, the pain was so acute that, when it had for the moment passed, it seemed to leave an echo in his bones. We were all the more horrified, therefore, one morning in November—when a cold white fog had penetrated into the theatre—to hear the hall-keeper announce to us, with a frightened look upon his face, that Mr. Robertson was at the stage door. We were terror-stricken, knowing him to be in an unfit state to leave his house, even in fine weather. In a piteous plight he came for the last time among us; many of the company then spoke their farewell word to him. He stayed for half an hour in dreadful suffering, tortured by a cough which told what he endured. In an agony of pain, caused by a violent paroxysm, he stooped down and knocked with a hollow sound upon the stage, saying, in a voice made terribly painful by its tone of sad reproach, to imaginary phantoms, "Oh, don't be in such a hurry!" When he recovered, we with difficulty persuaded him not to stay, for he persisted in the thought that the mere sight of the familiar stage and of the theatre which he loved and always called "home" would alone do him good.³⁹

Birth, written for Sothorn, opened in Bristol, October 5. The play required doctoring, but Robertson was too ill to ready it for the Haymarket. Sothorn was quick to withdraw his urging of alterations:

Dear Tom,—So very sorry you're ill again. D—n the alterations. Don't worry about them till you're better, and when you are, write me another piece, and after that another and another.—Ever yours, S.⁴⁰

By December, Robertson had to submit to a rest-cure in Torquay, G. B. Shaw's residence during World War I. The Devonshire weather, however, proved as bad as London's, and after a miserable, lonely two weeks, he returned to London. His son describes his state:

How altered he was! His kind face bore the traces of mental worry and want of rest—though the eyes sparkled as of yore. He could hardly walk

³⁹ *The Bancrofts*, p. 116.

⁴⁰ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, lxx.

44 *Thomas William Robertson: His Plays and Stagecraft*

up the steps to the front door, so difficult was his breathing—having to stay on each step for a while, at the same time doing his utmost to pass it all off with jokes at Tommy's expense. There were some dozen steps to mount, and it was fully fifteen minutes ere he entered the house for the last time!⁴¹

Robertson's last month was filled with anxiety attending the opening of *War* at the St. James's. On January 16, 1871, Robertson, too ill to be at the theater, awaited reports after each act. The play, turning on the Franco-Prussian War, naturally aroused controversy; Robertson interpreted hostile reactions as evidence that the play had failed.

There is hardly a more pathetic scene in all literary history than the one enacted at the dying Robertson's bedside. He had sent his little son to occupy his box at the theatre while his last play, *War* . . . was given its only hearing. A more brutal and disheartening condemnation of a play is not recorded in the century. Robertson drew from the reluctant lips of the little fellow the whole sad tale. His reply is memorable: "Ah, Tommy, my boy, they wouldn't be so hard if they could see me now. I shan't trouble them again."⁴²

On February 1, the Bancrofts called at Eton Road for the last time. He talked about a new play, boasting of notes he had written.

He died in his chair February 3, 1871, having told his boy the previous day, "Good-bye, my son, and God bless you. Come and see me tomorrow. If I don't speak to you, don't be frightened, and don't forget to kiss your father."⁴³ He was buried beside his first wife at Abney Park Cemetery.

Thomas William Robertson burned himself out at the age of forty-two. He died at the height of fame. The impetus and direction of his work might have carried him to a more stable place in dramatic annals. He was germinating naturalistic tendencies which as yet had not been felt in the English theater. It is our job, however, to evaluate the work he did accomplish; and to that end, Chapter Four will analyze the "big six," into which Robertson poured his best talent. First, however, we shall consider the drama of his apprenticeship and his potboilers.

⁴¹ Page lxxiii.

⁴² Watson, *Sheridan to Robertson*, pp. 110-11.

⁴³ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, lxxv.

CHAPTER THREE
THE POTBOILERS

ROBERTSON was not the Scandinavian glacier of the eighties, overtoppling earlier forms of dramatic life. Although his best work represents a formidable native groundswell before the Ibsenite invasion, we must still reckon with the farces and melodramas he wrote before and during his association with the Bancrofts. For these, hastily-composed in the hackneyed and outworn Victorian tradition, thoroughly accommodating to managerial taste, and only fleetingly hinting at the delicate flavor of the "big six," constitute the bulk of his work.

The Robertsonian formula for realism never, as we shall see, achieved a clearcut break with sentimentalism. Even the best of Robertson does not escape the charge of contrivance and artificiality. How much more, then, must these qualities belong to his juvenilia, his apprenticeship, and his potboilers?

Unlike the vast number of his contemporaries, however, Robertson did develop from sheer acceptance of convention to original experimentation. As Pinero and Ibsen, after him, were to master current models before evolving unique styles, Robertson began by writing within the framework of the dominating tradition—which in his time happened to consist of *la pièce bien faite*. Although he never abandoned the Scribian framework, from total subservience to foreign influence, he developed into a writer of native comedies through which ran a fragile vein of naturalness. The instance of path-breaking in a Victorian playwright is in itself a remarkable phenomenon; for reasons described in Chapter One, playwrights were all too prone to stick to the well-traveled highway. Whenever we encounter development in a writer, our curiosity is naturally stirred to search for the early manifestation of later strength and the pattern its emergence assumes.

Robertson's indenture to Lacy was not completely pernicious. Beyond the obvious schooling in dramaturgy, Robertson appreciated and as-

simulated the most valuable gift French plays had to offer—restraint.

Robertson's juvenilia, *The Battle of Life* and *The Haunted Man*, are not extant. The fact that they were adaptations of Dickens' short stories, however, is interesting, for it shows Robertson at the outset embarking on the accepted practice of appropriating for theatrical effect what was already successful.

His *Chevalier de St. George*, adapted from the French of Melesville and Beauvoir, was performed at the Princess's on May 20, 1845. A typically tightly-woven fabric, it shows us Robertson's thorough schooling in the well-made play.

Melodramatic, cloyingly sentimental, totally deficient in characterization, the play nevertheless marches. Scenes effectively theatrical succeed each other too rapidly to permit the audience to engage in fatal analysis. The plot combines the standard motif of the last-minute discovery of a blood relationship and, interestingly enough from the point of view of what was to be Robertson's stock in trade, the motif of *mésalliance*. The device of having the plot turn on a stage property, in this instance a miniature of the hero's mother; the device of planting early in the play evidence at once provocative and inconclusive, which seen in retrospect falls patly into place; and the device of sudden shifts of mastery between antagonist and protagonist are all clearly Scribian.

Exposition is handled in the conventional, forthright manner, with one significant qualification: Robertson already demonstrates an awareness of natural inflection. The expository speeches, like a side of beef, had to be plunked down on the counter in a solid chunk of interchange, but the speeches themselves are short and humanly rhythmic. Moreover, they cap one another, and in view of the considerable past history of the principal characters which must be presented to the audience, they achieve a seemingly casual coherence.

While the pace of the dialogue throughout the play is generally natural, in scenes of emotional intensity, the playwright shuts his ear to human speech and indulges in the conventional literary language. Such scenes are replete with attitudinizing. One inevitably stumbles on them in Victorian drama. Seemingly they are mandatory show pieces in which the stage self-consciously assumes the office of the pulpit. Declamatory speeches in no uncertain terms reassure audiences that the theater is a moral force.

Noémie, which underwent several changes of title¹, shows no increase of power over *The Chevalier*. Robertson made his translation from the French play of the same name by Dennery and Clément, performed for the first time at the Théâtre du Gymnase, October 31, 1845. The original, billed as a *comédie-vaudeville*, contains frequent songs, entirely omitted in the adaptation. Otherwise Robertson makes no alteration in structure. The translation is loose; English adaptors felt no compunction with regard to emendations. Emendations purported to elevate the language, but succeeded only in channeling emotional passages into rhythmic, elocutionary flights. French idiom is apt to be rendered literally. This practice, universally followed by adaptors, helped condition Victorian audiences to speech patterns which had no natural habitat. Typically a compound in the English replaces a single word in the original. With a bow to the Lord Chamberlain, strong words, such as *Dieu*, had burial at sea in the English Channel.

Save for realistic dashes of dialogue, the play contains no forward-looking devices. To the stock motifs of *mésalliance*, and withheld identity, Robertson in this play discovered the device of two contrasting feminine roles, the one sentimental; the other, pert. The emphasis, however, remains on plot. Leniency must be accorded the well-made play in the matter of artificial construction, but in *Noémie*, the long arm of coincidence, in being forced to encircle eight remarkable postulates, sticks grotesquely out of its sleeve. Valentine, Count D'Avigny's ward, is a foster sister to Anette. Anette, in turn, is a foster sister to Noémie. Noémie, we learn, is the natural daughter of Count D'Avigny. Jules is a cousin to Valentine and happens to have fallen in love with Noémie through a chance meeting in a village sixty-five leagues away from the scene of the play. Jules and Noémie arrive at the scene of action almost simultaneously. Eleonore assumes that his uncle, the Count, plans for him to marry Valentine. And finally, Noémie's letter (the pivotal prop) happens to get into Eleonore's hands instead of the Count's.

At times, the dialogue gains strength through understatement, through the subtle, intimate, half-spoken line, and we hear a faint pre-

¹ First performed as *Ernestine* at the Princess's, April 14, 1846; as *Clarisse* or *The Foster Sister* at the St. James's, February 17, 1855; and as *The Foster Sisters* at the Grecian Saloon, 1855.

lude of the kind of dialogue Robertson was to fashion for use in his original plays. Unfortunately the flavor of the French-English dictionary vitiates such vitality as is scored by short, broken speeches. The play, too, without warning, is apt to lapse into bursts of rhetoric.

It is as though Robertson is able to realize psychological truth in isolated passages, without being able to sustain his art throughout the play. The disappointing fact in Robertson's plays is that natural speech continually reverts to rhetoric. The danger spots are the moments of crisis, at which times the more intense the emotion, the more florid the language. Robertson was alive to human speech patterns; he consciously attempted, for example, to capture the inarticulate. Why in his big scenes, he sacrificed realism to rodomontade, can be partly explained by theatrical formula, which in turn was an echo of the poetic tradition, the declamatory tradition of the major theaters. Still a third reason for what we might term the dramaturgidity of set speeches lies in the watered-down romantic idealization of woman. The pervasive and persistent Victorian myth distorted realistic portraiture. The following scene, in which Noémie explains to Anette why she has come to the chateau of Count D'Avigny, illustrates this sentimental intrusion:

Noémie: . . . This letter was written by my dying mother; it contains her last adieu to—my father.

Anette: To your father!

Noémie: Listen. On the day on which my poor mother died, she called me to her bedside, and said to me, 'Noémie, you must summon all your fortitude, all your courage, to hear with calmness what I am about to tell you.' For the first time she spoke to me of my father. For eighteen years she had been separated from him. She had remained poor and struggling—he was rich, honoured and happy. He loved her truly, but his family, who were proud and ambitious, had found means to separate them; they had menaced him with misery and exile if he dared to dishonour the name of his noble ancestors by a degrading marriage; and to save him, my mother sacrificed herself—to save him she left her native village, while he embarked for some foreign land; years after, when he returned to France, his family told him that my mother was no more.

Anette: Your mother told you all this?

Noémie: And more. She said, 'At first I was proud of the devotion I had shown; but, too late, I felt that I had not only sacrificed my own

happiness but the happiness and prospects of my child. I was a mother; I sought him far and near; I used every exertion—made every inquiry to find him, but in vain. You, my child, may perhaps be more fortunate. Heaven will assist an innocent child who seeks her only natural protector! Heaven will restore to you a father; when you find him, give him this letter, tell him that my last words were of him; my last sigh for him; and you, our child, tell him that I blessed you and prayed for him, and that he might treasure you in his soul as I had treasured the love I bore him.' And so, Anette, with one hand clasped in mine, her other pressing me close—close to her heart—a prayer upon her lips—a kiss upon my forehead—my mother died.²

Here the adaptation, by an unnecessary elegance of phrase, a studied rhythm, and the actual introduction of new ideas, violates the original. I shall quote the original of Noémie's last speech in the above:

Oh! bien malheureuse . . . et bien désespérée, me dit-elle; car, après quelque temps, lorsque je trompais ma douleur par le souvenir de mon sacrifice, lorsque j'étais fière de l'avoir sauvé en me perdant, je sentis avec épouvante que ce n'était pas seulement mon bonheur et ma vie que j'avais donnés, mais aussi le bonheur et la vie de mon enfant. . . Je sentis enfin que j'allais être mère. . . Oh! alors je mis à rechercher celui dont on m'avait séparée, toute l'ardeur, toute la persévérance que j'avais mise à le fuir . . . mais toujours . . . toujours inutilement. . . Toi, ma fille, tu seras peut-être plus heureuse. . . Dieu secondera les efforts de l'enfant innocente et pure, il te rendra ton père . . . et quand tu l'auras retrouvé, remets-lui cette lettre, Noémie, il te donnera un appui plus ferme que celui que tu perds aujourd'hui, une tendresse égale à celle que j'ai toujours eue pour toi.³

The final touch about the hand, the prayer, and the kiss does not exist in the French.

Robertson's translations continued with a version of *La Bataille de Dames* by Scribe and Legouvé. A translation of the play by Charles Reade had been produced at the Lyceum on May 7, 1851. On November 18 of the same year, the Haymarket produced Robertson's translation. The subsequent confusion in attributing the translation variously to Reade and Robertson serves as a commentary on the scant attention the Victorian theater paid to authorship.

As for the play itself, *The Ladies' Battle* furnishes little for the de-

² *Lacy's Acting Plays*, XXIII, No. 343, p. 12.

³ Théâtre, No. 35, p. 8.

velopment of the playwright. In the eccentric, senile lover, de Grignon, however, Robertson had an opportunity to study closely the manner in which the characterization of a minor role might be built up. He remembered the trick when he came to create Eccles in *Caste*.

The Clockmaker's Hat, produced at the Adelphi, March 7, 1855, is a tight one-act farce Robertson translated from Madame Émile de Girardin's *Le Chapeau d'un Horloger*. The complication depends on the fact that Betty Martin, a maid in the household of Major Miltiades Mohawk, damages a clock while dusting and attempts to cover up her crime. In his adaptation, Robertson works for the strictest economy, discarding speeches which do not directly forward the action. One of the best scenes in the original, in which the jealous husband is assured by his cousin that infidelity of wives is the way of the world, Robertson deletes wholesale.

Robertson's first original play is the one-act farce *The Cantab*, produced at the Strand, February 2, 1861. There was nothing in this lacklustre *tour de force* which hinted that its concocter had anything original to offer, and, indeed, critics dismissed the piece as an "old Joe Miller."⁴

Tackling Melesville's *Sullivan* with considerable leeway, Robertson dispensed with his practice of close translation, using the original as he would a plat, improvising new dialogue as he went along. His casting aside the narrow role of translator for that of the adapter was an important step, for the play, performed as *David Garrick* at the Prince of Wales's in Birmingham, April, 1864, and subsequently at the Haymarket, April 30, was a pronounced success.

For the first time, Robertson heard his own lines being applauded, and having provided Sothern with a free-wheeling, stellar vehicle⁵, he

⁴ *The Athenaeum*, February 23, 1861, p. 268.

⁵ "The events of this little comedy are neatly produced, and exhibit Mr. Sothern's capacity for serious acting. His *physique*, though small, permits a telling modulation of pathetic passages, and they fall upon the ear with a charming effect. His action was everywhere elegant and unobtrusive, and the fashionable costume of the eighteenth century became him remarkably well. We were glad to find that there was no exaggeration in his style, but that all was genuine acting. Even in the drunken scenes he was moderate; while the delineation was complete: a certain boundary was not overstepped. His acting was a perfect bit of art . . . Altogether, the performance left a pleasing impression, and has a fair chance of becoming popular. It will raise Mr. Sothern as an actor in the estimation of the judicious." From a review in *The Athenaeum*, May 7, 1864, p. 654.

1

Act 1.
Scene. A well-furnished room. ~~Interior.~~
Doors R. & L. (Enclosed.)

Table R. & L. Chairs Sofa. etc.

Ada discovered reading at
table L. + C.

Ada. Ah that is beautiful! I remember
how he looked when he said that.
How cruel he made the poor seem
~~to be~~ though the poor old man
~~has~~ had done us harm and was
trying to do good. Let me see
how was it? declaining
" 'T is torture and red misery, Heaven is
" here "
" Where perfect bliss, and every cat and dog
" And little noise, and every unworthy thing "
" See here in heaven, and may look
" on her "

was encouraged to trust to his own creative ability. It is no accident that following the triumph of David Garrick came the succession of the "big six." Simon Ingot, a well-to-do business man, is distressed by his daughter's infatuation with the great actor. With typical directness, Ingot summons Garrick to his home and proposes to pay him to give up acting. Garrick, of course, refuses, but with apocryphal generosity consents to disenchant Ada Ingot by pretending to be drunk at a dinner party Ingot will throw. Garrick, however, is unaware that Ada is the strange woman in the theater box whose warm response to his acting has deeply moved him. When he meets Ada at the party, he is taken aback but carries out his promise to Ingot. His sacrifice is rewarded, for in the end Garrick heals the rupture between father and daughter, and exposes the dolt Ingot has intended Ada to marry. Ingot comes to drop his contempt of the acting profession and willingly gives his daughter's hand to Garrick.

In its enthusiastic review, *The Theatrical Journal* for May 4, 1864, noted Robertson's scenic art:

On Saturday night a new play was produced entitled "David Garrick," [sic] Mr. T. W. Robertson, an author by no means unknown to fame, has adapted the play for our stage, and deserves every credit not only for the admirable manner in which he has executed his task, but more especially for being the means of making us acquainted with a very capital piece. . .

One word of commendation before we stop, which we cannot fail to accord the admirable manner in which the comedy is mounted and dressed. Every now and then the eye lighted upon a tableau calling up vividly some of Hogarth's best pictures. In a word, then, the new play was, as it deserved to be, a genuine success. After Mr. Buckstone announced that "David Garrick" would be played until further notice, loud cries were raised for the author, to which, however, he did not respond.⁶

In reworking the French piece, Robertson introduced broader effects, discarding Gallic restraint. The most glaring example is his introduction of an expository scene at the start of the play, in which the audience is carefully prepared for Ada's infatuation for Garrick. While there is no diminution of the conventional baggage of asides and soliloquies, there is in Robertson's style no foreshadowing of delicacy and naturalness. Broadside of bravado and heroics litter the play. Not yet was Robertson to temper his conventionalism with original subtlety.

⁶ Pages 138-39.

The importance, then, of *David Garrick* lies not in its intrinsic value or in its hint of things to come from Robertson's pen, but in the facts that it marks his departure from slavish translation and that its success gave him the impulse to strike out on his own as an original playwright.

Following *David Garrick* came *Society* and *Ours*, whose impact and significance I shall attempt to present in Chapter Four. Meanwhile, pursuing the story of Robertson's adaptations and potboilers, we come to *Shadow Tree Shaft*, produced at the Princess's on February 6 and *A Rapid Thaw*, produced at the St. James's on March 2, 1867. The plays were evidently not published, but from reviews of their performances, they were obviously sops thrown to the groundlings. Critics were quick to point out Robertson's defection. Although *The Theatrical Journal* for February 13 acknowledged "almost unprecedented" response, it took the playwright sharply to task for betraying his promise in *Society* and *Ours*. *The Athenaeum* for March 9, 1867, similarly dismissed *A Rapid Thaw* as an uninspired piece.

*Home*⁷, is the first of the major adaptations Robertson produced following his installment in the Prince of Wales's. The freedom with which he transformed Augier's *L'Aventurière* reflects the independence and assurance of his original successes. Augier's play is a rhymed, tight series of confrontations; Robertson expands it into a rollicking affair, adding characters, complications, and typical bits of business. He injects action: entrances are made through the window almost as frequently as through the door. He completely revamps the opening of the play, substituting for the formal exposition offered by Monte-Prade and Dario a lively scene in which Lucy admits Bertie through the window for a despairing inventory of their plight, and in which Alfred Dorrison suddenly arrives from America. Robertson's treatment allows for movement and suspense.

On the framework of the original, Robertson superimposes the techniques on display at Tottenham Road. Lucy Dorrison, a counterpart of the gamin roles undertaken by Marie Wilton, possesses a resourcefulness and verve unsuspected in the French. Robertson furnishes a love interest for the prodigal son, and the two engage in a shy flirtation.

⁷ Haymarket, January 14, 1869.

The love scene between Alfred Dorrison and Dora, a friend of Lucy, is poured from the same teapot doing service at the Prince of Wales's, though to suit the taste of the Haymarket, Robertson uses a stronger brew. Replacing the subtleties he was trusting his audiences at the smaller house on Tottenham Road to catch, he strives for broader comic effects.

Evidently planned as part of the monosyllabically titled sequence of plays at the Prince of Wales's, *Dreams*, or, *My Lady Clara* as it was offered first in Liverpool, is original in plot. The play opened in London at the Gaiety on March 27, 1869, competing with *School*, currently playing to packed houses at the Bancrofts' theater. Aware that he was entrusting his play to a different company, Robertson took pains to request "that this Drama may be played after the style and manner of Comedy, and not after the manner of Melodrama."⁸

In spite of his injunction, Robertson did not supply material which lent itself to a subdued style of acting. *Dreams* falls far short of domestic comedy. Its plot is heady stuff; its exposition, obvious and transparent. The hero, of poetic temperament, is forced to speak in stilted, unnatural phrasing. The *tour de force* of having one actor portray both Rudolf Harfthal and his father, Rittmeister Harfthal, results in creaky manipulation. *Dreams*, in short, is a rusty excrescence scraped up from the bottom of the pot.

Sandwiched between *School* and *M. P.* is one full-blown farce, *A Breach of Promise*, which opened at the Globe on April 10, 1869, and one unabashed melodrama, *The Nightingale*, which appropriately came to roost at the Adelphi, January 15, 1870.

In the latter, Robertson had a field day, heaping melodramatic devices.⁹ While purveying to the "Adelphi guests," he was inserting into one play all the elements he was combating as a mainstay of domestic comedy at the Prince of Wales's. The action covers six years and moves from a cottage in England to an Italian inn, to a lodging in Portsmouth, to a London street corner, and finally to a country churchyard.

The villain in the piece is Ismael-al-Moolah, a sinister Turk, who constantly invokes Allah, and then quickly bethinking himself, swears by

⁸ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, 189.

⁹ In spite of Robertson's enthusiastic entry into out-and-out melodrama, the *London Times* for January 17, 1870, attests that public response was lukewarm.

things Christian. He perpetrates forgery, kidnaping, and murder; during time that elapses between two acts, as Bahander Khan, "who gave the orders for the massacre of prisoners, women, and children,"¹⁰ he leads a mutiny of "heathens in India."

The heroine is reduced to street-singing in order to raise money to hire detectives to recover her kidnapped child. Her artificiality registers resoundingly when she first penetrates Ismael's deception:

And is it when a husband lies dying, that you dare ask his wife to forget her vows, and plight herself to you? Coward! I see through you now!¹¹

Staging calls for elaborate scenic effects, the most spectacular of which comes at the close of act three:

*She steps into the boat. Takes up the chain. The chain falls into the boat, and the boat floats away. Mechanical change and effect. The flats, &c., run forward. Music forte. When the flats are drawn off, the river is discovered—at night, during a fog. Nothing seen but the water and gauzes. Mary standing in the boat, the stem to the audience, lighted up by the green moonlight. The boat and her figure reflected in the moonlight. (This must be done by means of looking-glass let into the sea-cloth near the boat.) All round Mary is dark—her figure is light and bright. Mary's eyes fixed in madness. She sings the song of the first Act. A shadowy boat, supposed to contain Ismael and the child, glides by the back, as the drop descends.*¹²

In all this bouillabaisse there is one interesting refinement, and that consists of Robertson's direction for the interpretation of Ismael: "*no Iago-glances at the pit, and private information to the audience, that he is a villain, and that they shall see what they shall see*".¹³ The direction, indeed, is what we might expect from an *avant garde* playwright-regisseur, and yet one which is rather ludicrous, considering the arrant nonsense to which it is attached.

Progress, a reworking of Sardou's *Les Ganaches*, holds closely to the original action, expanding, contracting, or deleting speeches at will. Since the basic motif of *Les Ganaches* is the losing rear guard resistance of the old regime against the encroachments of science and commercial expansion, an important task for Robertson lay in substituting English

¹⁰ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, p. 414.

¹¹ Page 395.

¹² Page 407.

¹³ Page 385.

allusions for French. While Robertson appreciates the fun Sardou extracts from his breast-beating *aristocrates*, he blue-pencils freely scenes which veer towards the play of discussion, choosing to focus interest on the love story. In the original, the romantic heroine does not make her entrance until the very end of the first act; Sardou prefers to introduce leisurely the fantastic members who compose the ménage of Quimperlé, *les ganaches* or the boobies. Robertson amends the play so that the heroine has joined her relatives before the action begins and moves economically to the complication set into motion by her romance with the engineer who has come to plan a railroad through the Mompesson estate. For Sardou, the boobies remain the focal interest; for Robertson, they become theatrically-effective obstacles in the course of true love.

Birth, presented in Bristol, October 5, 1870, continues the theme of class struggle between rising industrialism and the landed aristocracy, and as in *Progress* the struggle is resolved by love's leaping the barrier of caste lines. Paul's factory, planked down in proximity to an old castle, has transformed "rock, and moss, and trees" to "smoke, fire, cinder, and ashes."¹⁴

One brother and sister operate the factory; the other brother and sister occupy the castle. The castle dwellers are bankrupt, and the factory owners take over the castle. The first encounter of the foursome, however, sows the seeds of eventual harmony, for Paul Hewitt falls in love with Lady Adeliza and Sarah Hewitt falls in love with the Earl of Eagleclyffe.

