DORAN JOHN

THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS. ANNALS OF THE ENGLISH STAGE (VOLUME 3 OF 3)

John Doran

Their Majesties' Servants. Annals of the English Stage (Volume 3 of 3)

Doran J.

Their Majesties' Servants. Annals of the English Stage (Volume 3 of 3) / J. Doran — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

Dr. Doran «Their Majesties' Servants.» Annals of the English Stage (Volume 3 of 3)

CHAPTER I OF AUTHORS, AND PARTICULARLY OF CONDEMNED AUTHORS

A glance at the foregoing list[1] will serve to show that, from the retirement of Garrick to the close of the eighteenth century, tragic literature made no progress. It retrograded. It did not even reach the height of Fenton and Hughes, in whom Walpole discerned some faint sparkling of the merit of the older masters. After Shakspeare's time, "Theatric genius," says Walpole, "lay dormant;" but he adds, that "it waked with some bold and glorious, but irregular and often ridiculous flights, in Dryden; revived in Otway; maintained a placid, pleasing kind of dignity in Rowe, and even shone in 'Jane Shore.' It trod in sublime and classic fetters in 'Cato;' but was void of nature, or the power of affecting the passions. In Southerne it seemed a genuine ray of nature and Shakspeare, but falling on an age still more Hottentot, was stifled in those gross and barbarous productions, tragi-comedies. It turned to tuneful nonsense in the 'Mourning Bride;' grew stark mad in Lee, whose cloak, a little the worse for wear, fell on Young, yet in both was still a poet's cloak. It recovered its senses in Hughes and Fenton, who were afraid it should relapse, and accordingly kept it down with a timid, but amiable, hand; and then it languished."

And continued to languish; I cannot more fully show to what extent, than by remarking that the century which opened with Rowe concluded with Pye – both Poets Laureate, but of different qualities. "Tamerlane" and "Jane Shore" have not yet dropped from the list of acting plays; but who knows anything more of "Adelaide" than that it was insipid, possessed not even a "tuneful nonsense," and was only distinguished for having made Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble appear almost as insipid as the play. Godwin's "Antonio," played in 1800, was as complete a failure as Pye's "Adelaide."

For the tragic poets who occupy the period between Garrick's retirement and the coming of Pye and Godwin, a few words will suffice. Mason's "Caractacus" was a noble effort, but it produced less effect than D'Egville's ballet on the same subject in the succeeding century. Cumberland's "Battle of Hastings" was as near Shakspeare as Ireland's "Vortigern" was; and Home's "Alfred" died, three days old.

Jephson was, after all, the favourite playwright of Walpole, who says of his "Law of Lombardy," that it was even "too rich" in language! but then Jephson always improved the passages to which Walpole objected. Walpole gave orders for alterations in Jephson's plays, as he might for the repairs of a cabinet. Sometimes his criticism is excellent, and at others, it involves a social illustration, as in that on the "Count of Narbonne." Raymond, in the last scene, says, "Show me thy wound; oh, hell! 'tis through her heart!" "This line," says Walpole, "is quite unnecessary, and infers an obedience in displaying her wound, which would be shocking; besides, as there is often a buffoon in an audience, at a new tragedy, it might be received dangerously. The word 'Jehovah!' will certainly not be suffered on the stage." Walpole praises Miss Younge's acting, and says, "the applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on." Jephson, however, wrote fair acting pieces, which is more than can be said for Bentley's "Philodamus," which, in spite of being

[1] Vol. ii., pp. 398-406.

pronounced by Gray the best dramatic poem in the language,[2] was hilariously laughed off the stage. It was at least original, which can hardly be said of any of Cumberland's plays, except the "Carmelite," a tragedy that terminates merrily! Cumberland was as much out of his line in tragedy as Reynolds, whose "Werter" and "Eloisa" brought him eight pounds!

"And very good pay too, sir!" said Macklin, "so go home, and write two more tragedies, and if you gain £4 by each of them, why, young man! the author of *Paradise Lost* will be a fool to you!"

Hayley, of whom Walpole said, "That sot Boswell is a classic in comparison;" and Murphy, with undeniable powers, failed in their attempts at tragedy during this period. Boaden may be said to have been below the level of Pye himself. On the former's "Aurelio and Miranda" some criticism was made before it was acted. The author was reading his play to the actors, when he remarked, that he knew nothing so terrible as having to read it before so critical an audience. "Oh, yes!" exclaimed Mrs. Powell, "there is something much more terrible." "What can that be?" asked Boaden foolishly. "To be obliged to sit and hear it," was the reply of Lady Emma Hamilton's old fellow-servant.

But if tragedy languished miserably, comedy was vivacious and triumphant. This period gave us the "School for Scandal," perhaps the most faultless comedy of the whole century. It gave us Murphy's "Know your own Mind;" the "Critic," that admirable offspring of the "Rehearsal;" Macklin's "Man of the World," the most muscular of comedies, which contrasts so forcibly with the sketchy sentimental, yet not nerveless comedies of Holcroft; General Burgoyne's "Heiress," which is not only superior to General Conway's "False Appearances" (a translation from a comedy by Boissy), but is, perhaps, the second best comedy of the period; Cumberland's "Jew" and "Wheel of Fortune;" Colman's serio-comic "Mountaineers," and the rattling "five-act farces" of Reynolds. At the head of all these, and of many others, stood Sheridan's immortal comedy. He may, as he said, have spoiled Vanbrugh's "Relapse," in converting it into the "Trip to Scarborough;" but the "School for Scandal"[3] has been accepted as the best comedy of the English stage. In its dazzling brilliancy, the labour expended to effect it is all forgotten. Garrick took the greatest interest in its success, and when a flatterer remarked to him that its popularity would only be ephemeral, and that with Garrick himself the Atlas of the stage had departed, the latter calmly replied that, in Mr. Sheridan, his successor in the management, the stage had a Hercules equal to any labour it might require at his hands.

I turn, less to newspapers than to private contemporary sources, to see what was thought of this comedy on its first appearance. Walpole was present at the acting, and he says: "To my great astonishment, there were more parts performed admirably in the 'School for Scandal,' than I almost ever saw in any play. Mrs. Abington was equal to the first of her profession; Yates, Parsons, Miss Pope and Palmer, all shone. It seemed a marvellous resurrection of the stage. Indeed, the play had as much merit as the actors. I have seen no comedy that comes near it, since the 'Provoked Husband.'" The chief characters were thus represented: Sir Peter, King; Sir Oliver, Yates; Backbite, Dodd; Charles Surface, Smith; Joseph Surface, Palmer; Crabtree, Parsons; Lady Teazle, Mrs. Abington; Mrs. Candour, Miss Pope; and Maria, by Miss P. Hopkins, daughter of the prompter, – soon to be the wife of Brereton, and subsequently that of John Kemble.

Walpole objected, that the comedy was too long, despite great wit and good situations; and that there were two or three bad scenes that might be easily omitted, and which, to his thinking, wanted truth of character. He does not specify the scenes, and he acknowledges that he had not read the play, and that he "sat too high to hear it well." When he had read it, he came to the conclusion that it was "rapid and lively, but far from containing the wit he had expected, on seeing it acted."

To Walpole, the "Heiress," by Burgoyne, was "the *genteelest* comedy" in the English language. Of Macklin's "Man of the World," the same writer says: – "Boswell pretended to like it, which would almost make one suspect that he knows a dose of poison had already been administered; though, by

[2] "One of the most capital poems in the English language" is what Gray is reported to have said.

[3] Produced 8th May 1777.

the way, I hear there is little good in the piece, except the likeness of Sir Pertinax to twenty thousand Scots."

It was the great merit of nearly all these writers, that while they caricatured folly, they scourged vice; and not only showed society what it was, but instructed it in what it should be. Cumberland wrote his "Jew" expressly to create a feeling of sympathy for a despised people. Howard, the philanthropist, walked, under fictitious names, through more than one piece, – inculcating the duties of love and charity; and the too fashionable or foolish people of the day, by being rendered ridiculous, served to demonstrate, merrily, their own defects. In this application of dramatic literature, the ladies, whom I have not yet mentioned, were as busily engaged as the gentlemen.

If we glance at the ladies who wrote for the stage during the latter half of the last century, and some of them before, we shall find a marked contrast between them and their sisters of the preceding century. There is Hannah More, who introduces into "Percy" a sermon, of which the first part denounces war, and the second draws a character of the Saviour. Of Mrs. Cowley, kinswoman to Gay – the unknown Anna Matilda who corresponded with Della Crusca (Merry), the fastidious Walpole unjustly declared that she was as freely spoken as Aphra Behn. She was the first lady who held an "At Home day," on which to receive her friends. She affected, like Congreve, to despise being an "author," and showed skill in shaping old characters into new, in comedies which still survive; as well as in defending herself against the acute people who had "a good nose for inuendo." In tragedy, she was not so successful; and she winced at the epigram of Parsons, on her "Fate of Sparta," which said: —

"Ingenious Cowley! while we view'd
Of Sparta's sons the lot severe,
We caught the Spartan fortitude,
And saw their woes, without a tear."