Subsisting on his own inventiveness, and tossing characterization and style to the winds, Robertson is unable to furbish *Birth* with any of the richness and spontaneity he derived from Sardou in his adaptation of *Les Ganaches*. To disguise the palpably obvious situation in *Birth*, Robertson introduces Jack Randall, a would-be playwright, who is bent on putting everything he sees into a play. The use of a *raisonneur* to call attention to the very artificiality of the plot serves to anticipate and thus forestall the condemnation of the audience. Jack omnivorously takes notes on the action going on about him and cries exultingly, "Just as in a work of fiction," "Just like on the stage."¹⁵

Robertson's often mis-directed but ineradicable urge for reform ex-

¹⁴ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, 6.

¹⁵ Page 17.

presses itself here incongruously in his insistence on careful mounting. *Birth* came in the vanguard of Robertson's successes at the Prince of Wales's, and the playwright was bound to sustain the illusion of realism. Thus the stage direction for act three, scene one reads:

*Ivy-covered Ruins and grass plot, supposed to have formed the old court yard of the castle; the chapel at the back. The tower . . . to be new (i. e., restored), and to look habitable. The door practicable. No moon in the cloth. The moonlight to be on the grass. The ivy to be real ivy, and the grass to be grass matting—not painted.*¹⁶

Robertson attempted to observe strict neutrality in *War*, but the audience at the St. James's found the Franco-Prussian war too controversial a subject to view his dramatic attempt with impartial objectivity; and the play failed. In this last of Robertson's plays there is nothing notable in plot, characterization, or dialogue. The story tells of a couple wrenched apart by the war between France and Germany, the man's supposed death on the battlefield, and his joyful return after the war is over. The characters are no more than mouthpieces for patriotic sentiments. And the sentiments themselves are oratorical flourishes, immunized from anything suggesting natural promptings.

Only four stage directions give significant evidence of atmosphere transported from the Prince of Wales's. The first three deal with the interpretation of roles:

The author requests this part [Colonel de Rochevannes] may be played with a *slight* French accent. He is not to pronounce his words absurdly, or shrug his shoulders, or duck his head towards his stomach, like the conventional stage Frenchman. COLONEL DE ROCHEVANNES is to be played with the old pre-Revolutionary politeness—knightly courtesy, with a mixture of ceremony and *bonhomie*.¹⁷

This part [Herr Karl Hartmann] to be played with a slight German accent, and not to be made wilfully comic. HERR KARL HARTMANN is to be played a perfect gentleman, with a touch of the scholar and pedant in his manner—but always a gentleman.¹⁸

CAPTAIN SOUND is not to be dressed in uniform, but in the morning dress of a gentleman. His manner is to be hearty, but not rough; in every

¹⁶ Page 38.

¹⁷ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 755.

¹⁸ Page 756.

respect that of a captain of a man-of-war, and not of the master of a half-penny steamboat.¹⁹

It is to be noticed that the three roles thus outlined represent England, France, and Germany, and Robertson would naturally take every precaution against outraging his audience. Nevertheless, the dramatic principle favoring naturalness gained thereby some recognition. In approaching verisimilitude, they harmonize with Robertson's injunction regarding the scene behind the front in act two:

Anything like uniform or accoutrement seen in this Act must be stained, muddy, and exhibit the signs of severe use. Nothing sparkling, tinselly, or patent-leathered.²⁰

In *War*, then, we have the unhappy spectacle of surface realism expended on bathos and oratory.

The plays which Robertson fed to theaters other than the Prince of Wales's show a deliberate concession to traditionalism. In his mechanical adaptation of French plays, he foreswore originality. In the original farces and melodramas which he concocted, Robertson wrote in the prevailing vogue. Were it not for the "big six," *Society, Ours, Caste, Play, School*, and *M. P.*, Robertson would have remained a nondescript contributor to the standardized trifles in the vast mid-Victorian dramatic repertoire.

¹⁹ Page 757.

²⁰ Page 766.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE TEMPEST

IN the previous chapter I examined Robertson's adaptations of French pieces. In this group, theatricality reigns supreme. Completely ensnared by the economics of an unimaginative managerial monopoly, Robertson cynically carried out his assignments. Had it not been for the happy conjunction of his friend Henry Byron with Marie Wilton, he would probably have continued turning out utterly worthless fillers, to be played and immediately forgotten.

Intimates would have been aware of his restiveness, his protest against a dictatorial commercialism; for his fiery temper was not one to smoulder in secret. But there would have been no particular reason for Victorian memoirists to hasten to affirm their friendship with Robertson or to describe their association with him. He would have remained, after all, simply another Lacy menial, along with scores of others, busily purveying to the meticulously prescribed diet of the theater public.

Several things, however, combined to save Robertson from being relegated to oblivion in the Lord Chamberlain's catalogue of manuscripts in the St. James's Palace. For one, there was the growing hold of the middle classes as the dominating force in Victorian culture. For another, there was Robertson's accurate gauging of the growing appeal of realism on the stage. Capitalizing on bourgeois value judgments and the bourgeois predilection for material objects, he was in a fair way to set a new style. With an array of domestic properties, he would provide audiences the thrill of recognition, thus satisfying the acquisitive, possessive instincts of the middle classes, which was finding expression elsewhere in cluttered interior decoration, what-nots, and ginger-bread friezes. The themes of his plays, meanwhile, would flatter the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie by suggesting that individual worth might leap caste lines.

Finally, there was the fortuitous advent of the Bancrofts among the ranks of London managers. Their genteel, *intime* jewel box of a theater was the perfect setting for Robertson's plays. The gentility of the Bancrofts was, in fact, symptomatic of the bourgeois spirit in theatrical life. The modern student can enter the elegantly respectable atmosphere which pervaded the Tottenham Road Theatre via the prolific memoirs of actors and managers, such as those of the Bancrofts themselves, George Augustus Sala, Ellen Terry, and Dame Madge Kendal. Such autobiographies possess in common a self-conscious preoccupation with the respectability of the theater. In so doing, they form an interesting chapter in the social history of England, for they attest to the belated appearance of a submerged group.

Bitterly aware of age-old prejudices against the stage, Victorian actors were particularly anxious to dispel popular illusions of loose-living in the wings. The prejudice, alienating the middle class, made for bad box-office. But beyond the question of receipts, there was the question of respectability. The prejudice constituted a libel against a group of people who saw no reason why they should remain outside the pale.

Had not the actor come into his own? Had not the Queen herself set her official stamp of approval on the theater? Was it not possible for actors to be knighted? What the acting profession needed more than anything else was a public-relations service to maintain and extend its hard-won respect, and this office actors hastened to fill by presenting their life-stories to the reading public. A heavily moral tone informs memoir after memoir, suggesting the protestations of the parvenu:

Mummers interrupt our path in life—their virtue, their beauty, their successes, their books—for lately they have taken to writing books; books about what? about themselves. There is but one subject of interest to the mummer, and, like his clothes, his talk, and his virtue, his books excite the curiosity of the public. We have had five editions of the Bancroft *Memoirs*—two bulky volumes of five hundred pages each. Mr. Toole's *Memoirs* are promised, Mr. Grossmith's have appeared, and Mr. Corney Grain's are announced . . . And when not engaged in compiling the stories of their virtuous and successful lives, the mummers discuss their social grievances in the evening papers. What is the social status of the actor? is argued as passionately as a frontier question of European importance. Mr. Grossmith writes to the duke, before he consents to accept two pounds to sing a couple of songs, to ask if he will be received as a guest. . . . Or was it that the duke wrote to Mr.

Grossmith and asked how he would like to be received? Be this as it may, something went wrong, and Mr. Grossmith declares that he scored over the duke by taking a countess down to supper. Neither doctors, lawyers, nor dentists stipulate how they are to be received when they attend. And it will seem to many that when a gentleman accepts a fee for singing in a drawing-room he would prove his blue blood better by declining to consider himself in the light of an ordinary guest than by afterwards discussing his claim to be received on an equal footing with those whose presence was not paid for. It would also be well if, on retiring from the stage and entering society, actresses would refrain a little, not criticize too severely the morals of the ladies around them, and not wonder in stage whispers why Mrs. So-and-so is received.¹

The unbending solemnity of Squire Bancroft's portraits, his ever-present monocle, and his evident pride in knighthood afford a clue as to why his theater was receptive to Robertson's gifts. The Bancrofts were shrewd business people and brilliant actor-managers, but they were also middle-class Englishmen bent on sounding their respectability. As Robertson himself observed, "The actor's mind is impressionable and plastic, and they [*sic*] often illustrate their era without knowing it."²

In his lavender-scented comedies, Robertson successfully caught the aspirations of the Bancrofts and helped woo a new audience to the theater.

Society, the comedy which first merged the talents of Robertson and the Bancrofts, opened at the Prince of Wales's, November 11, 1865. With George Bancroft as Sidney Daryl and Marie Wilton as Maud Hetherington, the play had an outstanding run of one hundred and fifty nights.³

John Chodd, Junior and John Chodd, Senior have amassed a fortune and are attempting to crash society. In order to get his son into Parliament, Chodd, Senior hires the services of Sidney Daryl, a "literary barrister," to edit a newspaper in support of the campaign of John Chodd, Junior. John Chodd, Junior then proceeds to pay court to Daryl's sweetheart, Maud Hetherington. Her aunt, Lady Ptarmigan, enchanted with

¹ George Moore, *Impressions and Opinions*, London, 1914, pp. 122-24.

² "The Queens of Comedy," *London Society*, VIII, (September, 1865), 277.

³ Its first revival, in the fall of 1868, rolled up one hundred performances, with George Bancroft as Tom Stylus. In the fall of 1874, *Society* ran for five months. In 1881, *Society* was performed fifty times at the Haymarket, then under the Bancroft management.



Sir Squire Bancroft.

PHOTO. LONDON. STEREO.

2

Chodd's fortune and disgusted with Daryl's poverty, encourages the former's attentions to Maud. Maud is passively led by her aunt, for she wrongly assumes that Daryl's ward is his daughter. Actually, as it comes out at the end, Daryl has been caring for Lady Ptarmigant's grand-daughter, orphaned by Lady Ptarmigant's run-away son. Daryl, thinking Maud has thrown him over for Chodd's money, creates a scene at Lady Ptarmigant's ball. Then he bestirs himself and competes with Chodd for the same borough election. Finally, the lovers settle their misunderstanding. Daryl wins the election from Chodd. A last minute legacy raises Daryl to eligibility in the marriage mart, while his nobility in having assumed the guardianship of Lady Ptarmigant's grand-daughter more than vindicates him.

The play employs all the Scribian tactics observable in Robertson's adaptations. Climactic curtains, stereotyped characters, the last minute legacy, and even the frayed soliloquies and asides of his apprenticeship are in evidence, but something has transformed sheer hackwork into fresh, delightful comedy. That something which masks the creaky machinery is the naturalness of dialogue.⁴ Freed from the confining channels of close adaptation, Robertson was able to introduce original pace to his scenes. Furthermore, a free hand to apply local color afforded new impetus to the playwright. *Society*, as did the comedies which followed it, abounds in native connotations.

Persona non grata at the Ptarmigant residence, Sidney Daryl in act one steals a few moments with Maud in the garden. Their love scene, played by the Bancrofts, provides the first real hint of Robertson's new power. Understatement, indirection, and the intrusion of everyday practicality into a traditional, sentimentally-soaked situation give a new lease to comedy. As Pinero put it, "The aim of Robertson and his followers was to amuse with conversation by creating the impression that the audience was eavesdropping."⁵ Since this type of dialogue was to stamp the cup-and-saucer school, I shall quote the bulk of the duet:

Maud: (*starting.*) Oh! is that you? Who would have thought of seeing you here!

⁴ *The Athenaeum* for November 18, 1865, reported, "The dialogue of this piece is above the ordinary level; it is smart and lively, and will, no doubt, prove attractive." p. 697.

⁵ Wilbur Dwight Dunkel, *Sir Arthur Wing Pinero*, Chicago, 1941, page 21.

Sidney: Oh come—don't I know that you walk here after dinner? and all day long I've been wishing it was half-past eight.

Maud: (*coqueting.*) I wonder, now, how often you've said that this last week?

Sidney: Don't pretend to doubt me,—that's unworthy of you. (*A pause.*)
Maud?

Maud: Yes?

Sidney: Are you not going to speak?

Maud: (*dreamily.*) I don't know what to say.

Sidney: That's just my case. When I'm away from you I feel I could talk to you for hours; but when I'm with you, somehow or other, it seems all to go away. (*Getting closer to her and taking her hand.*) It is such happiness to be with you, that it makes me forget everything else. (*Takes off his gloves and puts them on seat.*) Ever since I was that high, in the jolly old days down at Springmead, my greatest pleasure has been to be near you. (*Looks at watch.*) Twenty to nine. When must you return?

Maud: At nine.

Sidney: Twenty minutes. How's your aunt?

Maud: As cross as ever.

Sidney: And Lord Parmigant?

Maud: As usual—asleep.

Sidney: Dear old man!—how he does doze away his time. (*Another pause.*) Anything else to tell me?

Maud: We had such a stupid dinner; such odd people.

Sidney: Who?

Maud: Two men by the name of Chodd.

Sidney: (*uneasily.*) Chodd?

Maud: Isn't it a funny name—Chodd?

Sidney: Yes, it's a Chodd name—I mean an odd name. Where were they picked up?

Maud: I don't know. Auntie says they are both very rich.

Sidney: (*uneasily.*) She thinks of nothing but money. (*Looks at watch.*) Fifteen to nine. (*Stage has grown gradually dark.*) *Maud!*

Maud: (*in a whisper.*) Yes?

Sidney: If I were rich—if you were rich—if we were rich.

Maud: Sidney! *Drawing closer to him.*

Sidney: As it is, I almost feel it's a crime to love you.

Maud: Oh, Sidney.

Sidney: You, who might make such a splendid marriage.

Maud: If you had money—I couldn't care for you any more than I do now.

Sidney: My darling! (*Looks at watch.*) Ten minutes. I know you wouldn't.

Sometimes I feel mad about you, mad when I know you are out a smiling upon others—and—and waltzing.

Maud: I can't help waltzing when I'm asked.

Sidney: No, dear, no; but when I fancy you are spinning round with another's arm about your waist—(*his arm round her waist.*) Oh! I feel—

Maud: Why, Sidney (*smiling*), you are jealous!

Sidney: Yes, I am.

Maud: Can't you trust me?

Sidney: Implicitly. But I like to be with you all the same.

Maud: (*whispering.*) So do I with you.

Sidney: My love! (*Kisses her, and looks at watch.*) Five minutes.

Maud: Time to go?

Sidney: No! (*Maud, in taking out her handkerchief, takes out a knot of ribbons.*) What's that?

Maud: Some trimmings I'm making for our fancy fair.

Sidney: What colour is it? Scarlet?

Maud: Magenta.

Sidney: Give it to me?

Maud: What nonsense!

Sidney: Won't you?

Maud: I've brought something else.

Sidney: For me?

Maud: Yes.

Sidney: What?

Maud: These. *Producing small case which Sidney opens.*

Sidney: Sleeve-links!

Maud: Now, which will you have, the links or the ribbon?

Sidney: (*after reflection.*) Both.

Maud: You avaricious creature!

Sidney: (*putting the ribbons near his heart.*) It's not in the power of words to tell you how I love you. Do you care for me enough to trust your future with me—will you be mine?

Maud: Sidney?

Sidney: Mine, and none other's; no matter how brilliant the offer—how dazzling the position?

Maud: (*in a whisper, leaning towards him.*) Yours and yours only! *Clock strikes nine.*

Sidney: (*with watch.*) Nine! Why doesn't time stop, and big Ben refuse to toll the hour?

Lady and Lord Ptarmigan appear and open gate at right.

Maud: (*frightened.*) My aunt!⁶

⁶ T. Edgar Pemberton, ed., *Society and Caste*, Boston, 1905, pp. 21-25.

A second device which Robertson incorporates in the dialogue of Society and which was to identify the teacup-and saucer as unmistakably as a chip is the contrapuntal effect he achieves by having two conversations going on simultaneously. In the third scene of act three, John Chodd, Jun. is proposing to Maud while his rival in love and politics, Sidney Daryl, is just off-stage electioneering. Robertson's first use of the device is blatantly farcical, for the speeches of the two groups dove-tail with absurd neatness:

- Maud:* (*struggling with herself.*) I was saying that the affection which a wife should bring the man she has elected as—
Cheers without.
- Sidney:* (*speaking without.*) Electors of Springmead—
- Maud:* We hardly know sufficient of each other to warrant—
- Sidney:* (*without.*) I need not tell you who I am.
Cheers. Maud trembles.
- Maud:* We are almost strangers.
- Sidney:* Nor what principles I have been reared in.
- Chodd, Jun.:* The name of Chodd, if humble, is at least wealthy.
- Sidney:* I am a Daryl; and my politics those of the Daryls.
Cheers.
- Chodd, Jun.:* (*aside.*) This is awkward! (*To Maud.*) As to our being strangers—
- Sidney:* I am no stranger here. (*Cheers.*) I have grown up to be a man among you. There are faces I see in the crowd I am addressing, men of my own age, whom I remember children. (*Cheers.*) There are faces among you who remember me when I was a boy. (*Cheers.*) In the political union between my family and Springmead, there is more than respect and sympathy, there is sentiment.
(Cheers.)
- Chodd, Jun.:* Confound the fellow! Dearest Miss Hetherington—Dearest Maud—you have deigned to say you will be mine.
- Sidney:* Why, if we continue to deserve your trust, plight your political faith to another?
- Maud:* (*overcome.*) Mr. Chodd, I—
- Chodd, Jun.:* My own bright, particular Maud!
- Sidney:* Who is my opponent?
- Tom:* (*without.*) Nobody.
A loud laugh.
- Sidney:* What is he?
- Tom:* Not much.

A roar of laughter.

Sidney: I have no doubt he is honest and trustworthy, but why turn away an old servant to hire one you don't know? (*Cheers.*) Why turn off an old love that you have tried and proved for a new one? (*Cheers.*) I don't know what the gentleman's politics may be, (*laugh*)—or those of his family. (*Roar of laughter.*) I've tried to find out, but I can't . . .⁷

The same radical transformation from the heavy strokes of melodrama to softened naturalness occurs at the curtain to act II, scene 1. The scene is the famous Owls' Roost, which London managers considered such a daring lampoon on the bohemian set that they shuddered at the thought of the antagonism the play might arouse. They need not have feared. As far as critics were concerned, the scene made the play; it captured the essence of camaraderie, casting a sentimental aura over the jolly spirit and generosity of impecunious free-lance writers.

The dramatic library of the nineteenth century is a large one; it is dangerous to state that a particular effect is to be found for the first time in a given play. I shall content myself by saying that this is the first instance I have come across demanding ensemble playing on such a natural level. At least contemporary audiences felt they were responding to something new.⁸

Although the play as a whole was not carefully mounted⁹, the scene at the Owls' Roost was realistic to an unprecedented degree:

Parlour at the "Owl's Roost." Public house. Cushioned seats all round the apartment; gas lighted on each side over tables; splint boxes, pipes, news-

⁷ Pages 87-89.

⁸ "There is more than one wholesome sign in the present appearance of the theatrical world. Very few years ago it seemed impossible to attract people to the playhouses, save by means of extraordinary excitement. Either the senses were to be dazzled by gorgeous decorations, or an interest was to be created of a harrowing kind, approaching that which is awakened by a real calamity, and distinct from the emotion produced by the poetical tragedy. Not something amusing, but something thrilling has long been demanded by the patrons of the drama, and while tragedy has been banished from the stage as too ideal, comedy has sunk into obscurity as too weak in its appeal to general sympathy. With a world that will not recognize any interest in a story that does not involve some infraction of the criminal code it is obvious that a tale of ordinary society, in which an arrest for debt or a quarrel with one's sweetheart is regarded as the worst calamity "on the cards," will meet but Lenten welcome." *London Times*, November 14, 1865, p. 7.

⁹ See Pemberton, *Life and Writings of Thomas William Robertson*, p. 179; Watson, *Sheridan to Robertson*, pp. 399-400.

*papers, etc., on table; writing materials on table (near door); gong bell on another table; door of entrance near centre; clock above door (hands set to half-past nine); hat pegs and coats on walls.*¹⁰

In her autobiography, Dame Madge Kendal speaks of her brother's eagerness to secure realistic detail:

When Tom planned this play, he confided to my father that in the club scene,—the Owl's Nest,—he intended when the play was produced, to have real hooks screwed into the walls of the room so that the actors could hang their real coats on them.

Our father, vivid as was his imagination, was by no means impressed. "I think, Tom," he said, "You'd better try something more romantic than hats and coats on pegs in which to interest the public."

The scene made an instant success by its realism.¹¹

The scene in the club room builds effectively. Its climax is wrought by a twist of traditional technique. Amid the rollicking confusion of mock speeches, toasts, and songs, Daryl inadvertently learns that Maud is engaged to John Chodd, Junior. Instead of topping his scene by calling for heroics from the defeated lover, Robertson has him merely start. His friend Tom asks him what the matter is. Daryl says, "Nothing." Then as the clubmen continue a song with a stanza about the fickleness of women, Daryl, who is seated at a table, buries his head in his arms, and the curtain falls.

Again we can observe the direction in which Robertson is moving. He attempts dramatic effect by quiet means. In this particular instance, maximum contrast is achieved between the cheerful bohemians and the sad Daryl, but the contrast is achieved by paradox. By such a stroke Robertson at once forsook the fustian of mid-Victorian melodrama and employed the quiet irony of domestic comedy and tragedy.

Realistic detail at times freshens up the soliloquy which Robertson never came to discard. In spite of his unwillingness to challenge the conventions of aside and soliloquy, it is interesting to see the way in which he domesticated them. For example, when Daryl crashes the P'tarmigan ball in act II, scene 2, he is having trouble with the cuff links Maud has given him:

I have seen her—she was smiling, dancing, but not with him. She looked

¹⁰ Pemberton, *Society and Caste*, p. 28.

¹¹ Pages 46-47.

so bright and happy. I won't think of her. How quiet it is here; so different to that hot room, with the crowd of fools and coquettes whirling round each other. I like to be alone—alone! I am now thoroughly—and to think it was but a week ago—one little week—I'll forget her—forget, and hate her. Hate her—Oh, Maud, Maud, till now I never knew how much I loved you; loved you—loved you—gone; shattered; shivered; and for whom. For one of my own birth? For one of my own rank? No! for a common clown, who—confound this link!—but he is rich—and—it won't hold. (*Trying to fasten it, his fingers trembling.*) I've heard it all—always with her, at the Opera and the Park, attentive and obedient—and she accepts him. My head aches. (*Louder.*) I'll try a glass of champagne.¹²

The language here has moved definitely from the literary swell which dominates the melodramas of the period. The speech, of course, can be mouthed. Without the director's careful regard, an actor trained in the elocutionary approach, would fall naturally into stylized delivery. He might be surprised at the short phrases. The absence of a marked melodic flow would stump him for a little, but he would try to force the speech into periods. The challenge of every-day speech to actors trained in the poetic tradition can be adduced from such first-hand accounts as Lester Wallack's:

I always found Sheridan a very easy study; but I have had more difficulty, curious to say (and I think many of my profession, at least the best of them, will bear me out in this), in studying the extremely modern school of writers than I ever had with the older ones. In speaking Tom Robertson's lines, for instance, one is talking "every-day talk." It looks very easy, but it is most difficult, for if you are illustrating Sheridan or Shakspeare you are speaking in a language that is new to you; which on that account impresses you all the more; whereas if you have a speech from Tom Robertson or Boucicault you can give it just as well in two or three different ways. You cannot in Shakspeare find any words to improve the text, but if you say: "How *do* you *do* this morning?" or "How *are* you this morning?" one is just as good as the other; and yet, as a rule, to give the author's text is usually both proper and just.¹³

As far as the cast at the Prince of Wales's was concerned, there was no doubt as to the manner in which lines were to be delivered. Robertson did his own directing; the Bancrofts were entirely in sympathy with his ideas and gave him every support. John Hare, whose meteoric

¹² Pemberton, *Society and Caste*, pp. 52-53.

¹³ Lester Wallack, *Memories of Fifty Years*, New York, 1889, pp. 169-70.

rise to fame in Robertsonian roles started with Lord Ptarmigan in *Society*, testified:

My opinion of Robertson as a stage-manager is of the very highest. He had a gift peculiar to himself, and which I have never seen in any other author, of conveying by some rapid and almost electrical suggestion to the actor an insight into the character assigned to him. As nature was the basis of his own work, so he sought to make actors understand it should be theirs. He thus founded a school of natural acting which completely revolutionized the then existing methods, and by so doing did incalculable good to the stage.¹⁴

The Prince of Wales's, on November 11, 1865, caught critics and audience by surprise. The subdued acting and quiet naturalness of dialogue threw the operatic bravura at the Haymarket, Adelphi, and Lyceum into ridiculous light. The English had been used to seeing the grand style taken off in burlesque; here, for once, the grand style was not burlesqued but replaced. And what came in its stead was a new sense of intimacy in the theatre. Audiences found themselves bending forward to catch what was relevant in seeming irrelevance.

Looking back, as my wife and I often do, through the long vista of more than forty years, it is still easy to understand the great success of this comedy. In those now far-off days there had been little attempt to follow Nature, either in the plays or in the manner of producing them. With every justice was it argued that it had become a subject of reasonable complaint with reflective playgoers, that the pieces they were invited to see rarely afforded a glimpse of the world in which they lived; "the characters were, for the most part, pale reflections of once substantial shapes belonging to a former state of theatrical existence, whilst the surroundings were often as much in harmony with the days of Queen Anne as with those of Queen Victoria." I do but echo unbiassed opinions in adding that many so-called pictures of life presented on the stage were as false as they were conventional. The characters lived in an unreal world, and the code of ethics on the stage was the result of warped traditions. The inevitable reaction at length made itself apparent; the author of *Society* it was truly said, rendered a public service by proving that the refined and educated classes were as ready as ever to crowd the playhouses, provided only that the entertainment given there was suited to their sympathies and tastes.

The Robertson comedies appeared upon the scene just when they were needed to revive and renew intelligent interest in the drama. Nature was Robertson's goddess, and he looked upon the bright young management

¹⁴ Pemberton, *Society and Caste*, p. xxxi.

as the high-priest of the natural school of acting. The return to Nature was the great need of the stage, and happily he came to help supply it at the right moment.¹⁵

¹⁵ *The Bancrofts*, p. 83. T. E. Pemberton quotes Clement Scott's recollections of first-night reaction to *Society*: "There was a great gathering of the light literary division at the little Theatre in Tottenham Court Road on the first night of Tom Robertson's new play. It was our dear old Tom Hood, who was our leader then, who sounded the bugle, and the boys of the light brigade cheerfully answered the call of their chief. I remember that on that memorable night I stood—for there was no sitting room for us on such an occasion—by the side of Tom Hood at the back of the dress circle. The days of stalls had not then arrived for me. Suddenly there appeared on the stage what was then an apparition. Bancroft had delighted us with his cheery enthusiasm and boyish manner, for he was the lover in this simple little play,—well dressed and, for a wonder, natural. Think what it was to see a bright, cheery, pleasant young fellow playing the lover to a pretty girl at the time when stage-lovers were nearly all sixty, and dressed like waiters at a penny ice-shop! Conceive a Bancroft as Sidney Daryl in the days when W. H. Eburne played young sparks at the Adelphi, and old Braid was the dashing military officer at the Haymarket! But what astonished us even more than the success of young Bancroft was the apparition that I have spoken of just now. A little delightful old gentleman came upon the stage, dressed in a long, beautifully cut frock coat, bright-eyed, intelligent, with white hair that seemed to grow naturally on the head—no common clumsy wig with a black forehead-line—and with a voice so refined, so aristocratic, that it was music to our ears. The part played by Mr. Hare was, as we all know, insignificant. All he had to do was to say nothing, and to go perpetually to sleep. But how well he did nothing! How naturally he went to sleep! We could not analyse our youthful impression at the time, but we knew instinctively that John Hare was an artist. Had *Society* been accepted at the Haymarket—which luckily for Tom Robertson, it was not—the part of Lord Ptarmigan would have been played by old Rogers, or Braid, or Cullenford,—Chippendale and Howe would certainly have refused it as a very bad old man. No; Tom Robertson's lucky star was in the ascendant when *Society* was refused by the Haymarket management with scorn. Had it failed there, I believe my old friend would have 'thrown up the sponge' and never worked for the stage any more. The refusal of *Society* by Buckstone, and the keen and penetrating intelligence of Marie Wilton, who was determined that Tom Robertson should succeed and that his plays should be acted, were the turning-points in the doubtful career of a broken-hearted and disappointed man. I don't think I ever remember a success to have been made with slighter material than that given to Mr. Hare. And it was a genuine success. We of the light brigade could not work miracles. We might have written our heads off, and still have done no good for the new school. Luckily there was at that time as critic to the *Times* a man of keen and penetrating judgment. John Oxenford knew what was good as well as any man, and he knew how to say it into the bargain. He was not a slave to old tradition, and when he had a good text what a wonderful dramatic sermon he could preach! Luckily, also, the new school had the constant support and encouragement of the *Daily Telegraph*, whose leading proprietor and director, Mr. J. M. Levy, never missed a first night in the company of his artistic and accomplished family. All that was liberal and just and far-seeing was in favour of the new Robertsonian departure—of a dramatist who was not old-fashioned and dull, and of actors so new, so fresh, so talented, as Bancroft, Hare,

It is interesting to observe how the words *nature* and *natural* figure in the criticisms of *Society* and its successors at the Prince of Wales's. The words indicate the size of the tempest Robertson had raised.

In spite of the chorus of approval which greeted this fresh, spontaneous comedy, the carry-over of stock conventions could hardly fail to have passed discerning critics unnoticed. Robertson's men and women, as befitting a teacup-and saucer school of drama, are cambric dilutions of the stronger brew of Dickens and Thackeray. Idealization, sentimentality, idiosyncrasy, and a pinch of cynicism are the ingredients of a superficially differentiated *dramatis personae*. Sidney Daryl is the noble, self-sacrificing aristocrat; Maud Hetherington, the idealized, fragile ingénue. Dickens was standing not too far from the baptismal font when Lady Ptarmigan, the snob, was christened. Lord Ptarmigan, whose principal duty is to fall asleep wherever he may be and trip people with his sprawling legs, likewise suggests a Dickensian humor character. Add John Chodd, Jun., the social climbing boor; Moses Aaron, the traditional stage Jew; and Tom Stylus, the kind, blundering confidant, and we have an array of conceptions which offered nothing new or challenging to the audience gathered in the Prince of Wales's on November 11, 1865. All were types immediately recognized; spectators knew what conduct to expect of them, and Robertson did not dash those expectations.

A scribbled synopsis found amongst his papers reveals his method of character-drawing. He struck down three words, one after another—a name, a profession, a ruling passion, such as love, ambition, cupidity, pride. With these words he thought he had summed up the ordinary conventional man, as nature had formed him, and society had reformed or deformed him: a very elemental but very sane psychology, which he enriched, embellished, elaborated, with the flowers of his fancy and the fruits of his observation.¹⁶

Whether or not, as according to Filon, this be sane psychology, we can-

and their companions. The heavy brigade of influential writers, led by John Oxenford, patted the new movement on the back; the light division, led by Tom Hood and others, lent their enthusiasm to the good cause. Gilbert, Prowse, Leigh, Millward, Archer,—all of us, in fact, who knew Robertson and appreciated his talent were the first to step forward and back up our friend's success in every way that was possible. Pemberton, pp. xxv-xxvii.

¹⁶ Augustin Filon, *The English Stage*, London, 1897, p. 127.

not deny that it is sane theatrical psychology. The salient fact is that once we recognize Robertson's characters for the stereotypes they are, we can experience anew something of the surprising revelation which hit contemporary audiences when those stereotypes opened their mouths.

I have already pointed out the undiminished use of asides and soliloquies, even though Robertson consciously attenuated their theatricality. Besides these, we must reckon with puns. It was perhaps inevitable that a close friend of Byron would catch something of his mania. Byron's ambition, it will be remembered, was to write a play in which every word turned on pun. Plays on words, however, were still very much part of a playwright's baggage. For example, in the scene between Sidney and Maud quoted above (page 62), there is the intrusive pun on *Chodd*.

Robertson scores a big curtain at the end of act two by reverting to melodrama: Sidney, who has crashed the Ptarmigant ball, is alone with Maud, who, he thinks, has thrown him over for Chodd:

Sidney: Listen to me for the last time. My life and being were centered in you. You have abandoned me for money! You accepted me; you now throw me off, for money! You gave your hand, you now retract, for money! You are about to wed—a knave, a brute, a fool, whom in your own heart you despise, for money!

Maud: How dare you!

Sidney: Where falsehood is, shame cannot be. The last time we met (*producing ribbon*) you gave me this. See, 'tis the colour of a man's heart's blood. (*Curtains or doors at back draw apart.*) I give it back to you.

Casting bunch of ribbon at her feet.

Lord Cloundrays, "Sir Farintosh, Colonel Browser," Tom, Lord Ptarmigant, and Lady Ptarmigant, Chodd Jun. and Chodd Sen. appear at back. Guests seen in ball-room.

And tell you, shameless girl, much as I once loved, and adored, I now despise and hate you.

Lady P: (*advancing, in a whisper to Sidney.*) Leave the house, sir! How dare you—go!

Sidney: Yes; anywhere.

*Crash of music. Maud is nearly falling, when Chodd Jun. appears near her; she is about to lean on his arm, but recognizing him, retreats and staggers. Sidney is seen to reel through ball-room full of dancers. Drop.*¹⁷

¹⁷ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 61-62.

Besides the return to bombast, we meet with another of Robertson's favorite resources, by no means original with him,—the tableau, in which the audience was permitted to feel the full impact of the dramatic situation before the curtain fell. If necessary, the curtain was again raised, as a kind of encore, while the characters, adopting slightly different positions, reinforced the emotional impact of the scene. As I discuss the other plays in the "big six," I shall point out other tableaux.

It remains to be pointed out that the resolution of the play depends upon a *deus ex machina* wearily dispensing legacies since the days of Charles II, and we have sufficient material before us to recognize in Robertson's first success a blending of the old and new, which places him in the middle of the 'sixties as a theatrical Janus, a transitional figure, cautiously retaining as well as daringly innovating.

In 1854, the poet laureate had glorified English militarism, then on test in the Crimean War, by writing "The Charge of the Light Brigade." In less vigorously masculine accents, Robertson sounded the chauvinistic temper of his countrymen in *Ours*. Although the lion that roars in *Ours* is a household pet, it roars with the same inspiration as Tennyson's.

Robertson was sincerely addicted to soldierdom:

Robertson's love of soldiers first shows itself in *Ours*, for nearly all his pieces contain something of a military element in the form of incident or character. To him the romance of love and honour was seen at its best when associated with a soldier's uniform; and when otherwise "there may be alas traced the flutter of the cavalier's feather!"¹⁸

It will be remembered that during the dark, rootless days in London he and Henry Byron had presented themselves before the recruiting officer of the Horse Guards. Robertson's own brother Harry had run away from home to fight in the Crimean War.¹⁹ Throughout his plays,

¹⁸ I, lii.

¹⁹ In this connection, Dame Madge Kendal relates an amazing family story:

Years later, when I was in my teens and had returned to the stage after my career as a child actress, Colonel Castle, an amateur actor who lived in Worcester got up a performance of "*Ours*." I was engaged to play Mary Netley, the part originally acted by Miss Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft), while Blanche Hays was played by Louise Moore, a sister of Nellie Moore, the Heroine of a popular song at that time . . .

Worcester being a garrison town and Colonel Castle being in command of the regiment, privates in the regiment acted as scene shifters. The stalls and dress


PRINCE OF WALES'S
THEATRE.

RE-NAMED BY SPECIAL PERMISSION.

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, [Tottenham St., Tottenham Court Rd.,]

Sole Lessee, Mr. C. J. JAMES,
Percy Street, Bedford Sq.

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF

MISS MARIE WILTON.

THIS EVENING,

The Performances will commence with a New and Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by T. W. ROBERTSON, Author of "David Garrick," &c., &c., entitled

SOCIETY!

Lord Ptarmigan		Mr HARE
Lord Cloudways		Mr TRAFFORD
Sydney Daryl, Esq.	Barrister at Law	Mr SYDNEY BANCROFT
Mr John Chodd, Sen.		Mr J. W. RAY
Mr John Chodd, Jun.		Mr J. CLARKE
Tom Stylus		Mr F. DEWAR
Olinthus O'Sullivan, Esq., D.C.L.		Mr H. W. MONTGOMERY
Desmond Mc Usquebaugh		Mr HILL
Dr. Macviesz		Mr COOKE
Bradley		Mr STAINES
Trodnou		Mr MACARTE
Dr. Scargill		Mr PERDUE
The Smiffel Lamb		Mr TINDALE
Waiter		Mr REDMOND
Moses Aaron		Mr BENNETT
Lady Ptarmigan		Miss S. LARKIN
Maud Hetherington		Miss MARIE WILTON
Little Maud		Miss LUCY GEORGE

ACT 1.—DARYL'S CHAMBERS IN LINCOLN'S INN.

A SQUARE.

ACT 2.—THE OWL'S ROOST (EIGHT.)

THE BALL.

ACT 3.—LADY PTARMIGAN'S THE OWL'S ROOST (MORNING.)

HOT WELLS AT SPRING MEADLEBEAU.

THE NEW SCENERY BY MR. CHARLES S. JAMES

Robertson idealizes militarism, following unquestioningly the current clichés of British supremacy and destiny.

Following a try-out at the Prince of Wales's in Liverpool on August 23, 1866, *Ours* opened at the Prince of Wales's in London on November 15, where it met with instant acclaim. Including a series of successful revivals, the play under the Bancroft aegis ran up a total of seven hundred performances. The Bancrofts listed it next to *Caste* as the most profitable Robertson comedy in their repertoire.²⁰

The play opens just before Sir Alexander Shendryn's regiment "Ours" is summoned to the Crimea. The departure leaves relations troubled and unsettled between the men and the women they leave behind them. Sir Alexander is saddled with a jealous wife who nurses the delusion that her husband is unfaithful. Lady Shendryn is attempting to arrange a marriage between Blanche Haye, her ward, and Prince Petrovsky, a fabulously wealthy Russian. Blanche Haye, however, is in love with the timid Angus MacAlister. Her volatile companion, Mary Netley, irritates and enchants Hugh Chalcot, a world-weary chap. General resolution ensues when the ladies descend *en masse* in the Crimea. Sir Alexander's fidelity is vindicated. Prince Petrovsky stands aside for Angus. Hugh Chalcot's ennui disappears in the conflict and he now behaves towards Mary with winning boyishness.

I should like to defer until the final chapter consideration of the place

circle were reserved for the wives and guests of the officers and the upper part of the house was given over to the men of the regiment and their wives.

It will be remembered that the second act [*sic*] of the play takes place in the Crimea. As the curtain fell on it, a soldier in the gallery fainted.

Somehow, without knowing why, I was quite interested in the incident, and, next day, I asked Captain McAdam, who had taken part in the performance, who the man was.

Captain McAdam replied, "He's Corporal Ashton."

"Ashton," I repeated. "Can I see him?"

"Certainly. He's a corporal in my company; I'll send for him."

When he arrived and I went into the room in which he had been shown, I asked, as I looked at him, "Is your name Ashton?"

"Yes, miss," he replied, saluting me.

"Your name is not Ashton," I replied, "It's Robertson. I'm your sister. You must go and see mother."

"Never," he answered, "till I'm a commissioned officer."

"What does that matter to her. [*sic*] Your first duty is to your mother."

Later I took him home and I shall never forget the scene when my mother took him into her arms. *Dame Madge Kendal*, pp. 54-55.

²⁰ *The Bancrofts*, p. 88r.

of militarism in Robertson's thinking. At this point I am concerned with the dramatic treatment and effectiveness of the motif. To this end, several telling illustrations will suffice to show why the play was a sure-fire hit. Continuing in *Society's* appealing tone, Robertson introduced a patriotic motif which rose to a climax described by Squire Bancroft as "almost hysterical."²¹ This is the scene in which the ladies watch from a window Sir Alexander Shendryn's Regiment, "Ours," march off to war:

*Music forte. Band plays "God save the Queen." Cheers. Tramp of soldiers. Excitement. Picture. Chalcot and Mary waving handkerchiefs, and cheering at window . . . Blanche totters down and falls fainting.*²²

Earlier in the act there is a significant dialogue between Mary Netley and Hugh Chalcot, who play a Beatrice-Benedick team. Up to this point in act two, Chalcot has been shown to us as a cynical, bored chap, with several fleeting glimpses of a sentimental streak.

Mary: (up, C. Excitedly.) Oh, when I hear the clatter of their horses' hoofs, and see the gleam of the helmets, I—I wish I were a man!

Chal: I wish you were! (standing, C., his glass in his eye.)

Mary: (opening window at back.) We can see them from the balcony.

Music ceases. When she opens window, the moonlight, trees, gas, &c., are seen at back. Distant bugle.

Mary: There's Sir Alick on horseback. (distant cheers. On balcony.) Do you hear the shouts?

Chal: Yes. (up at window.)

Mary: And the bands?

Chal: (on balcony.) And the chargers prancing.

Mary: And the bayonets gleaming.

Chal: And the troops forming.

Mary: And the colours flying. Oh, if I were not a woman, I'd be a soldier! (going down a little.)

Chal: So would I. (coming down, L.)

Mary: Why are you not?

Chal: What!—a woman!

Mary: No—a soldier. Better be anything than nothing. Better be a soldier than anything.

Goes up again. Tramp of troops marching heard in the distance. Cheers.

²¹ *The Bancrofts*, p. 87.

²² *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 460.

Chal: (catching MARY'S enthusiasm, and sitting on ottoman.) She's right! She's right! Why should a great hulking fellow like me skulk behind, lapped in comfort, ungrateful, uncomfortable, and inglorious? Fighting would be something to live for. I've served in the militia—I know my drill—I'll buy a commission—I'll go!

Mary: (meeting him, as he goes up.) That's right. I like you for that.²³

The whole of the third act takes place during the war, somewhere behind the front lines (not too far from Balaklava) in a hut. The ladies arrive all the way from England in a picnic spirit. Mary Netley and her friend, Blanche Haye, play at being men, recoil with girlish fear from the sight of weapons, and Mary Netley makes a pudding using an improvised rolling pin. The only casualties observable in the Crimean campaign are Hugh Chalcot's bandaged leg—inflicted by the playwright to permit Chalcot to remain behind in the hut so that he can help Mary Netley make her pudding—and a staggering entrance by Alexander Shendryn followed by "It's only a scratch." A more sentimentalized treatment of the Crimean campaign would be difficult to imagine. The only oath Chalcot utters is "damn," and he putters about the hut as chatty and kittenish as an old woman in a kitchen:

What a jolly good sleep I have had, to be sure! (*takes flask from under pillow, and drinks.*) Ah! What a comfort it is that in the Crimea you can drink as much as you like without its hurting you! The doctor says it's the rarefaction of the atmosphere. Bravo, the rarefaction of the atmosphere!—whatever it may be. I must turn out. (*takes pillow, and addresses it in song.*)

"Kathleen Mavourneen, arouse from thy slumbers."

(*hits pillow, and gets out of bed*) *Gardez vous* the poor dumb leg. It's jolly cold! (*goes to fireplace and warms his hands, then turns and holds them round the candle, whilst so doing sees letters.*) Oh, Gus has left his love-traps to my keeping in case he should be potted. (*puts letters in cupboard, L.*) Now for my toilette. Where's the water? (*goes across stage, finds bucket against barrel up stage, R.*) Ice, as usual! Where's the hammer? . . .²⁴

The portrayal of the softened rigors of war; the women's cheering their men off to battle, wishing only they could be men; the reassuring platitudes about the duty and prowess of Englishmen evoked tremendous response. Robertson had domesticated war, reducing it to a lawn party in the Crimea.

²³ Pages 458-59.

²⁴ Page 463.

Meanwhile Robertson was moving forward in his attempt to capture everyday reality in dialogue and staging. Stage directions for act one, which occurs in the private park of Alexander Shendryn, call for the trees to shed leaves through the act. Angus, the disconsolate lover of Blanche Haye, plucks them or cuts at them with his cane. Elaborate directions for the stage-setting for act three foreshadow the meticulous attention to details of a Shavian *mise-en-scène*:

Interior of a hut, built of boulders and mud, the roof built out, showing the snow and sky outside. The walls bare and rude, pistols, swords, guns, maps, newspapers, &c., suspended on them. Door; R. 2 E. Window in flat, R. C., showing snow-covered country beyond; rude fireplace, L., wood fire burning; over-hanging chimney and shelf; small stove, R., very rude, with chimney going through roof, which is covered with snow and icicles; straw and rags stuffed in crevices and littered about floor; a rope stretched across back of hut, with fur rugs and horse-cloths hanging up to divide the beds off; camp and rough make-shift furniture; camp cooking utensils, &c.; arm-chair, made of tub, &c. Cupboards round L., containing properties; hanging lamp, a rude piece of plank before fireplace, stool, tubs, pail, &c. Port-manteau, L. table, L. C., rough chair, broken gun-barrel near fireplace, for poker, and stack of wood. Stage half dark, music, "Chanson," distant bugle and answer, as curtain rises.²⁵

Striving for stage pictures—tableaux—persists. On page 74, I have quoted the rousing curtain to act two. The highly artificial is carried to ridiculous lengths earlier in the act when:

Bugle without, at distance. Roll on side drum, four beats on big drum, then military band play "Annie Laurie"—the whole to be as if in the distance. Angus starts up, and goes to window. Blanche springs up, and stands before door, L. Angus goes to door, embracing Blanche. They form Millais' picture of the "Black Brunswicker."²⁶

Characterization, however, remains stereotyped, although Robertson's

²⁵ Page 461.

²⁶ Page 455. The ascent of Marguerite in the last act of *Faust and Marguerite*, according to a review of the play in the *London Times*, April 20, 1854, p. 12, is "after a well-known picture of St. Catherine." Similarly, the *Times'* critic guesses that the auction scene in *M. P.* "may have been suggested by the late R. Martineau's impressive picture of 'The Last Day in the Old House.'" See issue for April 25, 1870, p. 10.

The stage directions for act two of *War* (*Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 766) call for the Colonel and Oscar to form "the picture from Horace Vernet's 'Retreat from Moscow.'"

theatrical inventiveness provides an illusive freshness to the types. For example, he applies the lesson he learned in *Noémie* of contrasting two leading feminine roles. Blanche Haye is the completely soft, Victorian ideal, whereas Mary Netley is the outspoken gamin, a role ideally suited to the talent of Marie Wilton, trained in burlesque.²⁷ Starting with *Ours*, the first play he wrote especially for the Bancrofts, Robertson created a series of vehicles designed to exploit the impish quality in Lady Bancroft's acting.

As for Marie Wilton, with what wonderful insight Robertson had made out the real genius of this little woman, whose talents were so real, if all her ambitions were not attainable! She looked back with horror at her successes at the Strand; she wanted never again to play a *gamin's* part . . . or to appear in burlesque. Robertson wrote her a succession of *gamin's* parts and burlesque scenes. But the *gamin* was petticoated and the burlesque scenes set in a comedy. I am not referring to *Society*, which was not written for the 'Prince of Wales's.' But what is it she has to do in the three other pieces? In *School* she climbs a wall. In *Ours* she takes part in a game of bowls, mimics the affectations of the swells of '65, plays at being a soldier, bastes a leg of mutton from a watering pot, and as a climax makes roley-poley pudding, adapting military implements to culinary uses for the purpose. In *Caste* her operations are still more varied—she sings, dances, boxes people's ears, plays the piano, pretends to blow a trumpet, puts on a forge cap, and imitates a squadron of cavalry. If this is not burlesque, what is it?²⁸

Realising that the role must stand or fall with Marie Wilton, Robertson encouraged her to make it her own, and she went to it with the zest of a Bernhardt or a Mrs. Campbell:

When the play was originally read to us, the author begged me to do all I could in the scenes which chiefly concerned myself in the last act, for somehow, he said, he felt unable to make Mary as prominent as he wished. So at the rehearsals I set to work, and invented business and dialogue, which, happily, met with his approval. He always declared I greatly helped the act,

²⁷ The Robertsonian formula included two heroines in each comedy: one ideal, the other practical; one sentimental, the other humorous. The practical-humorous heroine—Mary Netley, Polly Eccles, Naomi Tighe—always fell to the lot of Mrs. Bancroft, whose alert and expressive face, humid-sparkling eye, and small compact figure seemed to have been expressly designed for these characters. She possessed, too, the faculty of approaching the borderline of vulgarity without overstepping it—an essential gift for the actress who has to deal with Robertsonian pertness—and wherever feeling was called for she proved a mistress of tears as well as of laughter. Matthews and Hutton, edd., *Actors and Actresses*, V, 31.

²⁸ Filon, *The English Stage*, p. 121.

which was in parts very weak. The audiences always laughed heartily at the fun and frolic which in the days of high spirits I adopted. I remember with what care I made the famous roly-poly pudding during the first run.²⁹

So lively was the business Marie Wilton worked out for act three that she once inadvertently became the heaviest casualty in Robertson's version of the Crimean War:

When I was playing Blanche Haye in 'Ours,' I nearly killed Mrs. Bancroft with the bayonet which it was part of the business of the play for me to 'fool' with. I charged as usual; either she made a mistake and moved to the right instead of to the left, or I made a mistake. Anyhow, I wounded her in the arm. She had to wear it in a sling, and I felt very badly about it, all the more because of the ill-natured stories of its being no accident.³⁰

Among the theatrical types Robertson, as the "Theatrical Lounger" in the *Illustrated Times*, describes, appears the burlesque actress, a composite idealization of charm, beauty, and versatility. Here is the prototype for Polly Eccles; here are the gifts Robertson recognized in Marie Wilton:

The Burlesque Actress is young, elegant, and accomplished in more than the usual sense of the word. She is generally handsome, and when her features are irregular she more than atones for them by expression—expression that combines good humour, malice, intensity of feeling, Bacchante-like enjoyment, and devotion. She can sing the most difficult of Donizetti's languid, loving melodies, as well as the inimitable Mackney's "Oh, Rosa, how I lub you! Coodle cum!" She can warble a drawing-room ballad of the "Daylight of the Soul" or "Eyes Melting in Gloom" school, or whistle "When I was a-walking in Wiggleton Wale" with the shrillness and correctness of a Whitechapel birdcatcher. She is as faultless on the piano as on the bones. She can waltz, polk, dance a *pas seul* or a sailor's hornpipe, La Sylphide, or the Genu-wine Transatlantic Cape Cod Skedaddle, with equal grace and spirit; and as for acting, she can declaim à la Phelps or Fechter; is serious, droll; and must play farce, tragedy, opera, comedy, melodrama, pantomime, ballet, change her costume, fight a combat, make love, poison herself, die, and take one encore for a song and another for a dance, in the short space of ten minutes.