Of Mrs. Griffith's plays not one is now remembered; but the author and actress is remarkable for having published, as guides to young people, the correspondence of herself and husband, before marriage, under the title of *The Letters of Harry and Frances*; and if they describe all the love making, the lady was not likely to have resembled the Platonic Wife, in her own play so called, who laments, throughout, that her husband will not be exactly what he was when he was her lover. An incident, connected with this play, will show how ungallant players could be to female poets, and how free they could be with their audience. In the third act, when Powell and Holland were on the stage, the hissing was universal; and at the end of it the two actors thrust their heads out from behind the drop curtain, and implored the house to damn the piece at once, and release them from having to utter any more nonsense!

The gentle Frances Brooke's novels are better than her dramas, – save the pretty musical farce, "Rosina," in which she has so cleverly secularised the scriptural story of Ruth and Boaz. Unlike Mrs. Brooke, Elizabeth Inchbald's plays are as good as her novels; – in both, the romantic daughter of a Suffolk farmer exhibited a skill and refinement, the latter of which she must have acquired after the period when, a wayward and beautiful girl of sixteen, she ran away from home, and manifested wonderful ability in framing stories of her own, to mislead the curious. After the death of her husband, – the "Garrick of Norwich," – whose marriage with her was as romantically begun as it singularly ended, she took to writing for the stage, on which she was a respectable actress. In her plays, the virtues are set in action; and there is much elegance in her style. She was so successful, that a friend accused her of inculcating sedition in "Every One Has His Fault." Sometimes, her success was owing more to the actors than herself. King and Mrs. Jordan, as Sir Adam and Lady Contest, in the "Wedding Day," were such a pair as have never been *quite* approached by their successors.

Petulant Sophia Lee, daughter of a country actor, excelled all the foregoing ladies in one point, – the skill with which she mingled broad comedy with natural pathos, – as in her "Chapter of Accidents." The Lady Wallace was a thousand times more petulant than Miss Lee, without even a thousandth part of her ability. She resembled the female writers of the last century only in her vulgarity, and not in their poor wit. Then, there was Hannah Brand, school-mistress, like Hannah More; poet and actress, mad with much learning, – or with very little, of which she thought very much; and proud as an *artchangel*, as she pronounced the word! The great feat of imperious Miss Brand was in her "Huniades," which, on its failure, she altered, by leaving the whole part of Huniades out! She called the incomprehensible fragment "Agmunda," and heard it hissed (she playing the heroine), to her great disgust.

The century was within a year of its close, when Miss De Camp taught parents not to cross the first love of their children, in "First Faults." Then Joanna Baillie finished one and began another century, with her series of Plays of the Passions; none of which was intended for the stage, or succeeded when it was represented. The old Scots, who shuddered at "Douglas" being written by a minister, must have been stricken with awe, at the idea of the daughter of the divinity professor at Glasgow composing three profane tragedies in a single year.

In the supplement to the last chapter, indications will be found of the progress of Opera on the English stage. Music and singing were not uncommonly introduced into our early plays, and they ranked among the chief attractions of our masques, down to the reign of Charles I. Under the Commonwealth, and in the reign of Charles II., we had pieces sung in recitative, till Locke awoke melodious echoes by his music for the operas of "Psyche," "Macbeth," and the "Tempest;" and Purcell excelled Lawes in vigour and in harmony, and composed music to the words of Dryden.

Our first English male stage-singers were simply actors, with good, but not musically trained voices. Walker, the original Macheath, could "sing a good song," but he was a tragedian; and some of our songstresses might be similarly described. Mrs. Tofts, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and Miss Campion, were trained vocalists. In Beard and Miss Brent – he, living to marry an earl's daughter, and realise a large fortune; *she*, to want bread, and (as Mrs. Pinto) to thank the elder Fawcett for a shilling – Garrick found his most dangerous opponents. The "Beggar's Opera" and "Artaxerxes," mark epochs; and after Arne arose Linley, Jackson, Arnold, Dibdin, and Shield, as composers; and Leoni and Miss Browne – the former sweeter than Vernon, and the lady rich in expression, secured rare laurels for themselves and the "Duenna," in which opera they played the principal characters. Jackson's music in "The Lord of the Manor," brought Mrs. Crouch, then Miss Phillips, into notice; but it was not till Stephen Storace began his career, that concerted pieces and grand finales were introduced by him, and English opera rendered more complete. With his operas are most associated the names of Crouch, Kelly, and Braham – which last name, and that of Mrs. Billington, are the brightest in the operatic annals of the close of the eighteenth, and opening of the nineteenth century.

With operas and musical entertainments, the romantic drama greatly flourished for awhile. Indeed, the beautiful and hapless Mrs. Cargill made a romantic hero of Macheath; her tremor, when the bell sounded for execution, was a bit of natural tragedy which excited tears. But of real romantic drama, the most successful was the sensational "Castle Spectre," the merit of which was pointed out by a joke of Sheridan's. In a dispute with Lewis, the author, the latter offered, in support of his opinion, to bet all the money which that drama had brought into the treasury. "No," said Sheridan, "I'll not do that; but I don't mind betting all it's worth!"

So few of the plays in the preceding list have survived even in memory, that there must necessarily have been much suffering among disappointed authors. But it was not merely those of this half century who incurred disappointment. I have incidentally mentioned some of these before. I may add one more sample of the condemned in Flecnoe, who was among the worst of the writers of the seventeenth century, and was also the most independent, or the most truculent, in denouncing his critics. When the managers rejected his "Demoiselles à la Mode," he printed the piece with a

preface, in which he remarked that: – "For the acting this comedy, those who have the government of the stage, have their humour, and would be entreated; and I have mine, and won't entreat them; and were all dramatic writers of my mind, the Masters should wear their old plays threadbare ere they should have any new, till they better understood their own interest, and how to distinguish between good and bad."

But poets better skilled than this ex-Jesuit had to endure disappointment. Rowe ranks among the condemned (the hilarious condemned), by his failure in comedy. His idea was good. In the early part of the century, society was beset by the "Biters." These were the would-be jokers of the day, who, on hoaxing their friends, exclaimed "bite!" and exposed the trick they had played. An instance is afforded in the *Spectator*, of a condemned felon, who sold his body to a surgeon, but who, on receiving the purchase-money, called out "bite! I'm to be hung in chains!" Rowe took one of these humorists for the hero of his bustling three-act comedy or farce, entitled the "Biter." This part, Pinch, was played by Pack, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1704; but that clever actor rattled through it in vain. The jokes fell lifeless, to the great disgust of Rowe, who was in the pit. As the audience would not, or could not laugh, but rather yawned or hissed, the author set them the example he would have them follow, and at every jest he led the way with an explosion of laughter, which must have become the more lugubrious on every repetition. A good man struggling against evil destiny is said to be a sublime spectacle to gods and men; but a dramatic author, known to half the audience, upholding his own piece, and striving to rescue it from ruin by a convulsive hilarity, must have been a sight as astonishing to his foes as to his friends. The poor fellow laughed vehemently; but the house could not be tempted to sympathise with him, and the "Biter" was condemned under the applause and laughter of its hysterical author.

Aaron Hill took his failures more calmly. The public of 1710, at Drury Lane, would not tolerate his "Elfrid." Aaron shared the public opinion, and devoted *twenty years* to re-writing his tragedy, which was subsequently produced under the title of "Athelwold." Mrs. Centlivre was not equally patient with *her* public; from whom, a month earlier, she withdrew in pique her coolly-received comedy, "The Man's Bewitched." Elkanah Settle was so systematically visited with damnation, that he was at last compelled to bring out his plays under fictitious names, and during the long vacation, lest when the town was full, some enemy should discover him. Pope was as sensitive as Settle, if the story be true that he was one of the authors of "Three Hours after Marriage," and that the cool reception of this piece caused him to express dislike for the players. Dennis, however, was perhaps the most irritable of his race. When his adaptation of "Coriolanus" ("The Invader of his Country") failed, in 1719, to draw £100 to the house, and was consequently shelved by the management, Dennis thundered against the insolence, incapacity, and disloyalty of Cibber and his colleagues, and invoked against them the vengeance of the Duke of Newcastle, the Lord Chamberlain! Theobald took another course; and when the pit hissed his pieces, he abused the "little critics," in a preface, scorned their "ill nature," and appealed to "better judges."

Gay, considering his dramatic failures in tragedy, found more consolation than most damned authors. The public of 1724 had no sympathy for his "Captives;" which, despite Booth, Wilks, and Mrs. Oldfield, soon disappeared from the stage. To console the author, the Princess of Wales requested him to read this play in presence of herself and little court. On being ushered into the august company, Gay, nervous from long waiting, tragedy in hand, bashful and blundering, fell over a stool, thereby threw down a screen, and set his illustrious audience in a comical sort of confusion, which, notwithstanding the kindness of the princess, marred the self-possession of the poet. The piece, however, went off more merrily at Leicester House than it had done at Drury Lane.