The young actress in possession of all these abilities wakes up in the morning after her appearance in London to find herself famous. The men at the clubs go mad about her. She is almost pelted with bouquets and *billet-doux*;

²⁹ *The Bancrofts*, pp. 318-19.

³⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, p. 132.

enthusiasts crowd round her cab to see her alight or waylay her in omnibuses; old gentlemen send her flowers, scent-bottles, ivory-backed hair-brushes, cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, and parasols; matter-of-fact barristers compose verses in her honour; and photographers lay their cameras at her feet. Half Aldershot comes nightly up by train. She is a power in London, and theatrical managers drive up to her door and bid against each other for her services. Fortunate folks who see her in the daytime complain "that she dresses plainly"—"almost shabbily"; but, then, they are not aware that she has to keep half a dozen fatherless brothers and sisters and an invalid mother out of her salary—which intelligence, when known to the two or three men who really care for her, sends them sleepless with admiration. Here is a household fairy who can polk, paint, make puddings, sew on buttons, turn heads and old bonnets, wear cleaned gloves, whistle, weep, laugh, and perhaps love.³¹

Hugh Chalcot, first played by J. Clarke, and subsequently taken over by Squire Bancroft, is as typically a Squire Bancroft role as Mary Netley is Marie Wilton's. Chalcot is sophisticated, slightly world-weary, yet withal worshipful at the feet of his adored one.

Mr. Bancroft is an actor of limited range, but, within that range, of remarkable intelligence, refinement and power. His face is not very mobile and his features are so marked that the most elaborate make-up is powerless to disguise them, while his voice, though strong and resonant, is of a somewhat harsh and croaking quality. These peculiarities, combined with his tall and spare figure, were of the greatest service to him in embodying the languid, cynico-sentimental, military heroes of Robertson. The playwright no doubt indicated, but the actor may fairly be said to have created, this original and essentially modern, if not altogether pleasing type.³²

Chalcot's sudden conversion to the military life and his subsequent mawkish volubility in the third act are inconsistent with his earlier cynicism and reserve, but such was the alchemical power of Victorian love.

The Lady Ptarmigan of *Society* releases her stays slightly to become Lady Shendryn. Still the snob and nag, she continues to pop up under different names in the rest of Robertson's comedies.

With regard to dialogue, Robertson refined the hesitant, hovering effect in his love scenes and scored a bright success with the con-

³¹ As quoted in Pemberton, *Life and Writings of Thomas William Robertson*, pp. 120-21.

³² Matthews and Hutton, *Actors and Actresses*, V, 31-32.

trapuntal effect he attempted awkwardly in *Society*. Blanche and Angus, after exchanging timid vows in London, meet in the Crimea. With his own gentle tongue in cheek, Robertson awards theirs to the cat:

Angus: (*conscious that Lady Shendryn's eyes are upon him. To Blanche.*)
I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you quite well!

Blanche: Quite well; and you?

Angus: Quite well.

Mary: I want a spoon.

(*Chalcot gives her the wooden one.*)

Chal: Our family plate. (*a pause. They sigh.*)

Angus: Any news in London, when you left it?

Blanche: No; none (*pause.*)

Angus: No news?

Blanche: None; none whatever.

Mary: It's so hot.

Chal: Have some ice in?

Blanche: (*pauses.*) You remember Miss Featherstonhaugh?

Angus: No—yes. Oh—yes.

Blanche: The Admiral's second daughter, the one with the nice eyes; used to wear her hair in bands. Her favourite colour was pink?

(*Angus puts cup to his lips, but does not drink.*)

Angus: Yes.

Blanche: She always wears green now.

Angus: Good gracious!

Chal: Can I offer your ladyship the spoon?

Angus: (*not knowing what to say.*) I heard that London has been very dull.

Blanche: Oh! very dull.

Angus: Seen anything of our friends, the Fanshawes?

Blanche: No.

Angus: Not of Mr. Fanshawe?

Blanche: Oh—Dick! He's married!

Angus: Married?

Blanche: Yes; one of Sir George Trawley's girls.³³

Robertson's more striking orchestration of two sets of speakers occurs at the end of act one. The Shendryn Park is empty for a moment. It has begun to rain, and Blanche and Angus enter, seeking shelter under a tree, Blanche covering her head with her skirt. Soon the Shendryns

³³ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 473-74.

enter and take up a position on the other side of the stage. The conversation of the lovers and that of the testy married couple "are to be taken up as if they were continuous."³⁴ The resulting scene is rich in its unfolding layers of dramatic contrast.

Ours, with its patriotic appeal and colloquial flavor, scored a sudden triumph. For reviewers, Robertson overnight became the touchstone of what was realistic.

The most endearing and enduring of Robertson's domestic comedies was *Caste*, dedicated to Marie Wilton, who had made its success possible. *Caste* opened at the Tottenham Road theater April 6, 1867, and saw revivals in 1871, 1879, and 1883, tallying 650 performances under the Bancroft management. Of Robertson's plays, *Caste* has been the most frequently reprinted.

It is not difficult to find the reason for the play's contemporary appeal. Robertson's theme that "what brains can break through love may leap over"³⁵ and his theatrical formula for realistic setting and subdued acting are here best realized in an economic plot and a small, well-balanced, vehicular cast of characters. George d'Alroy marries Esther Eccles, an actress, goes off to war, and is reported killed in action. Esther, burdened by a drunken father, bravely struggles to support her child, refusing to surrender it to the Marquise de St. Maure, d'Alroy's mother, who despises the girl. D'Alroy, unhurt, reappears at the end, and amid the joyful reunion, the Marquise is reconciled to her daughter-in-law.

The balance of characters is so pat that it can be diagrammed on an isosceles triangle. At the respective angles at its base, can be set the two most sharply contrasted characters, sniveling, drink-sodden Eccles, ranting about the rights of labor and the snobbish Marquise de St. Maur, quoting Froissart on the glories of her ancestors. Halfway up the sides of the triangle, we can place the opposing characters of Sam Gerridge and Captain Hawtree³⁶; the one contemptuous of "swells," the other repelled by proletariat *égalité*. The partners of the *mésalliance*, Esther and George D'Alroy, hands clasped reassuringly, stand at the apex.

³⁴ Page 441.

³⁵ Pemberton, ed., *Society and Caste*, p. 211.

³⁶ "The part, perhaps, which first made me known to London playgoers of those days." *The Bancrofts*, p. 26.

Within this pyramiding group, Robertson sustains the now familiar pattern of feminine foils, in the roles of the two Eccles sisters, Polly and Esther. Nowhere else did Robertson demonstrate to such an extent the dramatic efficacy of contrast.

Dialogue, realistic stage-setting, and telling business disguised the mechanics of contrast. Fresh mounting obscured for contemporary audiences the thread-bare theatrics of story and characterization. The artful blending of traditional melodramatics and surface realism cheated current opinion into thinking that a mirror had been held up to nature. No more revealing appraisal of what transpired on the Prince of Wales's stage on April 6, 1867, can be found than George Bernard Shaw's dicta, occasioned by the revival of *Caste* at the Court Theatre, June 10, 1897. Because of their immense value, I venture to quote them in full:

The revival of 'Caste' at the Court Theatre is the revival of an epoch-making play after thirty years. A very little epoch and a very little play, certainly, but none the less interesting on that account to mortal critics whose own epochs, after full deductions for nonage and dotage, do not outlast more than two such plays. The Robertsonian movement caught me as a boy; the Ibsen movement caught me as a man; and the next one will catch me as a fossil.

It happens that I did not see Mr. Hare's revival of 'Caste' at the Garrick, nor was I at his leave-taking at the Lyceum before his trip to America; so that until last week I had not seen 'Caste' since the old times when the Hare-Kendal management was still in futurity and the Bancrofts had not left Tottenham Court Road. During that interval a great many things have happened, some of which have changed our minds and morals more than many of the famous Revolutions and Reformations of the historians. For instance, there was supernatural religion then; and eminent physicists, biologists and their disciples were 'infidels.' There was a population question then; and what men and women knew about one another was either a family secret or the recollection of a harvest of wild oats. There was no social question—only a 'social evil'; and the educated classes knew the working classes through novels written by men who had gathered their notions of the subject either from a squalid familiarity with general servants in Pentonville kitchens, or from no familiarity at all with the agricultural laborer and the retainers of the country house and West End mansion. To-day the 'infidels' are bishops and church wardens, without change of view on their part. There is no population question; and the young lions and lionesses of Chronicle and Star, Keynote and Pseudonym, without suspicion of debauchery, seem

to know as much of erotic psychology as the most liberally educated Periclean Athenians. The real working classes loom hugely in middle-class consciousness, and have pressed into their service the whole public energy of the time; so that now even a Conservative Government has nothing for the classes but 'doles,' extracted with difficulty from its preoccupation with instalments of Utopian Socialism. The extreme reluctance of Englishmen to maintain these changes is the measure of their dread of a reaction to the older order which they still instinctively connect with strict application of religion and respectability.

Since 'Caste' has managed to survive all this, it need not be altogether despised by the young champions who are staring contemptuously at it, and asking what heed they can be expected to give to the opinions of critics who think such stuff worth five minutes' serious consideration. For my part, though I enjoy it more than I enjoyed 'The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith,' I do not defend it. I see now clearly enough that the eagerness with which it was swallowed long ago was the eagerness with which an ocean castaway, sucking his bootlaces in an agony of thirst in a sublime desert of salt water, would pounce on a spoonful of flat salutaris and think it nectar. After years of sham heroics and superhuman balderdash, 'Caste' delighted everyone by its freshness, its nature, its humanity. You will shriek and snort, O scornful young men, at this monstrous assertion. 'Nature! Freshness! you will exclaim, 'In Heaven's name (if you are not too modern to have heard of Heaven) where is there a touch of nature in 'Caste?'' I reply, 'In the windows, in the doors, in the walls, in the carpet, in the ceiling, in the kettle, in the fireplace, in the ham, in the tea, in the bread and butter, in the bassinet, in the hats and sticks and clothes, in the familiar phrases, the quiet, unpumped, everyday utterance: in short, the commonplaces that are now spurned because they are commonplaces, and were then inexpressibly welcome because they were the most unexpected novelties.'

And yet I dare not submit even this excuse to a detailed examination. Charles Matthews was in the field long before Robertson and Mr. Bancroft with the art of behaving like an ordinary gentleman in what looked like a real drawing-room. The characters are very old stagers, very thinly 'humanized.' Captain Hawtrey [*sic*] may look natural in the hands of Mr. Fred Kerr; but he began being a very near relation of the old stage 'swell,' who pulled his moustache, held a single eyeglass between his brow and cheekbone, said, 'Haw, haw' and 'By Jove,' and appeared in every harlequinade in a pair of white trousers which were blacked by the clown instead of his boots. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, defending his idealized early impressions as Berlioz defended the forgotten Dalayrac, pleads for Eccles as 'a great and vital tragi-comic figure.' But the fond plea cannot be allowed. Eccles is caricatured in the vein and by the methods which Dickens had made obvious; and the implied moral view of his case is the common Pharisaic one

of his day. Eccles and Gerridge together epitomize mid-Victorian shabby-genteel ignorance of the working classes. Polly is comic relief pure and simple; George and Esther have nothing but a milkcan to differentiate them from the heroes and heroines of a thousand sentimental dramas; and though Robertson happens to be quite right—contrary to the prevailing opinion among critics whose conception of the aristocracy is a theoretic one—in representing the ‘Marquizy’ as insisting openly and jealously on her rank, and, in fact, having an impenitent and resolute flunkeyism as her class characteristic, yet it is quite evident that she is not an original study from life, but simply a ladyfication of the conventional haughty mother whom we lately saw revived in all her original vulgarity and absurdity at the Adelphi in Madison Morton’s ‘All that Glitters is not Gold,’ and who was generally associated on the stage with the swell from whom Captain Hawtreay is evolved. Only, let it not be forgotten that in both there really is a humanization, as humanization was understood in the ’sixties: that is, a discovery of saving sympathetic qualities in personages hitherto deemed beyond redemption. Even theology had to be humanized then by the rejection of the old doctrine of eternal punishment. Hawtreay is a good fellow, which the earlier ‘swell’ never was; the Marquise is dignified and affectionate at heart, and is neither made ridiculous by a grotesque headdress nor embraced by the drunken Eccles; and neither of them is attended by a supercilious footman in plush whose head is finally punched powderless by Sam Gerridge. And if from these hints you cannot gather the real nature and limits of the tiny theatrical revolution of which Robertson was the hero, I must leave you in your perplexity for want of time and space for further exposition.³⁷

By the time of *Caste*, Robertson had perfected his brand of dialogue. Pert, lively, often elliptic, expanding at times into his favorite contrapuntal device, it has a pace and naturalness simply not to be felt in pre-Robertsonian drama. A good example of a fresh quality of writing can be found in the opening expository scene of the play, from which I should like to quote. Notice that with the very first speech Robertson suggests, as was his wont, the illusion of action just off-stage.

George D’Alroy: Told you so; the key was left under the mat in case I came. They’re not back from rehearsal. (*Hangs up hat on peg near door as Hawtree enters.*) Confound rehearsal!
Crosses to fireplace.

Hawtree: (*back to audience, looking round.*) And this is the fairy’s bower!

³⁷ *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*, II, 281-85.

- Geo: Yes; and this is the fairy's fireplace; the fire is laid. I'll light it.
Lights fire with lucifer from mantel-piece.
- Haw: (*turning to George.*) And this is the abode rendered blessed by her abiding. It is here that she dwells, walks, talks,—eats and drinks. Does she eat and drink?
- Geo: Yes, heartily. I've seen her.
- Haw: And you are really spoons!—case of true love—hit—dead.
- Geo: Right through. Can't live away from her.
With elbow on end of mantel-piece, down stage.
- Haw: Poor old Dal! and you've brought me over the water to—
- Geo: Stangate.
- Haw: Stangate—to see her for the same sort of reason that when a patient is in a dangerous state one doctor calls in another—for a consultation.
- Geo: Yes. Then the patient dies.
- Haw: Tell us all about it—you know I've been away. *Sits at table, leg on chair.*
- Geo: Well then, eighteen months ago—
- Haw: Oh cut that! You told me all about that. You went to a theatre, and saw a girl in a ballet, and you fell in love.
- Geo: Yes. I found out that she was an amiable, good girl.
- Haw: Of course; cut that. We'll credit her with all the virtues and accomplishments.³⁸

The tone of the above passage is anti-heroic. In Hawtree's mock extravagance, Robertson indeed neatly calls attention to the fact that he has deliberately left the traditional mode behind him. And this tone pervades the entire play. A significant stage direction, for example, follows Esther's recital of her trials as a young girl:

You see this little house is on my shoulders. Polly only earns eighteen shillings a week, and father has been out of work a long, long time. I make the bread here, and it's hard to make sometimes. I've been mistress of this place, and forced to think ever since my mother died, and I was eight years old. Four pounds a week is a large sum, and I can save out of it. (*This speech is not to be spoken in a tone implying hardship.*)³⁹

It is unthinkable that a modern actor would be directed in this manner. Robertson's prohibition indicates clearly the hold of stylized acting on the mid-Victorian stage and his conscious fight to stamp it out.

³⁸ Pemberton, *Society and Caste*, pp. 109-11.

³⁹ pp. 125-26.

Act one ends with another of Robertson's skillful dual conversations. While Sam and Polly are engaging in a mock quarrel, George and Esther desperately argue their chance for happiness together. This effect implicitly renounces the Meccan lure of centerstage. It was Robertson's eschewal of broad, heightened effects which tagged his plays as "teacup and saucer" or "milk and water," or "bread and butter." By these epithets, critics meant to convey the absence of melodramatic sweep in his plays. An actor cannot vibrate with emotion while balancing a teacup on his knee. At the same time, it came as a thrilling discovery to Robertson's audiences that untold suggestion might be conveyed in the very serving of a cup of tea. Robertson saw through the sham posturing of mid-Victorian actors; "It seems a simple thing," he observed, "for a young lady to hand a young gentleman a cup of tea, but all depends upon the manner."⁴⁰ From the tone of dialogue and scattered stage directions, we can arrive but imperfectly at a conception of the kind of acting that was done in his plays. The direction acting style was taking is unmistakable, but we cannot measure its actual attainment.

There is sufficient evidence, however, to assure us that understatement in speech had its parallel in movement. Alfred Darbyshire, in his *Art of the Victorian Stage*, recorded several very revealing bits of business:

Robertson had a peculiar way occasionally of relying upon action only, accompanied by no vocal efforts. Some playgoers now living will not have forgotten some scenes of this description. I shall always remember the scene where George D'Alroy endeavoured to cheer his wife, and encourage her to bear the pain of his departure for the war, by asking her to buckle on his sword and belt. I recollect the last time I saw this scene the wife was played by my dear old friend Ada Dyas . . . Those who saw Ada Dyas try to buckle on that sword and belt will never forget the force of expression conveyed by action and facial working. The effort was made with a breaking heart, and with the fearful thought she might never see her husband again. The effort left her a sad [*sic*] a grief-laden woman. The audience saw and understood this and, as Esther fell fainting into the arms of those who loved her, rose to the situation with prolonged applause. Another instance of this peculiar trait in the Robertsonian drama may be cited. On D'Alroy's return he finds that those near and dear to him have been cared for in their poverty and distress, and that various household comforts have been provided. On asking how this had happened all heads are turned to the man who believed in caste and who, in a conceited aristocratic style, had ridiculed his friend's

⁴⁰ "The Queens of Comedy," *London Society*, VIII, (September, 1865), 280.

affection for the daughter of a plebeian drunken reprobate. D'Alroy walked up to his friend, Captain Hawtrey [*sic*], and in dead silence grasped him by the hand. If any words *were* spoken they were drowned in applause. From that moment the audience loved the man on whom they had looked as a conceited nincompoop.⁴¹

It is a significant sign of the growth of realism on the stage, that audiences who had once watched for and vociferously applauded melodramatic points scored by a playwright (such as big confrontation scenes, denunciations, pietistic avowals, and the like) now greeted with equal enthusiasm these quieter points.

The spell over Robertson of the picture-frame stage stimulated him to realistic detail; it also accounts for his persistent use of tableaux. Each curtain falls on a significant grouping of characters; and as though this artificial clinching of the action were insufficient, the curtain rises on a regrouping:

At the end of each act the curtain was raised in response to the genuine acclamations of the house, when the *tableau* was ingeniously changed to mark the natural progress of the story. This novelty, indeed, proved very successful, and has been imitated often since.⁴²

I have already remarked on the effective contrast of characters in *Caste*. While we may regard such balance as blatantly theatrical, we are not giving Robertson his due unless we make ourselves aware of how his characters stand several steps removed from the stereotyped puppets of burlesque. Victorian characters were as definitely distinguished by prescribed costume and mannerism as clown and aerialist in the big top.

Robertson's inroads on the obvious outlines of fop, dowager, and ingénue may be anticipated by the preceding analysis of dialogue and setting. Squire Bancroft who played Hawtree relates how he won the fight to dissociate in the minds of audiences the connection between flaxen hair and a dandy:

At dinner I found myself seated next to a soldier whose appearance faintly lent itself to a make-up for Hawtree. With some diplomacy I afterwards went to Younge and suggested, if it would suit his views, that he

⁴¹ *London*, 1907, pp. 140-41.

⁴² *The Bancrofts*, p. 96.

should be the fair man. He asked how on earth he could do such a thing. Being the sentimental hero, he of course was intended to be dark; while I was equally compelled to be fair, and wear long flaxen whiskers in what he called the dandy or fop, a conventional stage outrage of those days, for whose death I think I must hold myself responsible. I eventually succeeded in touching a very pardonable vanity—the only drawback to his ever-to-be remembered performance being that he had already partly lost his *première jeunesse*—by suggesting that a chestnut-coloured wig would give him youth. At any rate, I got my way; but I believe, at the time, I was by more than one actor thought to be mad for venturing to clothe what was supposed to be, more or less, a comic part, in the quietest of fashionable clothes, and to appear as a pale-faced man with short, straight black hair. The innovation proved to be as successful as it was daring.⁴³

Caste is a dramatization of the short story, "The Poor Rate Unfolds a Tale," which Robertson had written for Tom Hood's *Rates and Taxes* (1866). There is nothing remarkable to be gathered by comparing the two versions, beyond the fact that the short story ends tragically: George D'Alroy (Daubray) falls on the field of battle. Behind the short story lay an experience in the Robertson family annals, recounted by Dame Madge Kendal:

My sister was a very pretty girl and was filling an engagement in a provincial town in which we were living and in which a regiment was quartered.

One of the officers fell in love with her,—as officers had fallen in love with beautiful actresses for hundreds of years before, and as they will, no doubt, be doing hundreds of years hence.

So enamoured was the young man that, in order to get the chance of seeing and talking to her, he actually called on our father and arranged to have lessons in elocution.

The young officer's mother, a typical *grande dame* of the old regime, very proud of her family, very proud of her social position, very proud of her son, was horrified at the possibility of what she regarded as a *mésalliance*.

She furnished the idea which my brother elaborated into the Marquise de Saint Maur, who has a long speech in which she describes her ancestry and her pride that it is mentioned in the famous "Chronicles of Froissart."

I don't know whether the real old lady had ever heard of Froissart or his Chronicles, but one day, as in the play, in order to find out all she could about my sister and our family, she called on my father, who, on hearing her story, assured her that he not only disapproved as highly as she did of

⁴³ *The Bancrofts*, p. 95.

the possibility of such a marriage but also that he found her son incapable of learning anything that he could teach.

In the end, an engagement in the theatre of another town was secured for my sister and the incipient romance was nipped in the bud.⁴⁴

More important, however, than the remembered episode is the influence of Thackeray. The *mésalliance* in *Caste* between an actress and a scion of the upper class has a close parallel in the "Fotheringay" episode in *Pendennis*; and there is, indeed, more than a casual similarity between Eccles and Captain Costigan. Ernest Reynolds has remarked an original for Eccles in Dickens' Parlour Orator.⁴⁵ Whether or not Robertson borrowed the plot directly from Thackeray, he certainly invested his dramatization with Thackerayan restraint and irony.

The influence was well recognized at the start. "Zounds!" thundered Charles Reade, "the brutes yelled at my poor bairn, but I believe the idiots would have encored that horse-marine caricature of Rawdon Crawley if he had given the little beast the pop-bottle *coram populo*."⁴⁶ Reade nevertheless executed an interesting about face, for in 1871 when he came to plan *A Simpleton*, we find him dipping back to *Caste* for a character: "For the second woman use Boucicault's second character in *Hunted Down*; and perhaps the little actress in *Caste* with particulars of class."⁴⁷ Clement Scott, the staunch propagandist of the Robertsonian school, was prepared to discover a Thackerayan stratum out of all proportion:

He gave us 'Caste,' where we have shadows at least of George and Amelia in George d'Alroy and Esther, a very respectable echo of Dobbin in Captain Hawtree, and, throughout, the tender tone and cynicism of Thackeray, which were very dear to Robertson. . . . His master was Thackeray.⁴⁸

Play showed no advance over Robertson's previous work, and, in fact, was conceded by the Bancrofts to be the least successful of his produc-

⁴⁴ Pages 10-11.

⁴⁵ *Early Victorian Drama*, Cambridge, 1936, p. 89.

⁴⁶ John Coleman, *Players and Playwrights*, Philadelphia, 1890, II, 61.

⁴⁷ The character in *A Simpleton* Reade modeled after Polly Eccles is Phoebe Dale. Reade's memorandum is quoted in Malcolm Elwin's *Charles Reade*, London, 1934, p. 250.

⁴⁸ *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*, I, 515.

tions at the Prince of Wales's.⁴⁹ It opened February 15, 1868, played only about a hundred nights, and was never revived.

The title connotes the background of the gambling resort in Germany against which the action unfolds. Here gather the Hon. Bruce Fanquehere and his ward, Rosie; the Chevalier Browne, an adventurer; Amanda, the wife Browne has deserted; and Frank Price, in love with Rosie and personally detestable to Rosie's guardian. Browne learns that Rosie is about to come into an independent legacy and plans a conquest. Amanda has followed her husband to the gambling resort and sees him pursuing Rosie. Despairing of her own happiness she warns Rosie of Browne's character. Rosie, however, assumes that Amanda is exposing Frank Price; and to his dismay, she cuts him dead on their next meeting. When she discovers her error, she begs his forgiveness, and the two recommence their idyl. Browne becomes thoroughly discredited when Fanquehere discovers that he had kept secret the news of Rosie's legacy. His nefarious intrigue having collapsed, Browne affirms his moral conversion and effects a reconciliation with Amanda. And Fanquehere relents towards Frank Price.

Play failed because it ventured too far into the atmosphere of the Adelphi, with a massive outdoor set, farcical comic relief, and melodramatic *peripetiae*. Its unsophisticated appeal was at sharp variance with the tone Robertson, the Bancrofts and company had labored hard to establish.

Here was a lapse in Robertson's groping for reform. Here was a reversion—complacent, well-nigh entire—to the threadbare non-descript dramaturgy of the past. Asides, soliloquies, pietism, gags stand unrelieved by the introduction of any dynamic qualities. It remains a credit to critics and audiences that they discriminatingly rejected *Play*.

In order to involve the hero, Frank Price, in a duel in act four, Robertson introduces in act one a character who does not speak English. Two low-comedy characters, shoddy Sheridanian caricatures, Mrs. Kinpeck and Benjamin Todder, society-crashing *nouveaux-riches*, sustain a barrage of insults and in an absurd bid for attention announce that the hero has been shot. Thus Robertson stoops to a cheap dodge to secure another sudden reversal.

Theatrical effects are woefully stale. The high society villain, the

⁴⁹ *The Bancrofts*, p. 102.

Chevalier Browne, reels off nefarious asides to the oblivious accompaniment of Mrs. Kinpeck's calculations to break the bank:

Mrs. K: I think this is certain, or at least certain three times out of seven, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. The other numbers 11, 17, 30, 32 and 29. The basis of the calculation is that those numbers—the sequences are all mathematical, and therefore to be calculated, 28 repeats itself after 28, 7 on fourth, so after 23 and 24, 6 after 11, 3, after 17, 4.

Enter Browne and leans on colonnade R.

Bro: Off in three days! So, in three days I shall have Rosie all to myself, away from Mr. Frank Price. Was it seeing Frank at my wife's feet that has discomposed her! I'll send Amanda off, perhaps to America. This old scamp knows nothing of Rosie's good fortune. Besides I really like the girl, and with her first year's money—

Mrs. K: After 17, 4.

Bro: If my first marriage should be blown, old Fan would shut his mouth for a share.

Mrs. K: One fourth again; always divide by four!

Bro: His influence and mine would win over the girl!

Mrs. K: The same combinations apply to colours—

Bro: As for Price, he'll soon be out of the way.

Mrs. K: Stake accordingly.

Bro: Odd that Stockstadt should come to me. I saw the advantage at once.

Mrs. K: And stake accordingly.⁵⁰

Amanda, the faithful, neglected wife who supports her husband by her earnings as an actress, is an impossible force for good in the world. As stereotyped as the other characters in the play are, Amanda outdoes them in sheer, unrelieved artificiality. The following is her awakening to her husband's deceit:

Lost to me! lost, as the gold, unlucky gamesters stake upon a colour. I was worthy of his love, and I deserved it. My dream is over. (*wiping her eyes*) I know his reason now for keeping me away from him. It was not shame for my calling! He loved another. Oh! how blind I have been; but my eyes are opened now. Let me dry them and look at my future—face to face. Poor girl! Poor girl! I fancy I can see myself in her. As she is, I was, when he wooed and won me! (*looks off R.*) She's coming back, and with his bouquet in her hand! (*goes up*) Should I not warn her? Should I not

⁵⁰ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 521.

show her the pitfall he is preparing for her? He is my husband. It is my duty to speak to her, and I will.⁵¹

Amid this rank growth of traditionalism, the Robertsonian delicacy is choked. There is a disarming display of naturalness in opening the expository scene between Browne and Fanquehere; here the understatement which came to the fore in *Society* and *Caste* seems to get off to a fine start:

Bro: Apropos, how is mademoiselle?

(*reads paper carefully*)

Fan: Quite well—she only got a wetting.

Bro: How was it?

Fan: She was fishing. A carp tickled her hook, she got excited, put one foot on the gunwale of the boat, so she tells me, and over she went. (*rising*) I'm glad I wasn't there. I should have gone cranky. Poor Fred's only legacy, that dear little Rosie! All he left behind him, except debts. (*sits again*) You know the story? How father went to the bad, the same year that I did—"Diadasti's" year: the family wouldn't stand it any longer. Poor Fred went to the worse, died at Boulogne, where he was staying under a temporary cloud. (*in jerks*) Just before he went, he said, "Uncle Bruce, there's the baby—don't let those damned people"—he meant the family, he always called them the damned people—"don't let them get hold of her,—or they'll teach her family prayers, and to forget her father." Well, I went tick with the undertaker, and gave Fred a handsome funeral—took Rosie and reared her from a foal—I mean from a baby. By gad! that child, Browne (*with enthusiasm*) is the most wonderful child that ever—I dry-nursed her.

Bro: But how came young Price to fish her out?

Fan: He was on the island—saw her fall in—and dived after her like an otter. Ever been otter hunting? Splendid sport! He brought her to the shore, and carried her to the Teich haus.⁵²

The love scene between Rosie, played by Marie Wilton, and Frank Price⁵³ sustains, though with less concealed sentimentality, the technique in the preceding Bancroft productions. Among the ruins of a castle and to the accompaniment of an Aeolian harp, the timid lovers convey in halting speeches the suggestion of inhibition which surrounds love-making in the teacup-and-saucer school of drama. In *Play*, unfor-

⁵¹ Pages 518-19.

⁵² Page 492.

⁵³ Pages 511-15.

tunately, the inhibition becomes a mannerism. So far does Robertson veer from original design that he introduces a song in which the two join their voices.

In his third Bancroft production, Robertson fell from grace. Whether he was resting on his laurels or whether he had exhausted his resources, *Play* exhibits a sudden decline into decadence. Box office receipts drew him up sharply, and it remains for us to see whether he was able to redeem himself with his next offering.

School is the most tenuous of Robertson's plays. What were the ingredients which assured the Bancrofts of its success? The plot taken alone is bare-faced: Dr. and Mrs. Sutcliffe run a girls' school, at which Bella and Naomi teach. Percy Farintosh, Lord Beaufoy, his nephew, and Jack Poyntz, Beaufoy's friend, overrun the school grounds. Naomi is an heiress, and Farintosh hopes that his nephew will become interested in her. When Beaufoy, however, falls in love with Bella, Farintosh is furious. Krug, a jealous tutor at the school, tells Mrs. Sutcliffe that Bella is carrying on a flirtation with Beaufoy, and Mrs. Sutcliffe sends the girl packing. Beaufoy searches for her in London and brings her back his bride. Luckily, Farintosh, by this time, has discovered that Bella is his long-lost granddaughter.

Robertson bathed the gossamer reality of *School* in an idyllic, pastoral setting exploiting the fairy-tale atmosphere of his source, Roderick Benedix's *Aschenbrödel*.⁵⁴ According to Clement Scott, it is *School* which first occasioned the epithet "teacup and saucer":

The milk-jug scene in 'School' has been frequently discussed. The Robertsonians think it tender and pretty enough; the anti-Robertsonian vote it to be bathos. Who shall decide? . . . It gave rise to the taunt of the "teacup and saucer, or milk and water, or bread and butter school" of comedy.⁵⁵

References to Cinderella run like a leitmotif throughout the play. The curtain rises on Bella's reading the tale to a bevy of girls. Lord Beaufoy and Bella meet because he retrieves the shoe she loses. The play ends with her putting on the glass slipper her Prince Charming presents to her.

Robertson considerably revamped Benedix's play. Benedix treated

⁵⁴ *Gesammelte Dramatische Werke*, Leipzig, 1876, Vol. 21-22.

⁵⁵ *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*, I, 530.

the Cinderella motif with naïve concentration. We see the Griselda-like Elfriede doing menial tasks at the girls' school. We see her insulted by Stichling, a vindictive usher, and unfairly scolded and finally cast out by Ursula, the headmistress, who is obsessed by the idea that her husband, Doctor Veltenius, is overly fond of Elfriede. We see her with her foster mother, Gertrud, who lives in a humble cottage an hour's walk from the school. Here Elfriede meets Graf Albrecht von Eichenow, who is searching for a woman who will love him for himself. He loses his heart to her simple honesty, they exchange rings, but he withholds his identity. The following day, he pays a visit to the school. Elfriede distinguishes herself in a recitation on Columbus but is hurt by her betrothed's seeming indifference to her. Because of her chores, Elfriede has access at certain times to the school garden. Kunigunde, a fellow student, enlists Elfriede's aid in arranging a rendezvous with a sweetheart. Stichling spies Elfriede in the garden, and reports to Ursula, who sends the girl away in disgrace. Out of a sense of shame and humiliation Elfriede nearly collapses at Gertrud's but Albrecht's reassurances soothe her to sleep. He then tells Gertrud he has been able to trace Elfriede's parentage from the ring she gave him. It turns out that she is of noble birth. While she is asleep Albrecht transports her to his nearby castle, where she awakens to the delicious problem of gradual adjustment. The play ends with her introduction to an amazed assembly of invited students and faculty of the school as Albrecht's betrothed.

Robertson made use of the basic framework of the original but changed the tone and characterization. He enlarged the role of the miserable usher, reduced the headmistress from an ogre to a gentle nag, introduced the senile Beau Farintosh, and, in Naomi Tighe, provided his heroine with a foil.

He kept the action on the school grounds and emphasized the pastoral element. He enlivened the fairy-tale atmosphere by introducing the contrasting, quasi-cynical repartee of the invading nobility. The Benedix fairy-tale is heavy; the paraphernalia of folk tale is unceremoniously lugged in. Robertson deftly reweave his source into a delicate lawn and fixed to it an appliqué of what currently passed as virile club talk on women.

There was no doubt that *School* would be a hit, though some four-

score years after its première, audiences would be hard-pressed to regard the play as anything but a cloying, saccharine concoction. Before its production, Squire Bancroft wrote to a friend: "We are on the eve of the greatest success we have yet enjoyed."⁵⁶ The Bancrofts proudly presented *School* on January 16, 1869. It easily wiped out Robertson's previous failure in *Play*, for *School* outnumbered by one hundred performances its closest rival, *Ours*. Its first run was well over a year (January 16, 1869, to April, 1870), and it went through generous revivals in 1873, 1880, and 1882.

Theatrical annals furnish, we believe, no record of a triumph such as Mr. T. W. Robertson has recently won. On Thursday, in last week, his comedy of 'Home,' obtained a favourable reception at the Haymarket Theatre, and, on the following Saturday, a second comedy, entitled 'School,' was equally successful at the Prince of Wales's. These works are thoroughly characteristic of Mr. Robertson's method in art. They are simple almost to baldness in plot, and altogether free from improbable incident or melodramatic situation. Their hold upon an audience is due to three gifts which Mr. Robertson possesses in a remarkable degree,—power of characterization, smartness of dialogue, and a cleverness in investing with romantic associations commonplace details of life. Mr. Robertson's plays are brilliant, epigrammatic, and amusing. They fall short of greatness, but their cleverness is remarkable. The one feature they all possess in common offers a key to Mr. Robertson's art. In all there is a scene of lovemaking, the effect of which is heightened by surrounding selfishness and cynicism. Love is the diamond in the play, worldliness its setting. To youth, Mr. Robertson, copying Nature pretty closely, gives the interest and romance of life; to maturity and age he assigns its worldliness and cares. His plays form one sustained apotheosis of youth. He shows generous instincts and high feeling hiding under our conventional bearing and garb, but represents both as soon spoiled by contact with the world. He gives us pretty and romantic idyls and then bids us laugh at them. His own laughter is always ready, sometimes it is kindly as the laughter of Thackeray, at others bitter as that of Swift. The great charm of his works is the atmosphere he throws around the scenes of lovemaking, which is entirely his own . . .

'School' is in four acts, or one more than 'Home.' It is a fanciful and graceful work, which, as regards dialogue and situation, is its author's masterpiece. It has scarcely more pretensions, however, to rank as a comedy than 'The Gentle Shepherd' of Allan Ramsay. It resembles a series of town eclogues, united by the thread of a fairy tale. Two youths, one a lord, the second an ex-officer of cavalry, fall in love with two school-girls. The noble-

⁵⁶ *The Bancrofts*, p. 105.

man chooses a rich and pretty heiress. After experiencing some slight vicissitudes of fortune the two couples are left in a fair way to be married. This is very nearly all the plot which 'School' possesses. One entire act might be omitted without any disadvantage or loss to the action. 'Comus' or 'The Faithful Shepherdess' is scarcely less devoid of sustained dramatic interest than 'School.' Yet the piece is fresh and charming, and stimulates an audience more than any work recently produced. Its complete realism, so far as regards the characters, conduces greatly to this result. But its sentiment, especially its tenderness, has a singular charm. The scene with which the first act ends is as dainty as anything in modern literature. The lovers have met, and have already felt the promptings of love. With half-averted eyes the maidens disappear in a forest glade watched longingly by their lovers, while across the back of the stage the school-girls walk in disorderly procession, singing a pleasant carol, and swinging the wreaths of wild flowers they have made in the wood. Hardly less effective is the concluding scene of the third act. That of the fourth drags a little, while the close of the second is unnatural and farcical. Mr. Robertson has done so much towards reforming old and irreverent dramatic superstitions, that he might with advantage go a step further. His pieces are so simple in all respects, that a set scene at the end of each act is unnecessary. Where the action leads up to it a scene of this description is tolerable, and is sometimes even advantageous; but if forced it does more harm than good. Most of Mr. Robertson's scenes are introduced naturally enough. Sometimes, however, as at the end of the second act, the writer sacrifices both art and probability to obtain a situation which is out of keeping with the rest of the play, to which it adds no single element of strength. Mr. Robertson will do well to discard all search after scenes of this class. The manner in which the fairy tale of 'Cinderella' is made to form a framework to the play gives it a particularly pleasant character. 'School' is acted as well as any piece on the English stage. Miss Wilton as a young heiress, girlish, impulsive and full of kindheartedness and love of mischief, is admirable. Her archness and *mutinerie* are charming, and the entire impersonation is highly artistic. Miss Carlotta Addison is pleasing and natural, though a little too subdued in manner, as the pupil-governess. Mr. Montague presented without a shade of exaggeration or caricature a young nobleman. Mr. Bancroft gives in a manner which, without being quite finished, is broadly effective, a fashionable young man of the day. As an old dandy belonging to the period of the Regency, Mr. Hare is finely made up. His acting is clever and artistic. A little more superbness of bearing, and at times more deliberateness of movement, would, however, improve the impersonation. Mr. Addison plays the schoolmaster in good style, but is over-animated in the examination scene, in which he walks backwards and forwards with unnecessary vehemence. Mr. Robertson will do well to excise much of the second act of this piece. He may also with advantage

make the behaviour of his hero to his uncle in the last act a little less gratuitously insulting. When these alterations are made, his play will be worthy of the immense favour with which it was received.⁵⁷

Tricks and effects, which were by now sure-fire mannerisms, guaranteed a warm response. Robertson incorporated contrasting heroines, Bella and Naomi, the latter, one of Marie Wilton's made-to-order gamin roles. Squire Bancroft was equipped with the part of the cynical man of the world (naturally with a military past) who seems "to tell truths as if they were not true and fibs as if they were truth,"⁵⁸ and who surrenders to the weakness of falling in love. And instead of one Robertsonian love scene, we have two, in which the participants spout evasive lines, playing the titillating cat and mouse game Robertson had endeared to audiences.

Robertson shook out his bag of familiar foibles and eccentricities and came up with a new set of variations: Mr. Sutcliffe, headmaster of Cedar Grove House, reminiscent of Dr. Strong in *David Copperfield*, discourses pedantically on the etymology of *love* and quotes Latin verse. Mrs. Sutcliffe, like Lady Shendryn in *Ours*, cannot put out of her mind an imagined transgression on the part of her husband thirty-five years before:

Mrs. S.: Do you not remember five and thirty years ago?

Dr. S.: Amanthis, to recall that error of my youth—

Mrs. S.: It is always present to my mind.

Dr. S.: My love, I only danced with her three times, and it is five and thirty years ago.

Mrs. S.: I remember we had been scarcely married seven years.

Dr. S.: Since then you have been constantly reproaching me.

Mrs. S.: It seems but as yesterday.

Dr. S.: It seems to me much longer.

Mrs. S.: Ah, Theodore, unfeeling—

Dr. S.: No, no Amanthis, I did not mean that. I meant that five and thirty years' conjugal serenity ought to compensate for dancing with a young lady three times at a ball, where from the fault of hosts too hospitable, the negus had been made too strong. Come, Amanthis, don't be hard on Theodore. Think what Jason says, "Credula res amor est—"⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *The Athenaeum*, January 23, 1869, pp. 136-137.

⁵⁸ *The Bancrofts*, p. 30.

⁵⁹ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 632.

Lord Farintosh, enacted by the specialist in old man parts, John Hare, has poor eyesight and is constantly addressing the wrong person. "Farintosh is a thin old man of seventy, dressed in the latest fashion, wigged, dyed, padded, eye-glassed, a would-be young man, blind as a bat—peering into everything."⁶⁰ Thus he joins his eccentric compeers: Lord Ptarmigan in *Society*, who falls asleep and trips up people with his sprawling legs, and Sam Eccles in *Caste*, who drinks and rants.

The comedy was staged with all the suave finesse and restraint the play requires. Costumes, properties, and settings contributed to a unified effect of gentle, yet convincing idealism. One French critic vowed he could see "a cow in the distance cropping the grass," and wished he could "get on the stage and roll on the sward."⁶¹

When Farintosh, Beaufoy, and Poyntz assemble for lunch on the grounds of Cedar Grove House, their food is real. In his *World Behind the Scenes*, Percy Fitzgerald celebrated the evolution in stage realism by calling attention to "the shooting lunch in 'School,' where liveried servants lay the table, and we see *pâté de fois gras* and other dainties in use in average society."⁶²

It is interesting to observe that the fragile quality of *School*, and doubtlessly the paradoxes in the speeches of Poyntz, evoked a tribute from the young Oscar Wilde:

Dear Mrs. Bancroft,—

I am charmed with the photography and with your kindness in sending it to me; it has given me more pleasure than any quill pen can possibly express, and will be a delightful souvenir of one whose brilliant genius I have always admired. Dramatic art in England owes you and your husband a great debt.

Since Tuesday I have had a feeling that I have never rightly appreciated the treasures hidden in a girls' school. I don't know what I shall do, but I think I must hold *you* responsible.

Believe me, sincerely yours,

Oscar Wilde.⁶³

School captures the essence of the Robertsonian advance. Its tenuous charm dispenses with melodramatic embroilment, relying in its stead

⁶⁰ Page 636.

⁶¹ *The Bancrofts*, p. 110.

⁶² *London*, 1881, p. 84.

⁶³ *The Bancrofts*, p. 409.

on the nostalgic appeal of budding love, exploiting wherever possible the little, the tender in word and gesture. To derive the maximum concentration, Robertson reduced his *mise en scène* to cameo proportions. He raised to new importance the matter of intonation and replaced the operatic sawing of arms with the flicker of eyelids.

With *M. P.*, which opened April 23, 1870, we come to the last of the plays Robertson wrote for the Bancrofts. The Robertson formula was running thin, for he was a dying man (he dictated the last scenes from his sick bed), and the Bancrofts produced the play with some misgivings.

Anxious to secure its success, the Bancrofts expended an unprecedented six weeks of rehearsal, bringing the cast to Robertson's home where he could supervise. The results were gratifying; the public took to the play and the critics sounded warm praise.

It was at his point in his career at the Prince of Wales's that the *London Times*, which previously had contented itself with synopses and praise, paused to synthesize the Robertsonian reforms and place them in a historical perspective:

Mr. Robertson depends for the pleasure he gives his audience on other means than action or story. Give him the smallest material in this kind that will carry the due amount of character, cohesion, and climax for the capacities of his actors and the character of his audience, and he will use it so adroitly, disguise its tenderness by such pleasant artifice of nicely managed situations and such embroidery of sparkling and vivacious dialogue, he will spice it with such short and sharp dashes of pleasant cynicism and witty worldliness, the pungency of whose pepper never rises to pain, that in the hands of the very competent and well-trained company of his own peculiar theatre he can make certain, humanly speaking, of his effect upon his public. In the way of light comedy there is nothing in London approaching the pieces and the *troupe* of the Prince of Wales', taken together. In a more spacious theatre, and by an audience more largely leavened with the usual pit and gallery public, these light and sparkling pieces would probably be voted slow in movement, slight in texture, and weak in interest. But in this pretty little bandbox of a house, with such artists as Marie Wilton, Hare, Bancroft, and their associates to interpret them, almost at arm's length of an audience who sit, as in a drawing-room, to hear drawing-room pleasantries, interchanged by drawing-room personages, nothing can be better fitted to amuse. Author, actor, and theatre seem perfectly fitted for each other. It shows rare intelligence in all concerned that they have so

quickly discovered this, and so consistently acted on the discovery. The result is that we have at least one theatre in London to which we need not be ashamed to take an intelligent foreigner in order to convince him that the lighter comedy, at least, of our own time can still be written and acted in England with more finish and truth to nature, perhaps, than in that earlier time, when weightier stage work was better done than now.⁶⁴

Dunscombe Dunscombe, a member of the landed gentry is being pushed off his ancestral estate by Isaac Skoome, an obnoxious, self-made bourgeois. To cap Dunscombe's sorrow, he must cooperate in Skoome's political aspirations in order to stave off bankruptcy. Dunscombe hopes that his son, Chudleigh, will marry his niece Cecilia, but Skoome has a ward, Ruth, a charming Quaker, with whom Chudleigh falls in love. Cecilia gives her heart to Talbot Piers, who is competing with Skoome in a parliamentary election. Knowing Piers' adamant stand against paying the bribe necessary to secure his election, Cecilia, being a resourceful woman, secretly meets and delivers money of her own to the political henchmen. Piers learns that Cecilia's bank account has dwindled by £2,000 and assumes that her uncle has appropriated the money to pay for Skoome's election. In anger that Talbot is capable of believing that either she or her uncle would aid his political opponent, Cecilia breaks off her engagement. The two, however, patch up their quarrel; Chudleigh elopes with Ruth, whom Skoome has been planning to marry, and Talbot wins his seat in Parliament.

M. P. sustains the mood and theme of its predecessors; it makes neither advance nor retreat. The static sameness of the piece, however, reveals a very real limitation in the playwright's resources. In the span of six plays, we can discern freshness falling into mannerism, experiment falling into formula. *M. P.* contains no hint that Robertson beheld new vistas of dramatic accomplishment.

The mold of characterization when relinquished was as solidified as when first formed. Marie Wilton, as Cecilia Dunscombe, independent, resourceful, volatile, has her usual foil, this time in Ruth Deybrooke, a soft, idealized creation in Quaker dress. Cecilia has an opportunity to shock and delight. She makes her first entrance, to the nonplussed reaction of her fiancé, wheeling a perambulator. Subsequently she breezily advocates equality of man and wife, engineers a midnight

⁶⁴ April 25, 1870, p. 10.

rendezvous with three political henchmen to bribe them to support Piers's candidacy for Parliament, and extricates herself from an embarrassing situation by disguising herself as Ruth and by encouraging Chudleigh to make love to her.

Isaac Skoome, the vulgar bourgeois, who is after the country seat of Dunscombe Dunscombe and the Parliamentary seat of Talbot Piers, is cut from the same mold as the Chodds in *Society*.

The most valuable creation in the piece is Dunscombe Dunscombe, played by John Hare. For the first time Hare had a chance to play an old man who is not farcical. Dunscombe is the model of British labial rigidity. With dignity, quiet self-mocking, and polished manners, he constitutes one of Robertson's most telling strokes of naturalness. When the third act curtain falls to the accompaniment of the auctioneer's hammer, Robertson specifies:

The actor playing Dunscombe is requested not to make too much of this situation. All that is required is a momentary memory of childhood—succeeded by the external phlegm of the man of the world. No tragedy, no tears, or pocket handkerchief.⁶⁵

In *M. P.*, Robertson elaborates his lovers' duets into a fugue, with his two couples wandering on and off the stage, the *marivaudage* of Cecilia and Piers contrasting with the mutual discovery of Ruth and Chudleigh.

In this play, which marks his involuntary leave-taking of the Prince of Wales's, Robertson inserts a passing jibe at the current low state of dramatic activity. Chudleigh, having resolved to become a playwright, explains to his uncle that burlesque now dominates the stage and that "Shakespeare is abolished."⁶⁶ *Burlesque* he defines as "an entertainment crammed full of fun and singing, and dancing, and tumbling, and parodies on popular songs, and—it is written in verse." The quality of the last, he proceeds to illustrate:

She is a blonde most beautiful to see,
I only wish that she *b'longed* to me.⁶⁷

How did Arthur Wing Pinero, who attributed his own inspiration

⁶⁵ *Principal Dramatic Works*, I, 365.

⁶⁶ Page 325.

⁶⁷ Pages 325-26.

to Robertson and the Bancrofts, appraise the teacup and saucer school? In *Trelawny of the "Wells"* (1898), he attempted to immortalize Robertson's achievement. Incidentally, one of the striking qualities of this play is the fact that Pinero surpassed Robertson in blending the themes of *mésalliance* and artistic rebellion. As we have seen, Robertson had frequently included actors or would-be playwrights in his *dramatis personae*. In *Caste*, he had come closest to a backstage atmosphere. Here, however, Robertson scarcely exploited local color, concentrating, as he did, on the *mésalliance*. And in other plays, such as *Birth, M. P.*, and *Dreams*, the theatrical-mindedness of characters has no direct bearing on the outcome of the plot.

Tom Wench, in *Trelawny*, represents Tom Robertson just at the period before he burst into fame. Wench, caught in the toils of "general utility," currently rehearsing in a play by Sheridan Knowles, chafes at his limited wardrobe: three wigs, one of which "accommodates itself to so many periods,"⁶⁸ a gray felt hat with a broad brim and "imitation wool feathers,"⁶⁹ yellow boots and spurs, and red worsted tights which have become "a little thinner, a little more faded and discolored, a little more darned."⁷⁰

In rebellion against the theatrical *status quo*, Wench would like to write plays in a realistic vein:

I strive to make my people talk and behave like live people, don't I—?