More touching than this was the way in which the aged Southerne, in 1726, took the condemnation of his "Money, the Mistress," at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The audience refused the request made in the prologue to protect the man who had filled their mothers' eyes with tears. They had no particular reverence for "the last of Charles's bards;" nor especial regard for "great Otway's peer

and greater Dryden's friend." The audience hissed mercilessly. The old man was standing at a wing with Rich, who asked him, if "he heard what they were doing." "No, sir," said Southerne, calmly, "I am very deaf!" So quietly did he see fall from his grey head, the wreath "for half a century with honour worn."

But "Money" was not more unequivocally damned on the first night than was the "Provoked Husband," in 1728, at Drury Lane. The difference was that the last piece suffered shipwreck, on political grounds, but survived the storm. All the Jacobites in town united to condemn a play, by the author of the "Nonjuror," with Vanbrugh for colleague. Cibber played Sir Francis Wronghead, in the face of the hurricane, and never forgot his part, though he gave up all as lost when, in the fourth act, the play was brought to a "stand-still," by the fierce antagonism of the house. Nevertheless, Colley persevered, and the comedy went on to the end. The critics acknowledged or boasted that it had been a miserable failure, but Cibber would not confess himself beaten. The "Provoked Husband" ran for eight-and-twenty successive nights, and on the last of those nights drew £140, "which happened," says the naturally-exulting Cibber, "to be more than in fifty years before could be said of any play whatsoever."

Gay read his tragedy, after it had been consigned to the limbo of such pieces, to a court circle; Tracy read his heavy "Periander" before it was damned at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1731, to a circle of friends, who were regaled on the occasion with a magnificent supper. Dr. Ridley spoke on behalf of himself and brother critics, and assured the author that they had been exceedingly well-pleased with the entertainment provided; he alluded particularly, he said, to the supper. This was held for wit, but it was not so neat, so happy, or so friendly as Carl Vernet's reply to the author of the *Maison à Vendre*. As the curtain fell, Carl remarked, "J'ai cru voir une Maison à Vendre, et je ne vois qu'une pièce à louer!"

Fielding took disapprobation with infinite indifference. In 1743, his "Wedding Day" was produced at Drury Lane, with Garrick as Millamour, and Macklin as Stedfast. Garrick had asked the author to suppress a scene which, he thought, would imperil the piece. Fielding refused. "If the scene is not a good one," said he, "let 'em find it out." This scene *did* excite violent hissing; and Garrick left the stage for the green-room, as violently disturbed. "There," says Murphy, "the author was indulging his genius, and solacing himself with a bottle of champagne. He had, at this time, drunk pretty plentifully; and cocking his eye at the actor, while streams of tobacco trickled down from the corner of his mouth, 'What's the matter, Garrick?' said he; 'what are they hissing now?' 'Why, the scene I begged you to retrench. I knew it wouldn't do; and they have so frightened me, that I shall not be able to collect myself the whole night.' 'Oh! d – 'em!' replies the author, 'they *have* found it out, have they?'"

Fielding suffered as severely as most authors at the hands of the critics, but he was bold enough to publish one unlucky play, not "as it was acted," but "as it was damned at the Theatre Royal." He accounted, however, for such failures, in himself and others, through Fustian, his tragic poet, in "Pasquin." "One man," says Fustian, "hisses out of resentment to the author; a second, out of dislike to the house; a third, out of dislike to the actor; a fourth, out of dislike to the play; a fifth, for the joke's sake; a sixth, to keep the rest in company; – enemies abuse him; friends give him up; the play is damned; and the author goes to the devil." Fielding might have given another illustration, – such as that of the Frenchman who clapped and hissed at the same moment, and explained his apparent inconsistency, by stating that he had received a free ticket from the author, and that he clapped out of gratitude to the donor, but that he hissed for the satisfaction of his own conscience. Again, there was one French critic who took a more singular way still of expressing his opinion. In the tragedy of "Antony and Cleopatra," a mechanical asp was introduced, which hissed as "dusky Egypt" took it up to apply to her bosom. The Parisian critic, on hearing the sound, arose and said to the pit – "Gentlemen, I am of the same opinion as the asp!"

Fielding published his play, "as it was damned," but he did not add, "as it deserved to be." He was less candid than Bernard Saurin, a French dramatist of the last century. Saurin's comedy, the "Trois Rivaux," was pitilessly hissed. The author printed it, not to shame the critics, but to confess the justice of their verdict. "Authors who have been humiliated," he says, "are not always the more humble on that account. Self-love supports itself." After enumerating many instances, he adds: "There are few unlucky playwrights who do not look beyond their piece for the cause of an effect which their play alone has produced. After wearying the public by their insipidity, they disgust it by their pride, displayed in some haughty preface to their drama. Perhaps there is a refinement of self-love in what I am myself now doing, when I candidly confess, that my comedy of the 'Three Rivals' thoroughly merited its fate."

Less reasonable than Saurin was Anthony Brown, the Templar, who produced his "Fatal Retirement," at Drury Lane, in 1739. This conversational tragedy, in which nobody is excited much above the level of every-day talk, fell at the first representation. Anthony Brown attributed the failure to Quin, who, after selecting one part, chose another, and finally threw up both. This conduct, according to Brown, rendered the other players indifferent, and brought on a catastrophe, which the condemned poet, of course, held to be unmerited. Accordingly, down went Templars and the Templars' friends, night after night, to hiss the offending Quin. He was commanded to make an apology, and he did so in his characteristic way. Addressing the audience, he said, blandly, that he had read "Fatal Retirement," at the author's request, and, under like impulse, had given him his sincere opinion of the tragedy, namely, that it was the very worst he had ever read, and that he could not possibly take a part in it. The audience were amused at the apparent frankness of this communication, and the Templars, allowing Anthony Brown to be non-suited, satisfied their indignation by visiting it upon poor Parson Miller, who had been so ungallant to Mistress Yarrow and her daughter. The "Hospital for Fools" was not brought out in Miller's name, but the Templar champions of the fair knew it to be his, and hissed it from the stage accordingly, despite the acting of Yates, Woodward, and Mrs. Clive, and that part of the audience who would fain have listened, if the noisy Templars would only have allowed them. Out of Miller's fiasco, Garrick subsequently made a success, and on the "Hospital for Fools" founded his "Lethe," in which he was famous in the character of Lord Chalkstone.

There is one anonymous author who exhibited a strange humour in his protest against the condemnation of his tragedy, the plot of which had been pronounced improbable. "You (critics)," says the dolorous author, "harp eternally on my improbabilities. You deal rigorously with inferior dramatists, on the score of their delinquencies as to the probable; but when the same fault is found in some great master, like Shakspeare, oh! then you give the word probability quite a liberal and kindly latitude of interpretation. And is not improbability as great a sin in the richest as it is in the poorest dramatic genius?" Campbell's just reply is, "No: we forgive the fault, in proportion as it is redeemed by wit and genius."

This author, so angry at being damned, should not have ventured his plays on the stage. He would have done well to imitate Thomas Powell, who wrote dramas, but did not wish the public to know it. So fearful of condemnation was he, that when a friend, who thought well of a tragedy he had written, called "Edgar," on the same subject as Ravenscroft's and Rymer's, offered to present it to Garrick, in order to its being acted, – "No, no!" exclaimed sensitive Powell, "by no means would I wish even to be known as an author, attackable by all." The mere pleasure of writing was enough for him. He fancied his triumphs; and they were thus never marred by hiss from the pit, or howl from adverse critic.

Some have taken their fate swaggeringly, with a protestation that the public were not so enlightened as they might be. Others have whistled, some have sung, a few have reasoned over it, one or two have acknowledged the condemnation; not one, except Bentley, has confessed that it was just. When the best scenes in the "Good-natured Man" were bringing down hisses and imperilling the comedy, Goldsmith fell into a tremor, from which the bare success of the play could not relieve

him. But he concealed his torture, and went to the club and talked loud and sang his favourite songs, but neither ate nor drank, though he affected to do both. He sate out the whole of the company save Johnson, and when the two were alone, the disappointed author burst into tears, and swore, something irreverently, that he would never write again. Johnson behaved like a true man, for he comforted Goldsmith, and never betrayed his friend's weakness. *That*, of course, Goldsmith was sure to do for himself. Long after, when they were dining with Percy, at the chaplain's table at St. James's, Goldsmith referred to the dreadful night, the hisses, his sufferings, and his feigned extravagance. Johnson listened in astonishment. "I thought it had all been a secret between you and me, Doctor," said he, "and I am sure I would not have said anything about it for the world."

Some poets thought the players had the better time of the two; but if poets incurred one peril, the players of this period incurred another. For instance, in 1777, the Edinburgh company going to Aberdeen by sea, were snapped up by an American privateer, and carried off captives to Nantz. How they were ransomed, I am unable to show.