To fashion heroes out of actual, dull, every-day men—the sort of men you see smoking cheroots in the club windows in St. James's street; and heroines from simple maidens in muslin frocks. Naturally, the managers won't stand that.⁷¹

When Tom Wench visits a mansion in the West End, he delightedly considers the possibilities of the drawing-room as a stage setting:

This is the kind of chamber I want for the first act of my comedy—

I tell you, I won't have doors stuck here, there, and everywhere; no, nor windows in all sorts of impossible places.

⁶⁸ Chicago, n. d., p. 16.

⁶⁹ Page 17.

⁷⁰ Page 18.

⁷¹ Pages 20-21.

[*Pointing to the left.*] Windows on the one side [*pointing to the right*], doors on the other—just where they should be, architecturally. And locks on the doors, *real locks*, to work; and handles—to turn! [*Rubbing his hands together gleefully.*] Ha, ha! you wait! wait—!⁷²

Meanwhile Rose Trelawny's brief recess from the "Wells" gives her a chance to evaluate the acting style which she has hitherto taken for granted. After being with "real" people, she discovers that "she can no longer *spout*, she can no longer *ladle*, the vapish trash, the—the—the turgid rodomontade."⁷³ Only as the heroine in Tom's own play will she be able to rediscover herself. In the brief episode in which that play is being rehearsed, we hear an echo of Robertson's natural, elliptical dialogue, and we see Wench directing his actors with meticulous attention to life-like detail.

In conjunction with the Bancrofts, Robertson had striven to create an antidote to the obvious artificiality of burlesque, farce, and melodrama. His goal was to tap the resources of the stage in the realm of suggestion, to transform audiences from passive gapers to alert participants. As for method, Robertson veered away from the tortuous intricacies of Scribe; he chose rather to catch the gleanings of personality revealed by gesture, facial expression, and intonation. The truths which came to light in this new atmosphere had been so bypassed that they dazzled an enraptured public. And yet, from this analysis of his plays we see that his reach was limited. He was content to abide by many set traditions, and within the compass of his best work the reforms he initiated became an old refrain. In the concluding chapter, I shall attempt to analyze the reasons for his limitations.

⁷² Pages 95-96.

⁷³ Page 117.

CHAPTER FIVE

ROBERTSON, THE SOCIAL THINKER

UP to this point, we have concerned ourselves in the main with the reforms in playwriting and staging instituted by Robertson and abetted by the sympathetic Bancroft management. That his innovations were limited is, I think, a fact manifest even in terms of Victorian drama. Contemporary Continental drama had certainly gone far beyond Robertson in facing up to the truths of society. Within a few short years, English dramatists, such as Pinero and Jones, were to take the Robertsonian advances very much for granted, and move on to richer pastures. In taking leave of Robertson, then, I wish to pay particular attention to the cause of the abortive nature of the so-called Robertsonian revolution. Why was his work so quickly eclipsed, even though the realistic elements he released fed the atmosphere of all subsequent drama?

The reason is fairly simple. Robertson hit upon some interesting ways of saying things (ways, it is true, which were not new and mysterious to the drama, but which playwrights had lost sight of), but unfortunately he had nothing very much to say.

His period was one of tremendous conflict in which the artists of the first rank were forced to define their position. It was an era challenged by the onslaughts of science, by a militant bourgeoisie seeking wider political expression, by the disruptions of a sprawling industrialism. It was a world through which the intellectual élite walked, menaced on the one side by crass materialism and on the other by the specters of Jacobinism.

The leading writers of the century fell athwart the compelling issues of the times. They took sides, of course,—becoming apologists of the old order or prophets of a new. But the literature of the age, regardless of particular partisan approach, is remarkable for its penetrating recognition of the issues at stake—so penetrating, in fact, that the stu-

dent must marvel at how Victorians have crystallized for him the disturbances implicit in capitalism of the twentieth century. Victorian writers explored the implications of factory life, class conflict, and suburbanism, tracing their influence on the thinking and behavior of society.

To move from the poets, novelists, and essayists of the Victorian period to the playwrights is to move from the complex to the simple, from analysis to shibboleth. It is fascinating to watch the intellectual conflicts of the age filter down to the level of the footlights, where they resolve into large, bold patterns.

To catch this process, we have merely to visualize for ourselves the vast numbers of Englishmen whose insight into their environment was no deeper than that they received from over the footlights. The drama insists on direct and immediate communication of ideas. If a society responds enthusiastically to the plays of its day, we can take those plays as a reasonably safe gauge of its thinking. The drama corrals the attitudes and aspirations of its audience. It reaches out for the common denominator; it epitomizes the social philosophy of a period.

A great measure of Robertson's success lay in his putting contemporary life on the stage. At least he deluded himself and his audience into thinking that he had. Actually, Robertson fell prey to the pervasive myths and wishful thinking of his era—he fell prey to what we have come to designate as the smug, complacent aspect of Victorianism. It is his unquestioning acceptance of the dominant modes of thinking which accounts for the limited extent of his pioneering, for the sameness of his plays, and for the short duration of his place on the playbill.

I should like to take up the points of view to which he subscribed. We shall discover them checking at every point his dramatic inventiveness. They lie at the root of his failure to invest his plots and characters with honesty. Prominent among these guiding ideas appears the acceptance of the frailty of woman, a conception which led to her idealization. Her apotheosis was a heritage from the romantic revival at the beginning of the century. But the original flowering of the ideal, emerging from a romantic matrix of platonism, humanitarianism, and the exciting discovery of intuition, wilted into a fainting, helpless creature. The decadent residue of romanticism, of course, harmonized readily with bourgeois values; the rising nation of shopkeepers, keen

on respectability and quick to capitalize on a marriageable commodity, took to its collective heart the sentimental heroine whose reputation must at all costs be sheltered.

The fact that audiences instinctively preferred the vivacious roles of Marie Wilton, which hinted audaciously at independence, suggests that below the surface forces were gathering for the overthrow of an impossible enslavement. For the time being, however, the Noras, the Mrs. Tanquerays and Ebbsmiths were unheard from, and playwrights led the nation's anthem to an idealized conception.

In the following description of Mademoiselle Favart of the Comédie Française Robertson gives explicit expression to his embodiment of the feminine ideal:

She seems to be exactly the sort of woman who would take a delight in sacrificing herself for somebody—a lover, a brother, a husband, a child, or a father—and make no sign. If the world knew of her sacrifice, or even guessed at it, she would feel robbed of half her sentimental pleasure. To charm her thoroughly, there must be something stealthy in her goodness and her love. She takes delight in being an anonymous benefactor. She is too high-minded to advance a step. She conceals emotion, but not under a smile. She is the antagonistic thing to a coquette. The heart of the man she loves must be as keen and prescient as her own, and must guess at her affection. Their love must be too high and holy to be spoken of. Always ready to perform her share of the duties of the household, her love is a thing apart from contact with the world.¹

And this ideal lies behind his tender characterizations: Blanche Haye in *Ours*, Esther Eccles in *Caste*, Rosie in *Play*, Bella Marks in *School*, Ruth Deybrooke in *M. P.* Where society transforms woman into a passive, delicate ideal, we encounter on the stage an even more heightened stereotype, from which there is no deviating species.

A second guiding idea in Robertson's plays is the acceptance as inevitable and desirable of the division of society into social classes. In truth, his ideology summarizes, only more bluntly, the cautious rationalization of the liberal humanitarians of the age. We can bring to mind Tennyson's distrust of the masses and Arnold's implicit retreat from the full implications of democracy. The Chartist novelists, Kingsley, Disraeli, Dickens, voluntary spokesmen for the oppressed, after de-

¹ "The Queen of Society," *London Society*, VIII (September, 1865), 278-79.

livering themselves of diatribes against capitalist exploitation, stop short with a word to the wise and a plea for paternalism.

The fears of the French Revolution had not played themselves out. Social thinkers still looked to the aristocracy as a wholesome check on excessive inroads of the proletariat. The middle classes, persistent enough in their struggle with the lords of the realm on the economic and political fronts, eyed wistfully the scutcheons of established, stable position. Throughout his plays, Robertson shows a sentimental attachment to *noblesse oblige* and the other romantic qualities of a decaying class. While touched by the currents of democratic feeling, he remains aloof from the proletariat. Caught between humanitarian sympathy and distrust of the masses, his position is thus basically akin to that of the Chartist novelists. Because he made no incursions into the problems of the dispossessed, his work does not even display the lively understanding and sympathy of the Chartists.

Robertson's one representative of a militant proletariat, *Eccles Caste*, is a distasteful caricature. I find it impossible to agree with Ernest Reynolds when he says that *Caste* "succeeded admirably in describing social conditions as they were, without prejudice and without propaganda."² Robertson, in creating *Eccles*, was allying himself with those who deplored the thrust of the working class towards suffrage and unionism. Robertson makes *Eccles* detestable, but does not so much as hint that his environment has produced his deficiencies. The following, by Bulwer-Lytton, strikes the dominant chord in Victorian social thinking with regard to the working class. The important element to be noticed in such statements is the emphasis, which is not one of vigorous progressivism, but a tacit, defeatist acceptance of an inevitable condition:

The working class have virtues singularly noble and generous, but they are obviously more exposed than the other classes to poverty and passion. Thus in quiet times their poverty subjects them to the corruption of the

² *Early Victorian Drama*, p. 89.

A contemporary review in the *London Times* shows an immediate appreciation of the fact that Robertson had stacked the cards in favor of the *status quo*:

"Mr. Robertson, while impelled by the theatrical Parcae towards a democratic goal, which he is likewise forced to reach, provides himself with a good conservative snaffle, and is scrupulously careful that his audience shall not mistake a sentiment for a principle." April 11, 1867, p. 11.

rich; and in stormy times, when the State requires the most sober judgment, their passion subjects them to the ambition of the demagogue.³

The same contemptuous note is taken up by Charles Reade:

And here, gentlemen of the lower classes, a word with you. How can you, with your small incomes, hope to be well off, if you are more extravagant than those who have large ones?

"Us extravagant?" you reply.

"Yes! your income is ten shillings a-week; out of that you spend three shillings in drink; ay! you the sober ones. You can't afford it, my boys. Find me a man whose income is a thousand a-year; well, if he imitates you, and spends three hundred upon sensuality, I bet you the odd seven hundred, he does not make both ends meet; the proportion is too great. And *two-thirds of the distress of the lower orders is owing to this—that they are more madly prodigal than the rich; in the worst, lowest, and most dangerous item of all human prodigality!*"⁴

In keeping with this point of view, Robertson puts into the mouth of a sniveling, hypocritical parasite distorted catchwords of reform:

Poor Esther! Nice market she's brought her pigs to—ugh! Mind the baby indeed! What good is he to me? That fool of a girl to throw away all her chances!—a *honourable-hess*—and her father not to have on him the price of a pint of early beer or a quartern of cool, refreshing gin! Stopping in here to rock a young honourable! Cuss him! (*business, puffs smoke in baby's face, L. H. of cradle, rocking it*) Are we slaves, we working men? (*sings savagely*)

"Britons never, never, never shall be—"

(*nodding his head sagaciously, sits R. of table L.*) I won't stand this, I've writ to the old cat—I mean to the Marquissy—to tell her that her daughter-in-law and her grandson is almost starving. That fool Esther's too proud to write to her for money. I hate pride—it's beastly! (*rising*) There's no beastly pride about me. (*goes up L. of table, smacking his lips*) I'm as dry as a lime-kill. [*sic*] (*takes up jug*) Milk!—(*with disgust*)—for this young aristocratic pauper. Everybody in the house is sacrificed for him! (*at foot of cradle, R. C., with arms on chair back*) And to think that a *working man*, and a member of the committee of the Banded Brothers for the Regeneration of Human Kind, by means of equal diffusion of intelligence and equal division of property, should be thusty, while this cub—(*draws aside curtain, and looks at child. After a pause*) That there coral he's got

³ The Earl of Lytton, *The Life of Edward Bulwer First Lord Lytton*, London, 1913, II, 316.

⁴ *Christie Johnstone*, London, 1906, p. 191.

round his neck is gold, real gold! (*with hand on knob at end of cradle, R. C.*) Oh, Society! Oh, Governments! Oh, Class Legislation!—*is this right?* Shall this mindless wretch enjoy himself, while sleeping, with a jewelled gawd, and his poor old grandfather want the price of half a pint? No! it shall not be! Rather than see it, I will myself resent this outrage on the rights of man! And in this holy crusade of class against class, of the weak and lowly against the powerful and strong—(*pointing to child*)—I will strike one blow for freedom! (*goes to back of cradle*) He's asleep. It will fetch ten bob round the corner; and if the Marquiss gives us anything it can be got out with some o' that. (*steals coral*) Lie still, my darling!—it's grandfather's a-watching over you.⁵

Robertson zealously patrols class lines,⁶ allowing an occasional breakthrough because of superlative worth.

His creed is essentially Victorian; he never tires of informing us that East is East and West is West, that classes should never mingle, that the working man should learn to stay in his appointed place and the *bourgeoisie* have no yearnings to intrude into the often impoverished drawing-rooms and libraries of Aristocratic Castle. In this way, Robertson's teaching must have been entirely in accord with the sentiments of the larger moiety of his audience.⁷

Two statements in *Caste*, taken in conjunction, express the theme of that play and the sentiment behind all of Robertson's plays. Sam Gerridge, with characteristic directness, supplies one half of the formula:

People should stick to their own class. Life's a railway journey, and Mankind's a passenger—first class, second class, third class. Any person found riding in a superior class to that for which he has taken his ticket will be removed at the first station stopped at, according to the bye-laws of the company.⁸

George D'Alroy, quoting from Tennyson's "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," supplies the other half:

"True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."⁹

⁵ *Principal Dramatic Works*, pp. 120-21.

⁶ It is an ironic commentary on the ideology of *Caste*, that news about the Reform Bill of 1867 crowded a review of the play off the pages of the *London Times* until April 11.

⁷ Allardyce Nicoll, *British Drama*, New York, 1925, p. 348.

⁸ *Principal Dramatic Works*, pp. 93-94.

⁹ Page 84. "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" also furnished the inspiration for Robertson's *Dreams*.

The arbitrary representatives of the class in *Caste* are permitted a lesson in mutual understanding. There is a general awakening to the universal qualities of goodness; class lines, yes, but not barbed-wire fences, bristling with ugly hostility. Rather useful, protective lines tying the nation into one benevolent, peaceful entity. Hawtree, after his exposure to the Eccles family, confesses in an aside: "'Pon my word, these are very good sort of people. I'd no idea—" ¹⁰ Sam, the belligerent gas-fitter, after being forced to observe Hawtree at close quarters, grudgingly admits in an aside: "Now who'd ha' thought that long swell 'ad it in 'im?" ¹¹ The reconciliation between Hawtree and Sam is handsomely democratic:

Haw: . . . Mr. Gerridge, I fear I have often made myself very offensive to you.

Sam: Well, sir, yer 'ave!

Haw: . . . I feared so. I didn't know you then. I beg your pardon. Let me ask you to shake hands—to forgive me, and forget it. (*offering his hand*)

Sam: (*taking it*) Say no more, sir; and if ever I've made myself offensive to you, I ask your pardon; forget it, and forgive me. ¹²

In spite of this outburst of brotherhood, the play ends on a more sober, practical note:

Haw: . . . A gentleman should hardly ally himself to a nobody.

Geo: My dear fella, Nobody's a mistake—he don't exist. Nobody's nobody! Everybody's somebody.

Haw: Yes. But still—Caste.

Geo: Oh, Caste's all right. Caste is a good thing if it's not carried too far. It shuts the door on the pretentious and the vulgar; but it should open the door very wide for exceptional merit. ¹³

In this proposition Robertson finds the material for his drama. Henry Arthur Jones was later to decry the falsehood and abortive nature of such a starting point in dramatic art:

The question has an aspect of expediency that it may be well to deal with first. Obviously as a matter of expediency and worldly prudence, a dramatist will do wisely to avoid giving offence to the prejudices and susceptibilities of any great portion of his possible audiences. Indeed, so perfectly has this

¹⁰ Page 130.

¹¹ Page 134.

¹² Pages 135-36.

¹³ Pages 43-44.

rule been understood upon the recent English stage, so eager have we been to exclude everything that might be offensive or tedious or incomprehensible to any possible spectator, that by a process of continual exhaustion and humble deference to everybody's prejudices we have banished from the stage all treatment of grave subjects but what is commonplace and cursory and conventional. The course of the drama has been diverted and hopelessly cut off from the main current of modern intellectual life. While the companion arts—painting, poetry, and music—are allowed to present every aspect of human life, on the stage only the narrow, ordinary, convenient, respectable, superficial contemplation and presentation of human affairs is allowed. Though off the stage the gravest matters have been in heated prominence, on the stage nothing of much greater importance has been bruited than how a tradesman's family may prepare itself for alliance with the aristocracy. And such tradesmen! And such aristocrats!¹⁴

The aristocracy comes in for a good deal of sympathy. Traditions harking back to the Restoration stage, of course, afforded stock comic types: those who failed to carry the mantle of their class gracefully invited ridicule: the snobbish dowager (Lady Ptarmigant in *Society*, Lady Shendryn in *Ours*, and Marquise de St. Maur in *Caste*), the eccentric, doddering old man (Lord Ptarmigant in *Society* and Beau Farintosh in *School*). But such are the obvious deviations from the norm, recognized and tagged in the canons of Restoration drama and bequeathed as fair game.

Thus it was according to Hoyle that Lady Ptarmigant so betray her class as to pander to the Chodds. Since she was an accepted theatrical type, anything might be expected from her.

As the "owls" were so much diverted by the faithful portrayal of their resorts and of their customs, thus presented for the first time upon the stage, there was no reason that *Society* would take offence over the extraordinary and incongruous proceedings at the establishment of Lord and Lady Ptarmigant. This kind of comic libel was not unknown;—Bulwer, for instance, had set himself to depict the union of the old aristocracy with the new, the naive veneration displayed by Riches for Rank, and on the other hand, the prostration of Rank before Riches. No one showed astonishment at seeing Lady Ptarmigant smilingly take the arm of old Chodd, though his language and his manners were those of a costermonger, and though his lordship's valet would probably have hesitated about letting himself be seen with him in a public-house.¹⁵

¹⁴ *The Renascence of the English Drama*, London, 1895, pp. 28-29.

¹⁵ Filon, *The English Stage*, p. 116.

From the school of early and mid-Victorian melodrama comes the slippery-tongued villain of Bond Street. The progenitor of Raffles, though at this point in his evolution unredeemed by altruism, the villain of birth afforded a titillating variation in melodrama. Enjoying entrée everywhere and possessed of devilishly good manners, he dismayed audiences by his apparently undetectable villainy. Robertson utilized the type in the Chevalier Browne in *Play*, but at the final curtain, it will be remembered:

My repentance is sincere. Indeed I meant to seek you at your hotel, confess all, and implore your pardon. It is now too late. I have been dazzled, but I am not bad at heart.¹⁶

With the exception of these smoothed theatrical coins, Robertson treats the upper class with respect tantamount to reverence. They become the responsible guardians of all that is noble and pure in the stream of English tradition, protecting their charge against the vulgar, elbowing encroachments of the middle class. At the final curtain of *Progress*, the characters suddenly assume symbolic garb. Eva becomes England; Ferne, the bourgeoisie; Lord Mompesson, the aristocracy:

Eva: A few more minutes to thank you so much for all your goodness to me. I shall get better; I feel I shall! When the snow melts from the grass, I shall be stronger; and when the summer covers those black branches with green leaves, I shall be able to walk down the avenue.

Fer: With me by your side?

Lord M: You, on one side—me on the other. Left to yourself your pace would be too fast, and mine would be too slow. You have youth, strength, and speed; I have age, judgment, and experience. Let Eva walk between us.

Eva: (as they are going round door R.) My path must lead to happiness when love and hope conduct me, and affection and experience guide me—(smiling)—That's Progress!¹⁷

Those in the plays on whom Robertson heaps ridicule are the upstart bourgeois, those who have made their money in trade and manufacturing and now expect to buy their way into society.

The class types which emerged from the Industrial Revolution pro-

¹⁶ *Principal Dramatic Works*, II, 539.

¹⁷ Pages 600-or.

vided Robertson with material for writing Victorian comedies of manners. Robertson did focus his attention, albeit superficially, on the special foibles of the *nouveaux riches*, their *faux pas*, vaulting ambition, and crass values. Certainly, one would say, abundant riches for a revitalized comedy of manners. He took seriously, however, the defensive disdain of the rich; he sentimentalized conservatism. In his depiction of the social-climbing parvenu, he introduced an acrid note. Thus Robertson was incapable of assuming the disinterest necessary to the genre. Sentimentality strained to the breaking point the thin strand of objectivity, and objectivity is a prime requisite for the creation of a comedy of manners.

In *Society*, the ogres begot by the Industrial Revolution are the Messrs. Chodd, Junior and Senior. With unblinking arrogance they set out to buy their way into polite circles. Equipped with cash, their first step is to pave the way of John Chodd, Junior, into Parliament by investing in a newspaper. And with this aim they approach Sidney Daryl, a writer in straitened circumstances. The chrysalid socialite unloads his philosophy on Daryl:

Chodd, Jun: . . . The present age is, as you are aware—a practical age. I come to the point—it's my way. Capital commands the world. The capitalist commands capital, therefore the capitalist commands the world.

Sidney: . . . But you don't quite command the world, do you?

Chodd, Jun: Practically, I do. I wish for the highest honours—I bring out my cheque-book. I want to go into the House of Commons—cheque-book. I want the best legal opinion in the House of Lords—cheque-book. The best turn out—cheque-book. The best friends, the best wife, the best trained children—cheque-book, cheque-book, and cheque-book.

Sidney: You mean to say with money you can purchase anything.

Chodd, Jun: Exactly. This life is a matter of bargain.

Sidney: But "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends"?

Chodd, Jun: Can buy 'em all, sir, in lots, as at an auction.

Sidney: Love, too?

Chodd, Jun: Marriage means a union mutually advantageous. It is a civil contract, like a partnership.

Sidney: And the old-fashioned virtues of honour and chivalry?

Chodd, Jun: Honour means not being a bankrupt. I know nothing at all about chivalry, and I don't want to.

Sidney: Well, yours is quite a new creed to me, and I confess I don't like it.

Chodd, Jun: The currency, sir, converts the most hardened sceptic.¹⁸

In *Ours*, Hugh Chalcot, genteel, indifferent to the commercial success which has made possible his moving in aristocratic circles, comments cynically on the *mariage de convenance*. The institution dominated bourgeois thinking, reducing the training and indoctrination of a daughter to something like the promotion of a saleable commodity. The institution likewise took hold of aristocratic families, as a desperate measure to uphold fast-fading grandeur. Accordingly Sir Alexander Shendryn had smiled on the possible union of his daughter Blanche with Chalcot.

Chal: . . . You know that I proposed to her?

Angus: Yes.

Chal: But I'm proud to say that she wouldn't have me. Ah! she's a sensible girl; and her spirited conduct in saying "No!" on that occasion laid me under an obligation to her for life.

Angus: She declined?

Chal: She declined very much. I only did it to please Sir Alick, who thought the two properties would go well together—never mind the two humans. Marriage means to sit opposite at table, and be civil to each other before company. Blanche Haye and Hugh Chalcot. Pooh! the service should have run: "I, Brewhouses, Malt-kilns, Public-houses, and Premises, take thee, Landed Property, grass and arable, farm-houses, tenements, and Salmon Fisheries, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold for dinners and evening parties, for carriage and horseback, for balls and presentations, to bore and to tolerate, till mutual aversion do us part"; but Land, grass and arable, farm-houses, tenements, and Salmon Fisheries said "No"; and Brewhouses is free.¹⁹

Chalcot is a rare specimen of a sympathetically-drawn bourgeois. Disillusioned by match-making matrons and sensitive about his income, he effects a mocking, cynical air. Wishing to give a poor sergeant, who has become the father of twins, fifty pounds, he hesitates before a display of conspicuous consumption:

There's the sergeant. I must tip him something in consideration of his

¹⁸ II, 691-92.

¹⁹ II, 434.

recent domestic—affliction. (*takes out pocket-book*) I'll give him a five—eh? Here's Angus's fifty, I'll give him that. (*pausing*) No; he'll go mentioning it, and it will get into the papers, and there'll be a paragraph about the singular munificence of Hugh Chalcot, Esq., the eminent brewer!—eminent!—as if a brewer could be eminent! No; I daren't give him the fifty.²⁰

Philistinism in *Play* finds its prototype in Mr. Benjamin Todder. Having made his fortune in starch, he buzzes and beats his wings against the bright lights of society. Mrs. Kinpeck, a widow who presses her unwelcome adulation on him, introduces Todder to Sir Bruce Fanquehere, M. P.:

Mrs. K.: Dear Mr. Bruce, you have seen his name in the advertisements in the newspapers. "Use only Bodmin Todder's Original Patent Starch." "Do you like a stiff, clean collar? Use Bodmin Tod—"

Tod.: (*wincing*) Um! Yes, Mr. Bruce Fanquehere, as my dear friend, Mrs. Kinpeck—(*aside*) curse her!—(*aloud*) says, I have made my fortune by starch. I'm not ashamed of it. I am proud of it. (*goes up.*)

Mrs. K.: Stuff! (*smelling bottle*)

Fan.: Sir! It is a stuff to be proud of. (*declaiming*) The British merchant who founds a colossal fortune, forwards his country's interests, and benefits his fellow man by means of—

Mrs. K.: The wash-tub.

Tod.: Starch!

Fan.: Starch—is one of the noblest—exemplars—of a—commerce—nationality, and national commerce—(*aside*) Confound it! Those are the sort of lies I don't tell well.

Tod.: My dear Mr. Bruce. Yes; I worked hard. I made my fortune, but I lost my stomach. It's gone!

Fan.: Gone? God heavens! Where?

Tod.: I mean my digestion. I worked too hard. Business is incompatible with good digestion. My doctor told me so. I resolved to sacrifice myself on the altar of commerce. I grew rich and dyspeptic. I am proud of it! Proud of both, sir; proud of both.²¹

Sir Bruce Fanquehere, contemptuous of Todder's social-climbing, is not above capitalizing on him:

I wonder if old Todder is good for that amount—paying interest, of

²⁰ Page 438.

²¹ II, 496.

course. I could pay him the interest. He seems toadyish to what he calls rank! He's an amusing scoundrel. Title dazzles him, and makes him feel like a child at its first exhibition of fireworks. My Lord-Fizz! Sir Somebody—Whiz! My Lady—Fizzle-Fozzle! (*imitating fireworks, by twisting his stick, and going towards R. I E*) I'll try it on you, my dear Mr. Bodmin Todder. I'll call him Boddy, or Toddy. Stupid old Noddy.²²

In *M. P.* the fate of a borough lies in a campaign between the bankrupt Dunscombe Dunscombe and the detestable, pushing Isaac Skoome. Skoome holds a mortgage over Dunscombe and uses his strategic advantage to force Dunscombe to aid him in his political aspirations. Asked to describe Skoome, Dunscombe replies:

He is hardly a man. He is a money-bag with a dialect—one of those rough brutes who pleases plebeians because he talks to them in their own bad English. An old ruffian, who, because he is rich, people persist in calling a rough diamond. Diamond! It is but a lump of the commonest clay who has never been moulded or burnt into a brick.²³

And to his niece's query as to why Dunscombe receives Skoome at his home, he relies:

Policy, my child. It is sometimes necessary to hold the candle to—a capitalist. If he forces a sale, the property will go for less than it's worth, and that would be a robbery of my creditors.²⁴

Skoome is Eccles all over again—an Eccles, that is, who saw his chance and made good. The broad strokes of the caricaturist make him a travesty of the enfranchised bourgeois. Employing the oratory on which he counts to sweep him into Parliament, Skoome acknowledges his welcome:

Mester Dunscombe (*holding out a large coarse hand*), that is the hand of a honest man, as has worked his way up from the lowest round of the social ladder to modest competence and honourable independence. It is rough, but it is clean; it is hard, but it is manly. It never closed, save in the grip of friendship, or to cement a good bargain. It never opened but to melting charity.²⁵

Robertson, then, stacked the cards in favor of the old order. The

²² Page 511.

²³ I, 329.

²⁴ Page 329.

²⁵ Page 332.

working man drank and grumbled. The bourgeoisie pushed and elbowed. The landed aristocracy, alone, had a sense of responsibility.

A third restricting point of view to which Robertson subscribed is the glory of militarism. He joined his voice to the hosannas which were swelling in intensity to greet the *fin de siècle* revival of imperialism. Sidney Daryl has been a lancer, Chalcot wins glory in the Crimea, George D'Alroy and Harold Fane become heroes in India. Frank Price is tricked into a duel with a Prussian officer because the villain in the piece is able to appeal to Price's patriotism: "Do not be under the least misapprehension nor fear that the reputation of England, Ireland, and Scotland, or of Englishmen abroad, will suffer at my hands."²⁶ Before the duel, Price reassures himself that "military rank, wrinkles, medals, and all told, he is only a foreigner."²⁷ Jack Poyntz finds it "hardly worth while"²⁸ to mention his service at the Battle of Inkerman. Talbot Piers has been an army officer.²⁹ The whole of *Ours* is drenched in a romantic glow of militarism. Rittmeister Harfthall in *Dreams* rises to a rhapsodic outburst:

There is no finer art than fighting—than the habit of obedience and command. What melody like a gallop? What harmony like a charge? What music like a trumpet or a drum?³⁰

In *The Nightingale*, Keziah holds Mary's baby to the window: "Look at the pretty soldiers, dear, who go out to fight and die in cold weather and hot weather, that pretty babies like you may lie soft and warm, and have no fear of nasty foreigners."³¹

War makes no inquiry into the right and wrong in the Franco-Prussian war, resting with praise for the patriotic mobilization in both countries. Captain Sound, the Englishman, encourages his Continental friends, "I say I hate war; but when once you begin to fight, fight it out—you're better friends after."³² There is sentimental pathos over the forced separation of lovers, but after all, Oscar's supposed death proves a mistake, and he returns to Lotte, wearing a medal and re-

²⁶ II, 525.

²⁷ Page 530.

²⁸ Page 661.

²⁹ I, 336.

³⁰ I, 190.

³¹ II, 401.

³² Page 764.

inforced in his conviction that "the truest glory is the glory of war."³³ This enchantment, unrelieved and unreserved, precluded the slightest inquiry into the march of historical events. It constituted the acceptance of and contribution to the growth of chauvinism at its uncritical worst.

Thus three stifling currents of Victorian orthodoxy—the glorification of woman, caste, and war—combined to smother the creative energy of Robertson. The limitation of his intellectual grasp on his milieu forced him to fall back on melodrama and on a conventional, sentimentalized treatment of love. Robertson was a rebel against theatrical convention, not against Victorianism. The only instrument he provided for arbitration in the class struggle was the love seat.

Where his advance lay was in the transformation of stagnant bombast into delicate, lyric-tinged dialogue, of shabby staging into a realistic, intimate *mise en scène*. Through his direction, the solo performance yielded to the ensemble.³⁴ Under the combined aegis of Robertson and the Bancrofts, dramatic presentation attained a new unity, with the proper subordination of the parts to the whole.

This new unity, in turn, generated new impulse. His domestication of drama quickened the evolution of both actor and audience towards the play of discussion. Having rid the stage of rant and rave, he facilitated the approach of his immediate followers towards the problem play. He died, unmindful of the ultimate consequences of the tempest he had raised; had he lived out his four score, he would have witnessed the naturalness he introduced evolve into naturalism.

³³ Page 757.

³⁴ See Watson, *Sheridan to Robertson*, p. 411.

APPENDIX I

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE OF T. W. ROBERTSON (Unless otherwise indicated, theaters are in London.)

- 1829 Jan. 9 Born at Newark-on-Trent.
- 1834 June 13 Debut as Hamish in *Rob Roy*.
- 1836 Attends Henry Young's Academy.
- 1841 Attends Moore's School.
- 1843 Factotum in Lincoln company.
- 1848 Goes to London.
Usher in Utrecht.
- 1851 Aug. 25 *A Night's Adventure*, Olympic.
- 1854 Prompter at the Lyceum.
April 29 *Castles in the Air*, City Theatre.
- 1855 Rejoins family at Marylebone Theatre.
Robertsons play *Macbeth* in Paris.
Meets Elizabeth Taylor.
- 1856 Aug. 27 Marries Elizabeth Taylor.
Irish tour.
- 1857 Fills engagements at the Surrey and the Marylebone.
Dec. 2 Thomas William Shafto Robertson born.
- 1858 Birth and death of Betty Robertson.
- 1861 Feb. 14 *The Cantab*, Strand.
- 1863 Writes the novel *David Garrick*.
- 1864 April *David Garrick*, Prince of Wales's, Birmingham.
David Garrick, Haymarket.

120 *Important Dates in the Life of Robertson*

- 1865 May 8 *Society*, Prince of Wales's, Liverpool.
 Aug. 14 Elizabeth Robertson dies.
 Nov. 11 *Society*, Prince of Wales's.
- 1866 Aug. 23 *Ours*, Alexander Henderson's theater, Liverpool.
 Sept. 15 *Ours*, Prince of Wales's.
 Meets Rosetta Feist.
- 1867 Feb. 6 *Shadow Tree Shaft*, Princess.
 Mar. 2 *A Rapid Thaw*, St. James.
 Ap. 6 *Caste*, Prince of Wales's.
 Oct. 5 *For Love*, Holborn.
 Oct. 17 Marries Rosetta Feist in Frankfort-on-Maine.
- 1868 *Play*, Prince of Wales's.
Passion Flowers, Theatre Royal, Hull.
- 1869 Jan. 14 *Home*, Haymarket.
School, Prince of Wales's.
 Feb. 22 *My Lady Clara*, Alexander Theatre, Liverpool.
 Mar. 27 *Dreams*, Gaiety.
 Ap. 10 *A Breach of Promise*, Globe.
 May 18 *Dublin Bay*, Theatre Royal, Manchester.
 Sept. 18 *Progress*, Globe.
- 1870 Jan. 15 *The Nightingale*, Adelphi.
 Ap. 23 *M. P.*, Prince of Wales's.
 Oct. 5 *Birth*.
 Dec. Attempts to recuperate at Torquay.
- 1871 Jan. 16 *War*, St. James.
 Feb. 3 Dies.
 Feb. 9 Buried in Abney Park Cemetery.

APPENDIX II

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ROBERTSON'S PLAYS WITHOUT DATE.
 UNPUBLISHED PLAYS ARE SO INDICATED.

Birds of Prey

Post Haste; unpublished

Two Gay Deceivers

Up in a Balloon; unpublished

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ROBERTSON'S PLAYS

(Including wherever possible: theaters, length of runs, casts, and source. Unpublished plays are so indicated. L. C. refers to the Lord Chamberlain's record of Mss.)

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|--------|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|----------|--------------------|--|---|----------|---|---------|-----------|-------|--|-------|----------------|---------|---|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1843-1847 | <i>The Battle of Life</i> ; performed in Boston by Robertson company; Theatre Royal, Norwich, Jan. 23, 1847; adapted from Dickens; L. C.; unpublished. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1843-1849 | <i>The Haunted Man</i> ; performed in Boston by Robertson company; Queen's Theatre, Jan. 1, 1849; adapted from Dickens; L. C.; unpublished. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1845 May 20 | <p><i>The Chevalier de St. George</i>: Princess's; adapted from Mélesville and Roger de Beauvoir.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Monsieur de Boulogne</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Granby</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Baron de Tourvel (his son)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Heild</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Chevalier de St. George</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Wallack</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Viscount de la Morliere</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Ranoe</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Marquis de Langeac</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Platon (<i>servant to St. George</i>)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Courtney</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Julien (<i>master of the Posthouse</i>)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Oxberry</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">An Exempt</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Honor</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Joseph (<i>servant to De Boulogne</i>)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Henry</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">First Huntsman</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">T. Hill</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">The Countess de Presle (<i>a rich young Creole</i>)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Mrs. Stirling</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Fanchette (<i>wife to Julien</i>)</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Miss E. Honor</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">An attendant</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Miss Mott</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Monsieur de Boulogne | Granby | Baron de Tourvel (his son) | Heild | Chevalier de St. George | Wallack | Viscount de la Morliere | Ranoe | Marquis de Langeac | | Platon (<i>servant to St. George</i>) | Courtney | Julien (<i>master of the Posthouse</i>) | Oxberry | An Exempt | Honor | Joseph (<i>servant to De Boulogne</i>) | Henry | First Huntsman | T. Hill | The Countess de Presle (<i>a rich young Creole</i>) | Mrs. Stirling | Fanchette (<i>wife to Julien</i>) | Miss E. Honor | An attendant | Miss Mott |
| Monsieur de Boulogne | Granby | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baron de Tourvel (his son) | Heild | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chevalier de St. George | Wallack | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Viscount de la Morliere | Ranoe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marquis de Langeac | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Platon (<i>servant to St. George</i>) | Courtney | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Julien (<i>master of the Posthouse</i>) | Oxberry | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| An Exempt | Honor | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Joseph (<i>servant to De Boulogne</i>) | Henry | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| First Huntsman | T. Hill | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The Countess de Presle (<i>a rich young Creole</i>) | Mrs. Stirling | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fanchette (<i>wife to Julien</i>) | Miss E. Honor | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| An attendant | Miss Mott | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1846 Apr. 14 | <p><i>Noémie</i>; Princess's (presented as <i>Ernestine</i>) adapted from the French by Dennery and Clément.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Count d'Avrigny</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Cooper</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Eleonore d'Avrigny</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">V. Wallack</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Jules de Mornas</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Leigh Murray</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Valentine de Quercy</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px 2px 10px;">Miss May</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Count d'Avrigny | Cooper | Eleonore d'Avrigny | V. Wallack | Jules de Mornas | Leigh Murray | Valentine de Quercy | Miss May | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Count d'Avrigny | Cooper | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Eleonore d'Avrigny | V. Wallack | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jules de Mornas | Leigh Murray | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Valentine de Quercy | Miss May | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | Noémie | Mrs. Stirling |
| | Anette | Emma Stanley |
| | Marguerite | Mrs. Fosbroke |
| | February 17, 1855; St. James's (presented as <i>Clarisse or The Foster Sister</i>) | |
| | Count d'Avrigny | Herbert |
| | Eleonore d'Avrigny | Sidney |
| | Jules de Mornas | Leigh Murray |
| | Valentine de Quercy | Miss Bufton |
| | Noémie | Miss Bulmer |
| | Anette | Miss Elsworthy |
| | Marguerite | Miss St. Clair |
| | 1855; Grecian Saloon (presented as <i>The Foster Sisters</i>) | |
| | Count d'Avrigny | B. Potter |
| | Eleonore d'Avrigny | R. Phillips |
| | Jules de Mornas | F. Charles |
| | Servant | Hamilton |
| | Valentine de Quercy | Mrs. C. Montgomery |
| | Noémie | Jane Coreney |
| | Anette | Miss H. Coreney |
| | Marguerite | Miss Johnstone |
| 1851 | Aug. 25 | <i>A Night's Adventure or Highways and Byways</i> ; Lyceum; four nights; based on Lytton's <i>Paul Clifford</i> ; L. C.; unpublished. |
| 1851 | Nov. 18 | <i>The Ladies' Battle</i> ; Haymarket; translated from <i>Bataille de Dames</i> by Scribe and Legouvé. |
| 1854 | Apr. 19 | <i>Faust and Marguerite</i> ; Princess's; translated from the French of Michel Carré. |
| | Faust | David Fisher |
| | Mephistopheles | Charles Kean |
| | Valentine | J. F. Cathcart |
| | Brander | Raymond |
| | Siebel | H. Saker |
| | Anselme | J. Collett |
| | Fritz | Daly |
| | Peters | Cormack |
| | Wagner | Collis |

- | | | |
|---------|------------|--|
| | Marguerite | Carlotta Leclercq |
| | Marthe | Mrs. Winstanley |
| | Genevieve | Miss Vivash |
| | Madeleine | Miss Hastings |
| | Helene | Maria Ternan |
| | Berthe | |
| | Gertrude | Miss Hughes |
| 1854 | Apr. 29 | <i>Castles in the Air</i> ; City of London Theatre; L. C.; unpublished. |
| c. 1854 | | <i>Photographs and Ices.</i> |
| 1854 | Dec. 18 | <i>My Wife's Diary</i> ; Lyceum; from <i>Les Mémoires de Deux Jeunes Mariées</i> by Dennery and Clairville. |
| | | Monsieur Dumontel (<i>a Merchant</i>) |
| | | Emery |
| | | Monsieur Deligny (<i>a Barrister</i>) |
| | | Leslie |
| | | Servant |
| | | Madame Dumontel (<i>newly married to Dumontel</i>) |
| | | Miss Maskell |
| c. 1854 | | <i>A Row in the House</i> ; Toole's Theatre, Aug. 30, 1883. |
| 1855 | Mar. 5 | <i>The Star of the North</i> ; Sadler's Wells; from the French of Scribe. |
| 1855 | Mar. 7 | <i>The Clockmaker's Hat</i> ; Adelphi; adapted from <i>Le Chapeau d'un Horloger</i> by Madame Émile de Girardin. |
| | | Betty Martin |
| | | Mrs. Keeley |
| | | Major Miltiades Mohawk |
| | | Selby |
| | | performed as <i>Betty Martin</i> at the St. James's, July 3, 1865. |
| 1856 | Feb. 13 | <i>Peace at Any Price</i> ; Strand |
| 1856 | May 6 | <i>Muleteer of Toledo</i> ; Grecian Saloon; L. C. |
| 1856 | Sept. 8 | <i>The Half Caste or The Poisoned Pearl</i> ; Surrey; L. C. |
| | | Sebastian Cabrera (<i>a Creole, or Half Caste</i>) |
| | | Creswick |
| | | Lord Falconer of Flaconwood (<i>an English Noble</i>) |
| | | Shepherd |

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| | Monsieur de Grandet (<i>a ruined planter</i>) | Basil Potter |
| | Oscar (<i>an artist of unknown parentage</i>) | F. Hustleby |
| | Monsieur de Beuval (<i>a magistrate</i>) | Butler |
| | Hon. Augustus Fitznoddleton | H. Widdicombe |
| | Auguste de Villarceau | } Parisians {
Oliver
Phelps
A. Tapping
Raymond |
| | Eugene de Bellot | |
| | Dr. Bernard (<i>a mulatto</i>) | |
| | Jerome (<i>a domestic</i>) | |
| | Eugenie | } <i>Daughters of de Grandet</i> {
Miss Marriot
Kate Percy |
| | Isabel de Grandet | |
| 1857 | <i>Down in Our Village</i> ; unproduced; MS.; translation of <i>Le Sang Mêlé</i> by E. Plouvier. | |
| | Fifine Fadette (<i>a florist</i>) | Miss F. Bland |
| | Mrs. Matchemall | Mrs. M. Brooks |
| | Miss Mary Jane (<i>ladies on Matchemall their travels</i>) | Miss J. Lascelles |
| 1861 Feb. 14 | <i>The Cantab</i> ; Strand; L. C. | |
| | Charles Cheddar | W. H. Swanborough |
| | Brutus Boodle, Esq. (<i>a country gentleman</i>) | J. Bland |
| | Sergeant Berlinns (<i>of the rural police</i>) | E. Danvers |
| | Mrs. Boodle | Kate Carson |
| | Hannah | Miss Lavine |
| 1861 Apr. 1 | <i>Jocrisse the Juggler</i> ; Adelphi; L. C.; (performed as <i>Magloire the Prestigiator</i>); adapted from <i>L'Escamoteur</i> by Dennery and Jules Brésil. | |
| | Count de Lespierre | Billington |
| | Le Vernay (<i>his nephew</i>) | D. Fisher |
| | Adolph de Mereno (<i>attached to the Neapolitan embassy</i>) | W. H. Eburne |

Jocrisse	B. Webster
Tobie Touraloulalou (<i>his Jack-pudding</i>)	Toole
Françoise (<i>servant to the Count</i>)	Page
Countess de Lespierre	Mrs. Billington
Julie (<i>daughter of the Juggler</i>)	Miss H. Simms

1864 April

David Garrick; Prince of Wales's, Birmingham; April 30, 1864, Haymarket; L. C.; adapted from *Sullivan* by Mélesville.

David Garrick	Sothern
Mr. Simon Ingot	Chippendale
Squire Chivy	Buckstone
Smith	Rogers
Mr. Browne	
Mr. Jones	Clark
Thomas	
George (<i>Garrick's valet</i>)	
Servant	
Ada Ingot	Nellie Moore
Mrs. Smith	Miss Snowden (Mrs. Chippendale)
Miss Araminta Brown	Mrs. E. Fitzwilliam

March 19, 1873, Wallack's Theatre, New York

David Garrick	Sothern
Mr. Simon Ingot	John Gilbert
Squire Chivy	J. B. Polk
Mr. Smith	G. F. Browne
Mr. Browne	W. J. Leonard
Mr. Jones	E. M. Holland
Thomas	J. Curran
George	J. Peck
Servant	Harris
Ada Ingot	Katherine Rogers
Mrs. Smith	Madame Ponisi
Miss Araminta Brown	Mrs. Sefton

February 29, 1889; Criterion.

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

	July 10, 1889; Criterion	
	David Garrick	Charles Wyndham
	March 22, 1890; Criterion	
	David Garrick	Charles Wyndham
	Mr. Simon Ingot	William Farren
	Ada Ingot	Mary Moore
1865	Jan. 23	<i>Constance</i> ; Covent Garden; music by F. Clay; L. C.
		Constance
		Mdlle. Martorelle
		Rat-ta-taf
		Miss Thirlwall
		Stanislas
		Henry Corri
		Commandant
		Aynsley Cooke
		Carlitz
		C. Lyall
		Count Madelinski
		Henry Haigh
1865	May 8	<i>Society</i> ; Prince of Wales's, Liverpool.
		Lord Ptarmigant
		Blakely
		Lord Cloudwrays M. P.
		F. Cameron
		Sidney Daryl
		Edward Price
		Mr. John Chodd, Sen.
		G. P. Grainger
		Mr. John Chodd, Jun.
		L. Brough
		Tom Stylus
		E. Saker
		O'Sullivan
		C. Swan
		MacUsquebaugh
		Chater
		Doctor Makvicz
		Smith
		Bradley
		W. Grainger
		Scargil
		Waller
		Sam Stunner, P. R.
		Hill
		(alias the Smiffel Lamb)
		Shamheart
		Doddles
		Moses Aaron (<i>a bailiff</i>)
		Davidge
		Sheridan Trodnon
		Bracewell
		Lady Ptarmigant
		Miss Larkin
		Maud Hetherington
		Miss T. Furtado
		Little Maud
		Miss F. Smithers
		Mrs. Churton
		Miss Procter
		November 11, 1865; Prince of Wales's, London;
		150 performances.
		Lord Ptarmigant
		John Hare

Lord Cloudwrays M. P.	Trafford
Sidney Daryl	Squire Bancroft
Mr. John Chodd, Sen.	Ray
Mr. John Chodd, Jun.	F. Clarke
Tom Stylus	F. Dewar
O'Sullivan	H. W. Montgomery
MacUsquebaugh	Hill
Doctor Makvicz	Bennett
Bradley	Parker
Scargil	Lawson
Sam Stunner P. R.	F. Tindale
Shamheart	G. Odell
Doddles	Burnett
Moses Aaron	G. Atkins
Sheridan Trodnon	Macart
Lady Ptarmigant	Miss Larkin
Maud Hetherington	Marie Wilton
Little Maud	Miss George
Mrs. Churton	Miss Merton
Servant	Miss Thompson

September 21, 1868; Prince of Wales's; 100 performances.

Sidney Daryl	Harry Montague
Tom Stylus	Squire Bancroft

Autumn, 1874; Prince of Wales's; five months.

1875; Prince of Wales's; 131 performances.

Lord Ptarmigant	Archer
Sidney Daryl	Coghlan
Mr. John Chodd, Sen.	Arthur Wood
Mr. John Chodd, Jun.	F. Glover
Tom Stylus	Squire Bancroft
O'Sullivan	Collette
Lady Ptarmigant	Mrs. Leigh Murray
Maud Hetherington	Fanny Josephs

June 11, 1881; Haymarket; 50 performances.

Lord Ptarmigant	Arthur Cecil
Sidney Daryl	H. B. Conway
Mr. John Chodd, Sen.	Kemble

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

Mr. John Chodd, Jun.	Charles Brookfield
Tom Stylus	Squire Bancroft
Lady Ptarmigant	Mrs. Channinge
Maud Hetherington	Miss Cavalier

total number of performances under the Bancroft management: nearly 500.

1866 Aug. 23

<i>Ours</i> ; Prince of Wales's, Liverpool; L. C.	
Prince Perovsky	John Hare
Sir Alexander Shendryn	J. W. Ray
Captain Samprey	
Angus MacAlister	Squire Bancroft
Hugh Chalcot	J. Clarke
Sergeant Jones	F. Dewar
Houghton	Tindale
Lady Shendryn	Miss Larkin
Blanche Haye	Miss L. Moore
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton

November 15, 1866; Prince of Wales's, London.

Prince Perovsky	John Hare
Sir Alexander Shendryn	J. W. Ray
Captain Samprey	Trafford
Angus MacAlister	Squire Bancroft
Hugh Chalcot	J. Clarke
Sergeant Jones	F. Younge
Houghton	Tindale
Lady Shendryn	Miss Larkin
Blanche Haye	Miss L. Moore and Miss Lydia Foote
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton

November 26, 1870-August, 1871 (230 nights); Prince of Wales's.

Prince Perovsky	John Hare
Sir Alexander Shendryn	Addison
Captain Samprey	Herbert
Angus MacAlister	Coghlan
Hugh Chalcot	Squire Bancroft
Sergeant Jones	Collette
Houghton	

Lady Shendryn	Miss Le Thiere
Blanche Haye	Fanny Josephs
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton
May 6, 1876-June 19 (?); Prince of Wales's.	
Prince Perovsky	Archer
Sir Alexander Shendryn	Flockton
Captain Samprey	Denison
Angus MacAlister	Coghlan
Hugh Chalcot	Squire Bancroft
Sergeant Jones	Collette
Houghton	
Lady Shendryn	Mrs. Leigh Murray
Blanche Haye	Ellen Terry
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton
1879; farewell performance at Prince of Wales's; eight weeks.	
Prince Perovsky	Arthur Cecil
Sir Alexander Shendryn	Kemble
Angus MacAlister	H. B. Conway
Hugh Chalcot	Squire Bancroft
Sergeant Jones	Forbes-Robertson
Lady Shendryn	Miss Le Thiere
Blanche Haye	Marion Terry
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton
January 19, 1882; Haymarket.	
Prince Perovsky	Arthur Cecil
Sir Alexander Shendryn	Pinero
Angus MacAlister	H. B. Conway
Hugh Chalcot	Squire Bancroft
Sergeant Jones	Charles Brookfield
Lady Shendryn	Miss Le Thiere
Blanche Haye	Mrs. Lillie Langtry
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton
1885; Haymarket.	
Prince Perovsky	C. Brookfield
Sir Alexander Shendryn	Kemble
Angus MacAlister	Barrymore
Hugh Chalcot	Squire Bancroft

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

Sergeant Jones	E. Maurice
Lady Shendryn	Miss Victor
Blanche Haye	Miss Calhoun
Mary Netley	Marie Wilton

May 12, 1896; Haymarket; farewell performance; second act performed.