Walpole may be registered, if not among the damned, yet among the discontented authors of this half century. Chute might be pleased, and even Gray approve; but Garrick seems to have had small esteem for Horace as a dramatic poet. Hence was Garrick, in Walpole's eyes, but a poor writer of prologues and epilogues, a worse writer of farces, and a patron of fools who wrote bad comedies, which they allowed Garrick to make worthless; but yet worthy of the town which had a taste for them! Walpole wished to see his "Mysterious Mother" acted, although he well knew that the story, and the inefficient way in which he had treated it, would have insured its failure. Indisposed to be numbered among the condemned, he ascribed his reluctance to venture, to two causes: Mrs. Pritchard was about to retire, and she alone could have played his Countess; "nor am I disposed," he says, "to expose myself to the impertinences of that jackanapes, Garrick, who lets nothing appear but his own wretched stuff, or that of creatures still duller, who suffer him to alter their pieces as he pleases." In this strain Walpole was never weary of writing. Of Garrick's "Cymon" the disappointed Horace was especially jealous, and he sneered at its pleasing "the mob in the boxes as well as the footman's gallery," which privileged locality was not yet abolished in 1772. Garrick might be the best actor, but, said Walpole, he is "the worst author in the world!"

I have noticed the mirthful *dénouement* of Cumberland's tragedy, the "Carmelite." Such *dénouements* were approved by some part of the French public.

When the "Gamester" was adapted to the French stage, under the title of "Beverley, a tragedy of Private Life," the adapter was the Saurin of whom I have spoken, and his attempt excited the critics, and divided the town. The poisoning fascinated some and revolted others. One French poet protested against the "horrible" in tragedy, and exclaimed: —

"Laissons à nos voisins ces excès sanguinaires,
Malheur aux nations que le sang divertie,
Ces exemples outrés, ces farces mortuaires
Ne satisfont ni l'âme ni l'esprit.
Les Français ne sont point des tigres, des feroces
Qu'on ne peut amouvoir que par des traits atroces."

The ladies united with the poet, and Saurin found himself compelled to give two fifth acts, and, as the piece was attractive, the public were informed whether the *dénouement* on that particular night would be deathless, or otherwise! In the former case, as Beverley was about to take the poison, his wife, friend, and old servant rushed in just in time to save him, and, in common phrase, to assure him that things were "made comfortable," in spite of his follies, his weakness, and rascality. Grimm jokes over plots admitting of double *dénouements*, and alludes to the Norman vicar of Montchauvet, who wrote a tragedy on the subject of Belshazzar. The vicar thought that dramatic catastrophes depended

on how the poet started. In his tragedy everything turned upon whether Belshazzar should sup or not, in the fifth act. If he does not sup, there can be no hand on the wall, and so "good-night" to the piece. Accordingly, the poet says, in the first act, that the king will sup; in the second, that he will not; in the third, that he will; in the fourth, that he will not; and, consequently, in the fifth, that he must, and will. Had the vicar intended otherwise, he would have begun, he says, in different order!

Ducis adapted Shakspeare's "Othello" to the French stage, for which he furnished two versions. In the first, he killed Desdemona according to tradition. At this, ladies fainted away, and gentlemen protestingly vociferated. Ducis altered the catastrophe, whereat Paris became divided into two parties, who supported the happy or the tragic conclusion, as their feelings prompted them. Talma played the Moor; and, bred as he had been in the shadow and the sunlight of the English stage, he was disgusted with the liberty taken with Shakspeare. One night, when the piece was to end as merrily as a comedy, and the last act was about to begin, Ducis heard Talma muttering at the wing, "I will kill her. The pit will not suffer it, I am sure; well, I will make them endure, and enjoy it. She shall be killed!" Ducis tremblingly acquiesced, and Talma restored the old catastrophe. There was some opposition, and a little fainting on the part of the susceptible, but, in presence of the marvellous talent of the actor, all antagonism gave way, and Talma, with reasonable pride, notified to his friends on the English stage the successful effort he had made in support of the integrity of the Shakspeare catastrophe.

Some authors have altogether refused to despair of the success of their piece, however adverse or indifferent the audience may have been. Take, as a sample, the case of Joseph Mitchell, the Scottish stonemason, but "University-bred." Towards the middle of the last century, the public sat, night after night, quite incapable of comprehending the mysteries and allusions of his "Highland Fair, or the Union of the Clans." At length, on the fourth night, the audience took to laughing at the nonsense served up to them, and as the last act proceeded, the louder did the hilarity become. Poor Mitchell took it all for approval, and going up to Wilks, with an air of triumph, he exclaimed, "De'il o' my saul, sare, they begin to taak the humour at last!"

Hoole, another of the stage-damned, was less self-deluding. When his "Cleonice" was about to be played, a publisher gave him a liberal sum for the copyright, Hoole's reputation, as a poetical translator from the Italian, being then very great. The play, however, was condemned, and Hoole was the first to acknowledge the unwelcome truth. He accordingly returned a portion of the sum he had received to the publisher. He had intended, he said, that the tragedy should be equally profitable to both, and now that it had failed, he would not allow the chief loss to fall on him who had bought the copyright. The watchmaker's son was a gentleman.

Hoole was as indifferent to condemnation as the French dramatist, Hardy, with less greed for money than influenced the latter, who, however, was moved by the proper sense of the value of labour. This French author, Hardy, who died about the year 1630, saw his plays damned with as much indifference as he wrote them. He composed between six and eight hundred, published forty of them, and did not see one live a fortnight. A couple of thousand lines a day were nothing to this ready dramatist, who furnished the players for whom he composed, with a new drama every third day. And it was a day when French dramas were full of incident. We hear of princesses who are married in the first act; the particular heroine is mother of a son in the second, whose education occupies the third; in the fourth he is a warrior and a lover; and in the fifth he marries a nymph who was not in existence when the play began. Hardy was the best of these inferior poets, and was original in this; he was the first who introduced the custom of getting paid for his pieces, a thing unknown till then, and which the poets, his successors, have not failed, says a French writer, "to observe very regularly ever since."

Mrs. Siddons's Bath friend, Dr. Whalley, was not so indifferent to the success of his muse as Monsieur Hardy; but he ranks among damned authors who have accepted condemnation or neglect with a joke. His "Castle of Montval" was yawned at rather than hissed; but as it was acted beyond the third night, the Doctor went down to Mr. Peake, the treasurer, to know what benefit might have accrued to him. It amounted to nothing. "I have been," said the author, an old picquet player, to an

inquiring friend, "I have been piqued and re-piqued;" and therewith he went quietly back to Bath, where he lived upon a private fortune, and the rich stipend from an unwholesome Lincolnshire living, which a kind-hearted bishop had given him on condition he never resided on it!

The tragedy of the other friend of Mrs. Siddons, Mr. Greatheed (the "Regent"), was not much, if any, more successful, than Dr. Whalley's; but the author was so satisfied with his escape, that he gave a supper – that famous banquet, which was followed by a drinking bout at the Brown Bear, in Bow Street, at which a subordinate actor, named Phillimore, was sufficiently tipsy to have courage to fight his lord and master, John Kemble; who was elevated enough to defend himself, and generous enough to forget the affair next morning.

Sheridan kept his self-possession under merrier control than this. His "Rivals" was at first a failure. Cumberland, the most sensitive author in the world, under condemnation, declared that he could not laugh at Sheridan's comedy. "That is ungrateful of him," said Sheridan, to whom the comment was reported by a particular friend – "for I have laughed at a tragedy of his from beginning to end!" But this not having been said in Cumberland's hearing, was less severe than a remark made by Lord Shelburne, who could say the most provoking things, and yet appear quite unconscious of their being so. In the House of Lords he referred to the authorship of Lord Carlisle. "The noble lord," said he, "has written a comedy." "No, no!" interrupted Lord Carlisle, "a tragedy! a tragedy!" "Oh! I beg pardon," resumed Lord Shelburne, "I thought it was a comedy!" The piece thus adjudged of was the "Father's Revenge," an adaptation from Boccaccio, of "Tancred and Sigismunda," never played and seldom read.

Cumberland, who bore his own reverses with impatience, and was ever resolute in blaming the lack of taste on the part of the public, rather than ready to acknowledge his own shortcomings, endured the triumphs of his fellow-dramatists with little equanimity. During the first run of the "School for Scandal," he was present, with his children, in a stage-box, sitting behind them. Each time they laughed at what was going on, on the stage, he pinched them playfully, and asked them at what they were laughing. "There is nothing to laugh at, my angels," he was heard to say; and if the juvenile critics laughed on, he less playfully bade them be silent – the "little dunces!"

The dramatists whom he "adapted," declined to be involved in his reverses. After his "Joanna," an adaptation from Kotzebue, had been damned, the German author took care to record in the public papers that the passages hissed by the English public were not his, but additions made by Cumberland. Sir Fretful found consolation. "If I did not succeed," says this frequently damned author, "in entertaining the audience, I continued to amuse myself… I never disgraced my colours by abandoning *legitimate comedy*, to whose service I am sworn, and in whose defence I have kept the field for nearly half a century – till at last I have survived all true national taste, and lived to see buffoonery, spectacle, and puerility so effectually triumph, that now to be repulsed from the stage is to be recommended to the closet; and to be applauded by the theatre is little less than a passport to the puppet-show." This spirit of self-satisfaction, and depreciation of the public taste, was nothing new. The author or adapter of "Richard II." (Nahum Tate), finding his piece prohibited by authority, published it with a self-congratulatory preface; but he had already done more in the epilogue; mindful of past reverses, and anticipatory of present condemnation, he made Mrs. Cook say: —

"And ere of you, my sparks, my leave I take,
For your unkindness past these prayers I make —
Into such dulness may your poets tire,
Till they shall write such plays as you admire!"

This was thoroughly in the old spirit of Flecknoe; but of samples of the spirit of "damn-ed authors," having given enough, let us pass among the audiences of the last half of the eighteenth century, whose "censure," in the old signification of the term, was challenged by the playwrights.

CHAPTER II
THE AUDIENCES OF THE LAST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the first half of the above century, if a quiet man in the pit ventured on making a remark to his neighbour, who happened to be a "nose-puller," and who disagreed with the remark, the speaker's nose was sure to be painfully wrung by the "puller." In the same period, those very nose-pullers sat quietly, merely grimacing, when the great people in the boxes found it convenient to spit into the pit! But, sometimes the house, pit and all, was full of great people. Thus, on the night of the 7th March 1751, Drury presented a strange appearance. The theatre had been hired by some noble amateurs, who acted the tragedy of "Othello," thus cast in the principal characters. Othello, Sir Francis Delaval; Iago, by John, subsequently (1786) Lord Delaval; Cassio, E. Delaval; Roderigo, Captain Stephens; Desdemona, Mrs. Quon (sister of Sir Francis, and later, the wife of Lord Mexborough); Emilia, Mrs. Stephens. Macklin superintended the rehearsals, and Walpole was present; for he says of the amateurs, in his characteristic way: "They really acted so well, that it is astonishing they should not have had sense enough not to act at all!.. The chief were a family of Delavals, the eldest of which was married by one Foote, a player, to Lady Nassau Poulett, who had kept the latter. The rage was so great to see this performance, that the House of Commons literally adjourned at three o'clock on purpose. The footman's gallery was strung with blue ribands. What a wise people! what an august senate! Yet my Lord Granville once told the prince, I forget on occasion of what folly: 'Sir, indeed your royal highness is in the wrong to act thus; the English are a grave nation.'"

The prince, and other members of the royal family, were present in the stage-box on this occasion; and the presence of blue ribands, in place of livery tags, in the footman's gallery, was owing to the circumstance that tickets were issued numerously enough to completely fill the house, but without indicating to what part of the house the bearers would be admitted. The first who arrived took the best places; and tardy peers, knights of the garter, their wives and ladies, were content to occupy the gallery, for once, rather than have no places at all. Such an audience was never seen there before, and has never been seen there since.

At this time swords were still worn, and evil results followed, to others, as well as to the wearers. On the night of Saturday, September 21, 1751, as the "Way of the World" was being played at Drury, a quarrel, and then a fight with swords took place, between two gallants in the box-lobby. From some cries which arose, the audience thought the house was on fire, and fearful confusion, with fierce struggling, and terrible injury ensued. Many women attempted in their terror to drop from the gallery to the pit. This was not so frightful as it might at present seem, for in those days the front of the lower gallery came down to the roof of the lower boxes. The occupants were a recognised power in the house, often appealed to, and were of very great intelligence and respectability, in one especially favourite locality, the Old Haymarket, as long as the house lasted. Professional men, and poets, and merchants and their wives, sat there to see, hear, and enjoy, whose grand-daughters now sail into stalls, unconscious that there is a gallery in the house, and ignorant that they are of a race who once condescended to sit in it.

In those days royalty's presence formed a great attraction at the theatre; and royalty enjoyed a "row" as heartily as the most riotous there.

When Garrick, in 1754, found that he could not fill Drury Lane, – notwithstanding the ability of his company of actors, unless he played himself, and that his own strength was not equal to the task of playing without intermission, – he brought forward a magnificent ballet-pantomime, called the "Chinese Festival." It was composed by Noverre, – who had treated of his art, dancing, as a branch of philosophy! As many competent English dancers as could be found, were engaged; and there was

a supplementary, but prominent and able body of foreign dancers. Little would have been thought of this but for the circumstance, that when the gorgeous show was set before the public, in the autumn of 1754,[4] war had recently broken out between England and France. Thereupon, John Bull was aroused in a double sense, – his patriotism would not allow of his tolerating the enemy on the English stage; and his sense of religious propriety, not otherwise very remarkable at that time, was shocked at the idea of his condescending to be amused by Papists.

His offended sense was further irritated by the circumstance, that George II., by his presence, on the first night, seemed to sanction favouritism of the enemy and the hostile church. Aggravated by that presence, which they did not at all respect, the pit heaved into a perfect storm, which raged the more as the old King sat and enjoyed, – nay, laughing at the tempest! The Brunswick dynasty was included within the aim of the hisses and execrations which prevailed. Had Garrick followed Lacy's counsel, he would have withdrawn the piece; but Davy was reluctant to lose his outlay, striving to save which, he lost hundreds more. As the "spectacle" was repeated, so was the insurrection against it; but the "quality" interfering, – as they deemed it the *ton* to uphold what great Brunswick approved, – a new element of bitterness was superadded. The boxes pronounced pit and galleries "vulgar;" and those powers waged war the more intensely, because of the arrogance of the boxes, whose occupants were assailed with epithets as unsavoury as any flung at the dancers. Then ensued strange scenes and encounters. Gentlemen in the boxes drew their swords, leaped down into the pit, pricked about them in behalf of "gentility," and got terribly mauled for their pains. The galleries looked on, shouting approbation, and indiscriminately pelting both parties. Not so the fair, who occupied the boxes. They, on seeing the champions of propriety and of themselves, being menaced or overpowered in the pit, pointed the offenders out to the less eager beaux who tarried in their vicinity, and who, for their very honour's sake, felt themselves compelled to out with their bodkins, drop into the surging pit, and lay about them, stoutly or faintly, according to their constitutions. The stronger arms of the plebeians carried the day; and when these had smitten their aristocratic opponents, they celebrated their victory with the accustomed Vandalism. They broke up benches, tore down hangings, smashed mirrors, crashed the harpsichords (always the first of the victims in the orchestra); and finally, charging on to the stage, cut and slashed the scenery in all directions. Some evidence of the improved civilisation of the audiences of this half of the century is afforded by the circumstance that no one suggested that the house should be set on fire. But, the pious and patriotic rioters rushed out to Mr. Garrick's house, in Southampton Street (now Eastey's hotel), and broke every window they could reach with missile, from basement to garret. The hired soldiery could not protect him; nor on their bayonets could he prop up the "Chinese Festival," wooden shoes and popery. This affair cost him a sum of money, the loss of which made his heart ache for many a day.

On our side of the Channel, royal personages have been more amusingly rude than the inferior folk. A good instance of this presents itself to my memory, in the person of the young King of Denmark, who married the sister of George III., and who frequently visited the theatres in London, in 1768. At the play of the "Provoked Husband," it was observed that he applauded every passage in which matrimony was derided; which was commented on as an uncivil proceeding, as his wife was an English princess.

This wayward lad offended audience and actors on another occasion, in quite a different way. In October, he commanded the edifying tragedy of "Jane Shore," during the performance of which he fell fast asleep, and remained so to the amusement of the audience and the annoyance of Mrs. Bellamy, who played Alicia. That haughty and hapless beauty was not likely to let the wearied King sleep on; and accordingly, having to pronounce the words, "O thou false lord!" she approached the royal box, and uttered them expressly in such a piercing tone, that the King awoke in sudden amazement, but with perception enough to enable him to protest that he would not be married to a woman with such

[4] Should be 1755. The "Chinese Festival" was produced 8th November 1755.

a voice though she had the whole world for a dowry. Two nights later[5] he went to see "Zara," Garrick being the Lusignan; and it is to his credit that he sat through that soporific sadness without winking.

The greatest excitement prevailed among the audience when the King went to see Garrick act Ranger, in the "Suspicious Husband." The pit was so crowded and so hot, that every man (and there were few or no women there) took off his coat and sat in his shirt or waistcoat sleeves, in presence of the King. The various hues formed a queer sight; but many of the men fainted. At the thunder of the cheers which greeted his coming, Denmark looked frightened, but bowed repeatedly; and when at Garrick's appearance, the roar of applause was renewed, his majesty appropriated it to himself, and again bowed to all sides of the house, while Ranger waited to congratulate himself on "having got safe to the Temple."

There was little indecorum in Mrs. Bellamy's act of rousing the sleepy King of Denmark with a scream, but greater, and what would now seem gross and unpardonable liberties, were taken by the actors, with their patron George III. For instance, in the "Siege of Calais," there is a scene between two carpenters who erect the scaffold for the execution of the patriots. Parsons played chief carpenter, in which character it was put down for him to say, "So, the King is coming! an the King like not my scaffold, I am no true man." George III. and family were present, one night, at the Haymarket, when this piece was played by command, and Parsons gave this unseemly turn to the set phrase. Advancing close to the royal box, he exclaimed: "An the King were here and did not admire my scaffold, I would say, D – n him! he has no taste!" At this sally the King laughed louder and longer than even the hilarious audience!

Sir Robert Walpole was readier to take offence than King George. He could smile at the inuendoes of the "Beggar's Opera;" but when he was deeply interested in the success of his Excise Bill, and an actor sneeringly alluded to it, in his presence, the minister went behind the scenes, and asked if the words uttered were in the part. It was confessed that they were not; and thereupon Sir Robert raised his cane, and gave the offending player a sound thrashing.

In Parsons' case, monarch and audience alike, knew that no offence was intended, in detection of which loyalty rendered the audience over acute; as in the case when Jack Bannister got into disgrace with the house. "God Save the King" was being sung, and Jack, dressed for Lenitive in the "Prize," stood among an undistinguished group of choristers at the back of the stage. Gentlemen in the boxes called upon him vociferously to come into the front rank, and sing so as to be heard. There was great disapprobation, in which the press joined, and poor Jack, as loyal a Briton as any in those days, had to explain, that being dressed in an extravagant costume, he had kept in the background, out of respect, as his caricatured garb seemed to him to be out of keeping with the words of the national anthem, which, to his thinking, were as something sacred.

Indeed, the loyalty of the actors to "King and Country" could not be doubted. When the Emperor of the French was collecting a host for the invasion of this country, the actors were among the first to enrol themselves as volunteers; and it was not an unusual thing to find the theatre closed, on account of the unavoidable absence of the principal performers, summoned to drill, or other military service then rigidly enforced.

On the other hand, there were what was then called disloyal factions among the audiences, and these drove "Venice Preserved" from the stage for a time by the furious applause which they gave to passages in favour of Liberty, and which applause was supposed to indicate hostility to the British Constitution!

Yet many of these factious people, who did not dislike the King because they loved liberty, were delighted to mark the unrestrained enjoyment of the royal family at the theatre. If George III. roared at the oft-repeated tricks of the clown, little Queen Charlotte shook with silent laughter at the intelligible action of the great comic performers. Once, when Foote, caricaturing an over-dressed

[5] Probably a misprint for "Ten nights later," October 1 and October 11 being the dates in question.

lady, with a head-tire a yard in height, and nearly that in breadth, accidentally let fall the whole scaffolding of finery, and stood bare-polled upon the stage, the Queen's laughter was then audible through the house. Perhaps it was all the higher as she herself wore a modest and becoming adornment for the head. Indeed, she was proud only of her beautiful arms, and these the plain-featured lady contrived to display to the lieges assembled, with a dexterity worthy of the most finished coquette.

There was great homeliness, so to speak, in this intercourse between royal and lay folk, in those days, and much familiarity. The young Princes were often behind the scenes. On one of these occasions, the "sailor-prince," the Duke of Clarence, saw Bannister approach, dressed for Ben, in "Love for Love." The actor wore a coloured kerchief round his neck. "That will never do for a man-of-war's man," said the Prince; who, forthwith, ordered a black kerchief to be sent for, which, putting round the pseudo-sailor's neck, he tied the ends into the nautical slip-knot, and pronounced the thing complete.

The royal patronage and presence did not always give rise to hilarity. Tragedy sometimes attended it. I can remember nothing more painful in its way than a scene, at the Haymarket, on the third of February 1794. The King and Queen had commanded three pieces, by Prince Hoare – "My Grandmother," "No Song, No Supper," and the "Prize." Fifteen lives were lost that night in the precipitate plunge down the old pit-stairs, as the little green doors were opened to the loyal and eager crowd. Whether those who rushed over the fallen bodies were conscious of the extent of the catastrophe, cannot be determined; but the royal family were kept in ignorance of it, from their arrival till the moment they were about to depart. While they had been laughing to the utmost, many a tear had been flowing for the dead, many a groan uttered by the wounded who had struggled so frightfully to share in the joyousness of that evening, and the King's own two heralds, York and Somerset, were lying crushed to death among the slain.

On another occasion, tragic enough in the character of a chief incident, the conduct of the simple-minded King rose to the dignity of heroism. I allude to the night of the 11th of May[6] 1800, at Drury Lane, when George III. had commanded Cibber's comedy, "She Would and She Would Not." He had preceded the other members of the royal family, and was standing alone at the front of the box, when Hatfield fired a pistol at him from below. The excitement, the dragging of the assassin over the orchestra, the shouts of the audience, the fear that other would-be regicides might be there, moved everybody but the King, who calmly kept his position, and, as usual, looked round the house through his monocular opera-glass. The Marquis of Salisbury, very much disconcerted and alarmed, if not for himself, at least for the King, urged the latter to withdraw. "Sir," said George III., "you discompose me as well as yourself; I shall not stir one step." He was a right brave man in this act and observation; and while the comedy was got through confusedly, the avenues to the stage crowded by people eager to see the assailant, the audience breaking spasmodically into cries in behalf of the King, and the Queen and Princesses in tears throughout the evening, George III. alone was calm, cheerful, self-possessed, and bravely undemonstrative.

Before we leave these august personages, let us take one glance at them, as they sit among the audience, "in State."[7]

When their Majesties, with the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, and the Princess Augusta, went thus, *in state*, on October 8, 1783, to see Mrs. Siddons play Isabella, there was much quaint grandeur employed to do them honour. The sovereign and his wife sat under a dome covered with crimson velvet and gold; the heir to the throne sat under another of blue velvet and silver; and the young ladies under a third of blue satin and silver fringe. My readers may desire to know how royalty was attired when it went to the play in state some fourscore years ago. There was some singularity about it. George III. wore "a plain suit of Quaker-coloured clothes with gold buttons. The Queen

[6] Should be 15th May.

[7] See the *London Chronicle*, 9th October 1783, for the account of this visit.

a white satin robe, with a head-dress which was ornamented by a great number of diamonds. The Princess Royal was dressed in a white and blue figured silk, and Princess Augusta in a rose-coloured and white silk of the same pattern as her sister's, having both their head-dresses richly ornamented with diamonds. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had a suit of dark blue Geneva velvet, richly trimmed with gold lace." The handsome young fellow, as he was then, must have looked superbly, and in strong contrast with his sire, – King in Quaker-coloured suit, and Prince in blue Genoa velvet.

George III. was not always lucky in his Thursday-night commands, and people laughed, when, after the solemn funeral of his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, he ordered "Much Ado about Nothing" to be played in his presence. For Shakspeare he had less regard than his father. Prince Frederick once suggested that the whole of Shakspeare's plays should be represented, under his patronage – at the rate of a play a week, but difficulties supervened, and the suggestion made no progress.

Let us turn from these royal to less noble folk. We find, on a July night of 1761, Mr. Walpole at Drury Lane, to witness the performance of Bentley's "Wishes." He has left a pleasant sketch of the audience-side of the house, whither he went "actually feeling for Mr. Bentley, and full of the emotions he must be suffering." But – "what do you think in a house crowded was the first thing I saw? Mr. and Madame Bentley perched up in the front boxes, and acting audience at his own play! No, all the impudences of false patriotism never came up to it! Did one ever hear of an author who had courage to see his own first night in public! I don't believe Fielding or Foote himself ever did. And this was the modest, bashful Mr. Bentley, that died at the thought of being known for an author, even by his own acquaintance. In the stage-box was Lady Bute, Lord Halifax, and Lord Melcombe. I must say the two last entertained the audience as much as the play. Lord Halifax was prompter, and called out to the actor every minute to speak louder. The other went backwards and forwards behind the scenes, fetched the actors into the box, and was busier than Harlequin. The *curious* prologue was not spoken, the whole very ill acted. It turned out just what I remembered it; the good parts extremely good, the rest very flat and vulgar; the genteel dialogue, I believe, might be written by Mrs. Hannah. The audience were extremely fair; the first act they bore with patience, though it promised very ill; the second is admirable, and was much applauded; so was the third; the fourth woeful; the beginning of the fifth it seemed expiring, but was revived by a delightful burlesque of the ancient chorus, which was followed by two dismal scenes, at which people yawned, but were awakened on a sudden, by Harlequin's being drawn up to a gibbet, nobody knew why or wherefore,[8]– at last they were suffered to finish the play, but nobody attended to the conclusion. Modesty and his lady sat all the while with the utmost indifference. I suppose Lord Melcombe had fallen asleep before they came to this scene." The piece was condemned, and the author was the first to recognise the fitness of such a fate. His nephew, Cumberland, sat on one side of him, and when Harlequin was hanged in the sight of the audience, as the fulfilment of the last of the "Three Wishes," Bentley whispered into his complacent kinsman's ear: "If they don't damn this, they deserve to be damned themselves!" The piece lingered for a few nights, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to revive it in 1782. So ended the (not first) experiment of introducing a witty-speaking Harlequin, in place of the dumb hero of pantomime.

At the period when this play was first acted, Garrick and his fellows laboured under a serious disadvantage, when attempting to give full effect to stage illusions, – I allude to the crowding of the stage by a privileged part of the public. In spite of this, Garrick could render perfect and seemingly real, on the same evening, the frantic sorrows of old Lear, and the youthful joyousness of Master Johnny, in the "School Boy." In Dublin, there was often more annoyance than what resulted from mere crowding. Garrick was once playing Lear there, to the Cordelia of Mrs. Woffington, when one Irish gentleman, who was present, actually advanced, put his arm round Cordelia's waist, and thus held her, while she answered with loving words to her father's reproaches. Our sparks never went so

[8] Dr. Doran omits "this raised a prodigious and continued hiss, Harlequin all the while suspended in the air."

far as this, in face of the public, but their intrusion annoyed the great actor. Such annoyance was not felt by his colleagues, and when Garrick resolved once and for ever, in 1762, to keep the public from the stage, there was an outcry on the part of the players, who declared that on benefit nights, when seats and boxes, at advanced prices, were erected on the stage, they should lose the most munificent of their patrons, if these were prohibited from coming behind the curtain. A compromise followed, and Garrick agreed to compensate for driving a part of the audience from the stage, by enlarging the house, and thus affording more room, and the old advantages on benefit nights. Thus, one evil was followed by another, for the larger houses were less favourable to the actor and less profitable to managers, – but stage spectacle became more splendid and effective than ever.

At this time amateur-acting was a fashionable pastime, and it had princely countenance. The Blake Delavals led the taste in this respect at their neat little theatre in Downing Street. The Duke of York, who had distinguished himself early at the Leicester House theatricals, which Quin, I believe, superintended, was a very efficient actor, and he especially merited praise for the grace and spirit with which he played Lothario to the Calista of Lady Stanhope, a Delaval by birth. Admission to these performances was not easily obtained. Walpole did not lack curiosity, but he would not solicit for a ticket, lest he should be refused. "I did not choose," he says, in his comic-jesuitical way, "to have such a silly matter to take ill!"

English and French audiences essentially differed in one pleasant feature, at this time. In France it was not the custom for young unmarried ladies to appear at the great theatres, especially the Opera. As soon as they were married they appeared at the latter in full bridal array, and the plaudits of the house indicated to them the measure of their success. With us, it was otherwise. Ladies, before marriage, appeared at the Opera more frequently than at church; and with much the same feelings, regarding both. "I remember," says Lady M. W. Montague, writing to her daughter, Lady Bute, "to have dressed for St. James's Chapel with the same thoughts your daughters will have at the Opera."

At the latter house, one of the most conspicuous young ladies of her day was Miss Chudleigh, afterwards Duchess of Kingston. She was constantly challenging the attention of the house. On one occasion, when a chorus-singer happened to fall on his face in a fit, Miss Chudleigh drew more notice than sympathy to herself, by pretending to fall into hysterics, and accompanying the pretence with a succession of shrieks and wild laughter. Walpole characteristically ridicules this affectation: "As if she had never seen a man fall on his face before!"

But ordinary confusion was as nothing, compared with that made on benefit nights, when audiences stood, or were seated in a "building on the stage." When Quin returned to play Falstaff for Ryan's benefit, the impatience of the house was great to behold their old favourite; but he was several minutes forcing his way to the front, through the dense crowd which impeded his path. As for Mrs. Cibber, Wilkinson had seen her as Juliet, lying on an old couch, in the tomb of the Capulets, all solitary, with a couple of hundred of the audience surrounding her. This occurred only on benefit nights, but even Garrick was unable to abolish it altogether.

It was really high time for this reformation, seeing that on one occasion, when Holland was acting Hamlet, for his benefit, and all Chiswick (his father's *bakery* still exists close to the churchyard) was there to support their fellow-villager, a young girl, seeing him drop his hat, the three-cornered cock, which Hamlet still wore, she ran, picked it up, and clapped it on his head, wrong side before, in such a way that gave the Dane a look of tipsiness; but see the respect of audiences for Shakspeare; they refrained from laughing, till Hamlet and the Ghost were off the stage, and then gave way to peal on peal of unextinguishable hilarity.

The author of a "Letter to Mr. Garrick," whom the writer treats with very scant courtesy, remarks, in contrasting the French and English audiences of his time, that it was then usual in France, for the audience of a new and well-approved tragedy, to summon the author before them, that he might personally receive the tribute of public approbation due to his talents. "Nothing like this," he says, "ever happened in England!" "And I may say, never will!" is the comment of the author

of a rejoinder to the above letter, who adds: – "I know not how far a French audience may carry their complaisance, but were I in the author's case, I should be unwilling to trust to the civility of an English pit or gallery. We know it is the privilege of an English audience to indulge in a riot, upon any pretence. Benches have been torn up, and even swords drawn, upon slighter occasions than the damning of a play. Suppose, therefore, upon your principle, that every play that is offered should be received, and suppose that some one of them should happen to be damned, might not an English audience, on this occasion, call for the author, not to partake of their applause, indeed, but to receive the tokens of their displeasure. Maugre the good opinion which I have received of my own talents, I would not run the hazard of having my play acted upon these terms; for I think it less tremendous and much safer to bear at distance the groans and cat-calls of ill-disposed critics, than to stand the brunt against half-eaten apples and sour oranges from the two galleries." These calls, however, are now common enough; but the French were before us in adopting the fashion.

Truculent as were the fine gentlemen in our theatres, in the days when swords were worn, they were less pugnacious than Irish audiences in their wrath. Mossop found this, when he was manager at Cork, in 1769. On one night of the season the house was unusually thin, but especially in the pit, where sat one little Major, determined to see all, though he sat alone. Mossop, unwilling to play at a loss, and to save his having to pay the actors whose salaries were regulated by the number of days on which they performed, came forward, announced that there would be no play, and intimated that all the admission money would be returned. The little Major insisted that the play should proceed. Mossop remonstrated, but kept to his purpose. The Major drew his sword and continued to insist. Mossop gently put his hand to *his* and declined to act. In a couple of leaps the Major was on the stage, where the soldier and the player's swords were speedily crossed, and the two men fighting as fiercely as for some dear and noble purpose in peril. The actors and the audience seem to have enjoyed the spectacle; at least no attempt was made to part the combatants till the Major had run his sword through the fleshy part of Mossop's thigh, and Mossop had more slightly wounded the Major in the arm. Both sides claimed a victory; for the manager, unable to act, closed the theatre; and the soldier, too much hurt to be immediately removed, remained *in* the house, as he had declared his intention to do.

Since that period the manners of most Irish audiences have *unfortunately* improved, because the old fun and humour have departed with the exercise of the old license. Not that the old license was not frequently of a somewhat uncivilised nature, as when the Irish footmen in attendance upon masters and mistresses within, being angered by the withdrawal of some privilege, flung their lighted torches into the house, and nearly succeeded in burning both theatre and audience. Sometimes the license had an aspect of rough gallantry. When an actress was more than ordinarily pretty, it was the custom of ardent officers and gentlemen to insist upon escorting the lady home after the play. An incident of this sort once put John Kemble's life in peril. The father of Miss Phillips (afterwards Mrs. Crouch) being, through illness, unable to attend his daughter, procured for her the guardianship of Kemble, who was but too happy to afford it. After the play Miss Phillips's dressing-room door was beset by a crowd of adorers, sword in hand, and hearts burning beneath their waistcoats, sworn to see her home, whether she would or no. The lady was too alarmed to leave her room; but her deputed and faithful Squire urged her to do so, and as she appeared, he gave her his arm, announced the commission he held from the young lady's father, and he declared that he would resent any affront offered to her or to him. Therewith he moved forwards, with his charge under determined escort, and the riotous champions gave way, in good-natured admiration of his resolute courage. It was the more resolute, as the gentleman is said to have then entertained a tender regard for the lady; though, as with that for Mrs. Inchbald, it was all in vain.

Mr. Maguire, Mayor of Cork, and M.P. for Dungarvan, has recently stigmatised the Cork theatre as being a locality which has preserved all the ferocity, and lost all the accompanying fun of the olden time. But even a Cork audience, in the last century, could be shocked. The Rev. C. B. Gibson, in his *History of the County and City of Cork*, tells us of a tailor there who was hanged

for robbery, but who was restored to life by an actor named Glover, who probably was in his debt, and dreaded the summary demands of executors. The process of restoration was long and difficult; after it had been accomplished, the tailor arose, went forth, and got drunk, in which state he went to the theatre in the evening, told his story, exhibited the mark of the rope, and tendered very tipsy acknowledgments to the actor for the service rendered. The audience did not at all relish this part of the evening's entertainment. At present the Cork gallery seems to be as vulgar and witless as that of the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, when filled with undergraduates. The liberty of English audiences has never been dealt with so harshly as that of audiences in continental theatres. In 1772, a theatrical riot took place in the Copenhagen Theatre. In a burlesque piece, a critic, who had dealt severely with the author, was quite as severely satirised, and a fierce tumult ensued. To prevent its recurrence, hissing and all equivalent marks of disapprobation were magisterially prohibited. This prohibition was long in force, and it is still maintained in continental theatres, when crowned heads are present. On these occasions the audience neither applaud nor hiss, but leave all demonstrations of approval or censure to the illustrious visitors, as if they alone were endowed, for the nonce, with critical acumen.

Charles Fox wound up the idler part of his early life by joining in private theatricals. Before he seriously commenced his career as a public man, in 1774, he played Horatio, in the "Fair Penitent," to the Lothario of his lively friend, Fitzpatrick, at Winterslow House near Salisbury, the seat of the Hon. Stephen Fox. In the after-piece, "High Life Below Stairs," Fox played Sir Harry's Servant with immense spirit; and after the curtain fell the house was burnt to the ground.

On the 10th of January, two days later, the Duke of Gloucester and his Duchess, formerly Lady Waldegrave, were at Covent Garden, "for the first time, in ceremony." The Duchess was confounded with the excessive applause; turned pale, coloured, and won by her modesty, confusion, and beauty the acclamations which the audience were willing to spare her, on account of the apparent condition of her health. The marriage of this pair had offended the King. The piece selected by them was "Jane Shore," as illustrative, perhaps, of the evils of *dishonourable* connections between princes and ladies of lower degree. Two nights after this visit of ceremony, the King and Queen went in state to Drury Lane, and saw the "School for Wives." It is only to be wondered at that numerous applicable passages in both plays were not noticed by the applause or murmurs of the audience.

Walpole gives a pretty picture of the audience side of Drury Lane, on the 25th of May 1780, on which night Lady Craven's comedy, the "Miniature Picture," which had been once privately played at her own house, was acted for the first time in public. "The chief singularity was that she went to it herself the second night 'in *form*,' sat in the middle of the front row of the stage-box, much dressed, with a profusion of white bugles and plumes, to receive the public homage due to her sex and loveliness. The Duchess of Richmond, Lady Harcourt, Lady Edgecumbe, Lady Aylesbury, Mrs. Damer, Lord Craven, General Conway, Colonel O'Hara, Mr. Lennox, and I were with her. It was amazing to see a young woman entirely possess herself; but there is such an integrity and frankness in the consciousness of her own beauty and talents, that she speaks of them with a *naïveté*, as if she had no property in them, but only wore them as the gift of the gods. Lord Craven, on the contrary, was quite agitated by his fondness for her, and with impatience at the bad performance of the actors, which was wretched indeed; yet the address of the plot, which is the chief merit of the piece, and some lively pencilling, carried it off very well, though Parsons murdered the Scotch Lord (Macgrinnon), and Mrs. Robinson, who is supposed to be the favourite of the Prince of Wales, thought on nothing but her own charms, or him. There was a very good, though endless, prologue, written by Sheridan, and spoken in perfection by King, which was encored (an entire novelty) the first night; and an epilogue that I liked still better, and which was full as well delivered by Mrs. Abington, written by Mr. Jekyll."

The prologue was called for a second time, at the conclusion of the play, which was acted after the "Winter's Tale." King had long before left the house, but though it was past midnight, the audience waited till he was sent for from his own residence, whence he returned to speak the address!

"The audience," adds Walpole, "though very civil, missed a very fair opportunity of being gallant; for in one of those *logues*, I forget which, the noble authoress was mentioned, and they did not applaud as they ought to have done exceedingly, when she condescended to avow her pretty child, and was there looking so very pretty. I could not help thinking to myself, how many deaths Lady Harcourt would have suffered rather than encounter such an exhibition; yet Lady Craven's tranquillity had nothing displeasing – it was only the ease that conscious pre-eminence bestows on sovereigns, whether their empire consists in power or beauty. It was the ascendant of Millamant, of Lady Betty Modish, and Indamore; and it was tempered by her infinite good nature, which made her make excuses for the actors, instead of being provoked at them."

Nineteen years later, Lady Craven, then Margravine of Anspach, "having with unprecedented kindness and liberality lent Mr. Fawcett the manuscript of her magnificent and interesting opera, the 'Princess of Georgia,'" that actor announced it for his benefit, April 19th, 1799, with an assurance that "nothing should be wanting on his part to render it as acceptable to the public as it was to the nobility who had the pleasure of seeing it at Brandenburgh House Theatre." On this occasion, however, the house was not so splendidly attended as when the "Miniature Picture" was represented, and in spite of the melody of Incledon, the grimaces of Munden, the humour of Fawcett, the grace of Henry Johnston, and the energy of his wife, the "Princess of Georgia" was heard of no more.

There is one circumstance which made a striking difference between the aspects of the French and English pit. One of the popular grievances which the French Revolution did not redress, was the appearance of an armed guard, with fixed bayonets, within the theatre. When the curtain rises, the menacing figures withdraw a little; but they are at hand. In the last century they remained throughout the performance, and they kept the pit in a purely passive condition, whatever might be its displeasure, disgust, or discomfort. Under the gleam of the bayonet, a spectator no more dared to laugh too loudly at a comedy, than to sob too demonstratively at a tragedy. But Gaul and Frank were not always to be restrained, and they would hiss heartily at times. Ah "Il est bien des sifflets mais nous avons la garde!" A too prominent dissentient was sure to be seized by the sentinel, who escorted him to the captain of the guard, who judged him militarily, and, after procuring the signature of the commissary of police, a pure matter of form, sent the offender, for the night, to prison.

With this restraint, it is not wonderful that the French audiences were coerced into brutality, and that they readily took offence, were it only to show their manhood. With us it was different. The whole house laughed aloud, or smiled contemptuously at sarcasms fired at them from prologue or epilogue, or by implication in the play. It is singular, too, that so late as 1782, though French audiences *would* express an opinion, the actors themselves cared little for its being unfavourable, and careless players grew accustomed to be hissed, without being the more careful for it. To remedy this, Mercier proposed the appointment of a writer who should watch the theatres and register the insults inflicted on the public by incompetent or indifferent actors, and by incapable poets. It was a proposition, in fact, for the establishment of a theatrical critic, whose judgments were to be recorded in the journals. There was public criticism of all other arts, but up to this time the art of acting was exempt from the censure of the French journals. So, at least, says Mercier, who seems, however, to have forgotten that when the Abbé Raynal conducted the *Mercure* some thirty years previously, the merits of actors *were* occasionally discussed.

French sentinels grew careless, or French individuals waxed bolder. Our own gallery was once famous for the presence of a trunkmaker, whose loud applause or shrill censure used to settle the destiny of authors. The house followed, according as the trunkmaker howled or hammered. I know nothing in French audiences to compare with this, except the notorious Swiss in the days of towering feathers and broad headdresses – a double fashion, which he succeeded in suppressing. When seated in the back row of a box, unable to see the stage for the fashionable impediments in front, it was his custom to produce a pair of shears and cut away all the obstructions between him and the delights for which he had paid, but could not enjoy. It was probably only a demonstration of destruction which

he made, but the result was effectual. At first the ladies made way for him to come to the front; but ultimately they took down their feathers, and narrowed their head-gear, and the Swiss, shorn of his grievance, was soon forgotten.

This intruder must have often marred the efforts of the best actor; but I remember a case in which the best actor of his day was entirely discountenanced by the quietest and most attentive auditor in the house. John Kemble was playing Mark Antony, in Dublin, when his eye happened to fall on a sedate old gentleman, who was eagerly listening to him through an ear-trumpet. The first sight caused the actor to smile, and that at an inappropriate moment, for he was surrounded by his wife Octavia (Mrs. Inchbald) and her children, the play being Dryden's "All for Love," and the situation affecting. The more John Kemble endeavoured to suppress his inclination to smile, the less he was able to control himself; as his agitation increased, the ear-trumpet was directed towards him more pertinaciously; seeing which the actor broke forth into a peal of laughter, and rushed in confusion from the stage. The audience had discovered the cause, and laughed with him; while the deaf gentleman, unconscious of his own part in the performance, and marking the hilarious faces around him, dropped his trumpet with the vexed air of a man who had lost a point, and could not account for it.

Then, if there were infirm, so were there sentimental, auditors. In the *Morning Post*, of September 27, 1776, we are told that: – "A gentleman, said to be a captain in the army, was so very much agitated on Miss Brown's appearance on Wednesday night, that it was imagined it would be necessary to convey him out of the house; but a sudden burst of tears relieved him, and he sat out the farce with tolerable calmness and composure. The gentleman is said to have entertained a passion for that lady last winter, and meant to have asked her hand as a man of honour, but – !" There were other curiosities in front, besides this sentimental captain. The famous Lady Hamilton drew large audiences to Drury Lane towards the close of the century, when it was announced that the performance would be honoured by the attendance of herself and her husband, Sir William, our minister to the Neapolitan court. The house gazed upon the beauty, and the beauty was deeply interested in the acting of Mrs. Powell, who, in her turn, was as deeply interested in my lady. Between the two women a connection existed which was little suspected by the audience. The ambassador's wife and the tragedy queen had first met under very different circumstances, in the house of Dr. Budd, in Blackfriars, where Jane Powell filled the office of housemaid, and Emma Harte, as she was then called, was employed as under maid in the nursery.

At this period I do not know that our galleries at least were