Hugh Chalcot	Bancroft
Prince Perovsky	Tree
Sir Alexander Shendryn	E. S. Willard
Sergeant Jones	Forbes-Robertson
Servant	Frederick Kerr
Lady Shendryn	Rose Leclercq
Blanche Haye	Mrs. Tree
Mary Netley	Mrs. Bancroft

total number of performances under Bancroft management: 700.

1867 Feb. 6	<i>Shadow-tree Shaft</i> ; Princess's; L. C.; unpublished.
	Sir Walter Kenyon Charles Vining
	Michael Woodyatt H. Forrester
	Richard Darkys F. Villiers
	Katie Katherine Rodgers
	Captain Mildmay J. G. Shore
	Lady Kenyon Miss Montague

1867 Mar. 2 *A Rapid Thaw*; St. James's; L. C.; unpublished; adapted from Sardou's *Le Dégel*.

Frank Matthews
G. Murray
K. Dyas
Burleigh
H. Irving
Mrs. Frank Matthews
Carlotta Addison
Eleanor Bufton
Miss M. Donnell
Miss Jones
Ada Cavendish
Miss Herbert

1867 Mar. 18

A Dream in Venice; Royal Gallery of Illustration; L. C.; unpublished.

Miss German Reed
Mrs. German Reed
Parry

1867 Apr. 6

Caste; Prince of Wales's; L. C.; Apr. 6-July 6; based on Robertson's short story "The Poor Rate Unfolds a Tale."

George D'Alroy	Fred Younge
Captain Hawtree	Squire Bancroft
Eccles	George Honey
Samuel Gerridge	John Hare
Marquise de St. Maur	Sophia Larkin
Polly Eccles	Marie Wilton
Esther Eccles	Lydia Foote

September 16, 1871-May 3, 1872; Prince of Wales's; 195 performances.

George D'Alroy Charles Coghlan

August 4, 1873; Standard Theatre, Shoreditch; four weeks. The first two weeks the leads were played by the Bancrofts; the second two weeks, by Denison and Augusta Wilton.

January 11, 1879-May 30; Prince of Wales's.

George D'Alroy	John Clayton
Captain Hawtree	Squire Bancroft
Eccles	George Honey and Henry Kemble
Samuel Gerridge	Arthur Cecil
Marquise de St. Maur	Miss Le Thiere
Polly Eccles	Marie Wilton
Esther Eccles	Amy Roselle

January 20, 1883-April 13; Haymarket.

George D'Alroy	Harry B. Conway
Captain Hawtree	Squire Bancroft
Eccles	David James
Samuel Gerridge	Charles Brookfield
Marquise de St. Maur	Mrs. Stirling
Polly Eccles	Marie Wilton
Esther Eccles	Florence Gerard

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

total number of performances under Bancroft management: 650.

October 5, 1889; Criterion.

George D'Alroy	Leonard Boyne
Captain Hawtree	Arthur Elwood
Eccles	David James
Samuel Gerridge	Charles Brookfield
Marquise de St. Maur	Mrs. Charles Poole
Polly Eccles	Lottie Venne
Esther Eccles	Olga Brandon

1867 Oct. 5

For Love; Holborn; L. C.; unpublished.

Mrs. Mountflatherault	Miss Stephens
Mabel Hardyn	Miss Hardyn
Dawle	Miss J. Willmore
Biddy	Miss C. Saunders
Lieutenant Tarne	H. J. Montague
Finnigan	Garden
Dr. Wyse	Price
Ship's steward	H. Widdicomb

1867 Nov. 28

The Sea of Ice or The Prayer of the Wrecked; Colosseum (?), Glasgow.

1868 Feb. 15

Play; Prince of Wales's; L. C.; 106 performances.

Graf von Staufenberg	H. W. Montgomery
The Hon. Bruce Fanquehere	John Hare
Captain Stockstadt	Sidney
Mr. Benjamin Todder	Blakeley
The Chevalier Browne	Squire Bancroft
Frank Price	H. J. Montague
a croupier	Silveyra
a waiter	
Rosie	Marie Wilton
Amanda	Lydia Foote
Mrs. Kinpeck	Mrs. Leigh Murray

1868 Oct. 28

Passion Flowers; Theatre Royal, Hull; unpublished.

1869 Jan. 14

Home; Haymarket; L. C.; adapted from M. Augier's *L'Aventurière*.

Alfred Dorrison	E. A. Sothern
Captain Mountraffe	Compton

Mr. Dorrison	Chippendale
Bertie Thompson	Robert Astley
Mrs. Pinchbeck	Ada Cavendish
Lucy Dorrison	Ione Burke
Dora Thornhaugh	Caroline Hill

June 13, 1870, revival at Haymarket.

October 27, 1881, revival at St. James's.

Captain Mountraffe	John Hare
Mr. Dorrison	T. N. Wenman
Bertie Thompson	T. W. S. Robertson
Mrs. Pinchbeck	Mrs. Kendal
Lucy Dorrison	Maud Cathcart
Dora Thornhaugh	Kate Bishop
Colonel White	W. H. Kendal
a servant	De Verney

November, 1881, revival at Haymarket.

Alfred Dorrison	W. H. Kendal
Captain Mountraffe	John Hare
Bertie Thompson	T. W. S. Robertson
Mrs. Pinchbeck	Mrs. Kendal

1869 Jan. 16

School; Prince of Wales's; L. C.; January 16, 1869-April 22, 1870; 381 performances; adapted from Roderick Benedix's *Aschenbrödel*.

Lord Beaufoy	H. J. Montague
Dr. Sutcliffe	Addison
Beau Farintosh	John Hare
Jack Poyntz	Squire Bancroft
Mr. Krux	F. Glover
Vaughan	Hill
Mrs. Sutcliffe	Mrs. B. White
Bella	Carlotta Addison
Naomi Tighe	Marie Wilton
Tilly	Augusta Wilton
Milly	Miss George
Laura	Miss Phillips
Clara	Miss Unah
Kitty	Miss Hutton
Hetty	Miss Atkins

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

September 20, 1873; Prince of Wales's; seven months.

Lord Beaufoy	Coghlan
Dr. Sutcliffe	Collette
Beau Farintosh	John Hare
Jack Poyntz	Squire Bancroft
Mr. Krux	F. Glover
Mrs. Sutcliffe	Mrs. Leigh Murray
Bella	Fanny Josephs
Naomi Tighe	Marie Wilton

May 1, 1880; Haymarket; May 1-August (?).

Lord Beaufoy	Harry B. Conway
Dr. Sutcliffe	Kemble
Beau Farintosh	Arthur Cecil
Jack Poyntz	Squire Bancroft
Mr. Krux	Forbes-Robertson
Mrs. Sutcliffe	Mrs. Canninge
Bella	Marion Terry
Naomi Tighe	Marie Wilton
Vaughan	Heneage
Clara	Ida Hertz
Laura	Miss Bruce
Hetty	Miss Gozna
Grace	Miss Otway
Milly	Miss Lambert
Tilly	Miss L. Lambert
Effie	Miss Reynolds
Fanny	Miss Leslie
Kate	Miss Montague
Ethel	Miss Reed
Sybil	Kate Rorke
Nina	Miss St. George

November 27, 1880; Haymarket; same cast with the exception of Charles Brookfield as Mr. Krux.

1882; Haymarket; seven months.

April (?), 1883; Haymarket; three weeks.

total number of performances under the Bancroft management: 800.

- 1869 Feb. 22 *My Lady Clara*; Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool; L. C.; inspired by Tennyson's "Lady Clara Vere de Vere."
 Duke of Loamshire J. Chester
 Earl of Mount-Forestcourt A. Glover
 Rittmeister Harfthal Bandmann
 Rudolf Harfthal Bandmann
 Mr. John Hibbs E. Saker
 Old Gray A. Sanger
 Lady Clara Vere de Vere Milly Palmer
 Lina Miss R. Sanger
 Frau Harfthal Mrs. Stammers
- as *Dreams*; March 27, 1869; Gaiety.
 Duke of Loamshire MacLean
 Earl of Mount-Forestcourt John Clayton
 Rittmeister Harfthal Alfred Wigan
 Rudolf Harfthal Alfred Wigan
 Mr. John Hibbs Robert Soutar
 Old Gray Joseph Eldred
 Lady Clara Vere de Vere Madge Robertson
 Lina Richel Sanger
 Frau Harfthal Mrs. Henry Leigh
- 1869 Apr. 10 *A Breach of Promise*; Globe; L. C.
 Mr. Ponticopp David Fisher
 Philip J. Clarke
 Achates Croople E. Marshall
 Mr. Fullawords H. Andrews
 David J. Paulo
 Clementina Ponticopp Rose Behrend
 Honor Molloy Maggie Brennan
- 1869 May 18 *Dublin Bay*; Theatre Royal, Manchester; L. C.; December 18, 1875, Folly; unpublished.
- 1869 Sept. 18 *Progress*; Globe; L. C.; adapted from Sardou's *Les Ganaches*.
 Lord Mompesson Collette
 Hon. Arthur Mompesson H. Neville
 Dr. Brown J. Clarke
 Mr. Bunnythorne Parselle

Chronology of Robertson's Plays

- | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------------|
| | Bob Bunnythorne | E. Marshall |
| | John Ferne | J. Billington |
| | Mr. Danby | Westland |
| | Wykeham | |
| | Eva | Lydia Foote |
| | Miss Myrnie | Mrs. Stephens |
| 1870 Jan. 15 | <i>The Nightingale</i> ; Adelphi; L. C. | |
| | Harold Fane | Arthur Stirling |
| | Ismael-al-Moolah | Ben Webster |
| | Chepstowe | Mrs. Alfred Mellon |
| | William Waye | J. D. Beveridge |
| | Major Pomeroy | |
| | Joe | |
| | Willie | Master Blanchard |
| | Mary | Miss Furtado |
| | Kesiah | Eliza Johnstone |
| | Mrs. Minns | Mrs. Cautfield |
| 1870 Apr. 23 | <i>The M. P.</i> ; Prince of Wales's; L. C.; April 23-August 12, September 17-November 26; 156 performances. | |
| | Dunscombe Dunscombe | John Hare |
| | Chudleigh Dunscombe | Coghlan |
| | Talbot Piers | Squire Bancroft |
| | Isaac Skoome | Addison |
| | Cecilia Dunscombe | Marie Wilton |
| | Mr. Bran | Charles Collette |
| | Mr. Bray | F. Glover |
| | Mr. Mulhowther | Montgomery |
| | Ruth Deybrooke | Carlotta Addison |
| 1870 Oct. 5 | <i>Birth</i> ; Theatre Royal, Bristol. | |
| | Earl of Eagleclyffe | H. Vincent |
| | Paul Hewitt | J. H. Slater |
| | Jack Randall | E. A. Sothern |
| | The Duke | T. A. Palmer |
| | Stanton | Brooks |
| | Dick | Stanley |
| | Tom | Hosegood |
| | Harry | Thomas |
| | Lady Adeliza | Louise Willes |
| | Sarah Hewitt | Amy Roselle |

- 1871 Jan. 16 *War*; St. James's; L. C.
 Colonel de Rochevannes Henri Nertann
 Oscar de Rochevannes Fred Mervin
 Herr Karl Hartmann A. W. Young
 Captain Sound, R. N. L. Brough
 Lotte Fanny Brough
 Blanche Alice Barrie
 Jessie Jenny Mori
 Agnes Marian Inch
 Katie Lilian Adair
- 1871 Feb. 13 *Policy*; Theatre Royal, Glasgow; unpublished.
- 1871 May 29 *Not at All Jealous*; Court; L. C.; unpublished.
- 1881 July 27 *Which is it?*; Drury Lane (?); L. C. (?) unpublished.
- 1883 Apr. 12 *Other Days*; Theatre Royal, Hull; L. C.; unpublished.
- 1883 Aug. 30 *A Row in the House*; Toole's; L. C.
 Mr. Scorpion A. Chevalier
 Tom J. H. Darnley
 Mr. Goodman F. Irving
 Jemmy A. D. Adams
 Mrs. Scorpion Maud Robertson
 Kate Miss L. Walker
 Mary Florence Rayburn
- 1892 Aug. 15 *Cinderella*; Theatre Royal, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; October 3, 1892, Grand; unpublished.
- 1893 Jan. 20 *Over the Way*; Court; L. C.; unpublished.
 Mr. Elliott
 Mr. Draycott
 Ellaline Terriss

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THEATRICAL CONDITIONS

- ARCHER, WILLIAM. *Playmaking, a Manual of Craftsmanship*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1912.
- . *The Old Drama and the New*. Boston: Small, Maynard, and Co., 1923.
- ARMSTRONG, C. F. *Shakespeare to Shaw*. London: Mills and Boon, 1913.
- ARNOLD, MATTHEW. *Irish Essays, Mixed Essays, and Others*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1924.
- COLEMAN, JOHN. *Fifty Years of an Actor's Life*. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1904.
- . *Memoirs of Samuel Phelps*. London: Remington and Co., 1886.
- . *Players and Playwrights I Have Known*. Philadelphia: Gebbie and Co., 1890.
- CORDELL, RICHARD A. *Henry Arthur Jones and the Modern Drama*. New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, 1932.
- CUNLIFFE, JOHN W. *Modern English Playwrights: A Short History of the English Drama from 1825*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927.
- DARBYSHIRE, ALFRED. *The Art of the Victorian Stage*. London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1907.
- DYE, WILLIAM S. *A Study of Melodrama in England from 1800 to 1840*. Pennsylvania State College, 1919.
- ELWIN, MALCOLM. *Charles Reade*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1931.
- FILON, AUGUSTIN. *The English Stage*. London: John Milne, 1897.
- FITZGERALD, P. H. *The World behind the Scenes*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1881.
- FRISWELL, J. H. *Modern Men of Letters*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870.
- FRITH, WILLIAM. *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888.
- GODDARD, ARTHUR. *Players of the Period*. London: Dean and Son, 1891.
- GRANVILLE-BARKER, Harley, ed. *The Eighteen Seventies*. Cambridge, 1929.

- HOLLINGSHEAD, JOHN. *My Lifetime*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, and Co., 1895.
- JERROLD, W. BLANCHARD. *The Life of Douglas Jerrold*. London: Bradbury, Agnew and Co., n. d.
- JONES, HENRY ARTHUR. *The Renaissance of the English Drama*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1895.
- KENDAL, DAME MADGE. *Dramatic Opinions*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1890.
- LEWISOHN, LUDWIG. *The Modern Drama*. New York: Viking Press, 1931.
- LYTTON, EARL OF. *The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord of Lytton*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1913.
- MATTHEWS, BRANDER, AND LAWRENCE HUTTON. *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States from the Days of David Garrick to the Present Time*. New York: Cassell and Co., 1886.
- MCCARTHY, JUSTIN. *Portraits of the Sixties*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903.
- MONTAGUE, C. E. *Dramatic Values*. New York: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1925.
- MOORE, GEORGE. *Impressions and Opinions*. London: T. Werner Laurie, 1914.
- MORGAN, A. E. *Tendencies of Modern English Drama*. London: Constable and Co., 1924.
- MORLEY, HENRY. *The Journal of a London Playgoer from 1851 to 1866*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1891.
- MORRIS, MOWBRAY. *Essays in Theatrical Criticism*. London: Remington and Co., 1882.
- NICHOLSON, WATSON. *The Struggle for a Free Stage in London*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1906.
- NICOLL, ALLARDYCE. *British Drama*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1925.
- . *A History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama 1800-1850*. Cambridge University Press, 1930.
- . *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama 1850-1900*. Cambridge University Press, 1946.
- ODELL, G. C. D. *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.
- PEARCE, CHARLES E. *Madame Vestris and Her Times*. New York: Brentano's, n. d.

- PELLIZZI, CAMILLO. *English Drama: The Last Great Phase*, translated by Rowan Williams. London: Macmillan and Co., 1935.
- PEMBERTON, T. EDGAR. *John Hare, Comedian*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1895.
- . *A Memoir of Edward Aiken Southern*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1889.
- POLLOCK, SIR FREDERICK, ed. *Macready's Reminiscences*. New York: Macmillan and Co., 1875.
- PURNELL, THOMAS. *Dramatists of the Present Day*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1871.
- REYNOLDS, ERNEST. *Early Victorian Drama*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1936.
- SAWYER, NEWELL WHEELER. *The Comedy of Manners from Sheridan to Maugham*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931.
- SCOTT, CLEMENT. *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1899.
- SHAW, G. B. *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*. New York: Brentano's, 1910.
- SHERSON, ERROLL. *London's Lost Theatres of the Nineteenth Century*. London: John Lane, 1925.
- STAHL, E. L. *Das Englische Theater im 19. Jahrhundert*. München: R. Oldenbourg, 1914.
- STIRLING, E. *Old Drury Lane: Fifty Years' Recollections*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1881.
- TERRY, ELLEN. *The Story of My Life*. New York: McClure, 1908.
- THORNDIKE, ASHLEY. *English Comedy*. New York: Macmillan, 1929.
- TOLLES, WINTON. *Tom Taylor and the Victorian Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940.
- TOMLINS, FREDERICK GUEST. *A Brief View of the English Drama*. London: C. Mitchell, 1840.
- WAITZKIN, LEO. *The Witch of Wych Street: a Study of the Theatrical Reforms of Madame Vestris*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933.
- WALLACK, LESTER. *Memories of Fifty Years*. New York: Charles Scribner's, 1889.
- WATSON, ERNEST BRADLEE. *Sheridan to Robertson: a Study of the Nineteenth Century London Stage*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926.

ROBERTSON'S LIFE

- BANCROFT, SQUIRE AND MARIE. *The Bancrofts: Recollections of Sixty Years*. London: John Murray, 1909.
- . *Mr. & Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1888.
- BULLOCK, J. M. "Dame Madge Kendal's Robertson Ancestors," *Notes and Queries*, CLXIII (1932), 398-400; 418-420; 434-437.
- HAWKINS, FREDERICK. a review of T. E. Pemberton's *Life and Writings of T. W. Robertson, The Academy*, XLIII (1893), 488-89.
- KENDAL, DAME MADGE. *Dame Madge Kendal, by Herself*. London: John Murray, 1933.
- LEE, SIDNEY, ed. *Dictionary of National Biography*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1896, 420-23.
- PEMBERTON, T. EDGAR. *The Life and Writings of T. W. Robertson*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1893.
- PINERO, SIR ARTHUR WING. "Tom Robertson's Pals," *Theatre Guild Magazine*, VI (1929), 19-21; 47-49.
- TURNER, GODFREY. "Robertsoniana," *The Theatre*, XIV New Series (1889), 285-90.
- WATSON, AARON. *The Savage Club*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907.

ROBERTSON'S STAGECRAFT

- ANON. "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft," *The Theatre*, XXIX (1897), 7-8.
- . "Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft," *ibid.*, XXX, 53-55.
- . "Thomas William Robertson and the Modern Theatre," *Temple Bar*, XLIV (1875), 199-209.
- GREIN, KONRAD. *Thomas William Robertson (1829-1871): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Neueren Englischen Dramas*. Marburg: Noske, Bornaleipzig, 1911.
- JONES, W. WILDING. "Robertson as a Dramatist," *The Theatre*, II New Series (1879), 355-60.
- MONTEFIORE, EADE, ed. *Robertsonianana, an Illustrated Appendix to Robert Arthur's Season of Robertson Comedies*. London: Mersey and Sons, 1910.
- PINERO, SIR ARTHUR WING. *Trelawney of the "Wells"*. Chicago: The Dramatic Publishing Co., n. d.

RAHILL, F. "A Mid-Victorian Regisseur," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XIII (1929), 838-44.

JOURNALS

Athenaeum, The. 1851-71.

Era Almanack. 1868-85.

Illustrated London News. 1846-71.

London Society. 1862-71.

London Times, The. 1851-71.

FOREIGN ORIGINALS OF ROBERTSON'S PLAYS

AUGIER, EMILE. *L'Aventurière*. Paris: Calmann Levy, 1897.

BENEDIX, RODERICH. *Aschenbrödel; Gesammelte Dramatische Werke*, XXI-XXII. Leipzig: I. I. Weber, 1876.

DENNERY ET CLÉMENT. *Noémie, Théâtre*, IX, No. 35.

DUYEYRIER, ANNE HONORÉ JOSEPH. *Sullivan*. Lagny, 1852.

SARDOU, V. *Les Ganaches*. Paris: Calmann Levy, n. d.

SCRIBE, EUGÈNE. *Bataille de Dames, Théâtre de Eugène Scribe*, III. Paris: Michel Levy Frères, 1859.

ROBERTSON'S NON-DRAMATIC WRITING

ROBERTSON, T. W. "After Dinner," *Savage Club Papers*. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867, 39-50.

—. *Artemus Ward's Panorama*. New York: G. W. Carleton, 1869.

—. "Exceptional Experiences," *Savage Club Papers*. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1868, 1-8.

—. "The Poor Rate Unfolds a Tale," *Rates and Taxes*, edited by Tom Hood. 1866. Reprinted in appendix to T. E. Pemberton's edition of *Caste*.

ROBERTSON'S PLAYS

(Volume numbers of Lacy refer to bound set in the
John Hay Library, Brown University.)

Birds of Prey:

French.

Lacy, Vol. XCIII, 1390.

Birth:

Lacy, 1959.

Principal Dramatic Works, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1889, Vol. I.

A Breach of Promise:

De Witt, Vol. XII, 179.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. I.

The Cantab (The Young Collegian):

De Witt.

Lacy, Vol. L, 743.

Caste:

Ames' Series of Standard and Minor Drama, 178.

Baker, Walter H., 1913.

Bowyer, John Wilson and Brooks, John Lee, editors, *The Victorian Age*, New York: F. S. Crofts and Co., 1938.

Coffman, George R., editor, *A Book of Modern Plays*, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1925.

Cordell, Richard A., editor, *Representative Modern Plays*, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1930.

De Witt.

French, 380.

Lacy, 1960.

Matthews, Brander and Lieder, Paul Robert, editors, *The Chief British Dramatists*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924.

Moses, Montrose J., editor, *Representative British Dramas*, Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1923.

New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, n. d.

Pemberton, T. Edgar, editor, *Society and Caste*, Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1905.

Philadelphia: Penn Publishing Co., 1910.

Principal Dramatic Works of Thomas William Robertson with Memoir by His Son, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1889, Vol. I.

Roorbach's American Edition of Acting Plays, 37.

The Chevalier of St. George:

Lacy, Vol. XXV, 368.

De Witt, Vol. V, 68.

The Clockmaker's Hat:

French's Minor Drama, 70.

David Garrick:

De Witt, Vol. II, 22.

French, 383.

Original Mss. of *David Garrick*, Harvard Theatre Collection.
Philadelphia: Penn Publishing Co., 1902.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. I.

Dreams (My Lady Clara):

De Witt, Vol. II, 21.

French, 405.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. I.

Faust and Marguerite:

De Witt, 103.

Lacy, Vol. XV, 213.

Sergel's Acting Drama, n. d.

The Half Caste, or The Poisoned Pearl:

Lacy, Vol. XCVII, 1441.

Home:

Chicago: T. S. Denison, VI, 1005, Star Series.

De Witt, Vol. XII, 174.

French, 382.

Lacy, 1962.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. I.

Roorbach's American Edition of Acting Plays, 38.

Jocrisse the Juggler:

French, 757.

Lacy, Vol. LI, 757.

The Ladies' Battle:

Lacy, Vol. IX, 47; Vol. CVIII, 1609.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. I.

M. P.:

De Witt, Vol. XX, 291.

Lacy, 1966.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. I.

*My Wife's Diary:**De Witt*, 130.*Lacy*, Vol. XVIII, 257.*The Nightingale:**French*, 409.*Lacy*, 1967.*Principal Dramatic Works*, Vol. II.*Noémie:**De Witt*, Vol. IV, 57.*Lacy*, Vol. XXIII, 343.*Not at All Jealous:**Lacy*, Vol. XCI, 1358.*Ours:**De Witt*, Vol. XII, 172.*French*, 384.*Principal Dramatic Works*, Vol. II.*Passion:*

Ms. of an outline for a proposed comedy. In the possession of the University of Rochester Library.

*Peace at Any Price:**De Witt*, 156.*Lacy*, Vol. XCV, 1422.*Play:**De Witt*.*French*, 411.*Lacy*, 1969.*Principal Dramatic Works*, Vol. II.*Progress:**Lacy*, 1981.*Principal Dramatic Works*, Vol. II.*A Row in the House:**Principal Dramatic Works*, Vol. II.*School:**De Witt*.*French*.*Lacy*, 1982.

Philadelphia: Ledger Job Printing Office, 1869.
Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. II.

Society:

De Witt.

French, 1060.

Lacy, Vol. LXXI, 1060.

Pemberton, T. Edgar, editor, *Society and Caste*, Boston: D. C. Heath
and Co., 1905.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. II.

The Star of the North:

Lacy, Vol. XCIII, 1386.

Two Gay Deceivers:

De Witt, 56.

Lacy, Vol. XXXIII, 491.

Sergel's Acting Drama, 56.

War:

French, 1983.

French's Standard Drama, 407.

Lacy, 1983.

Principal Dramatic Works, Vol. II.

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



122 745

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY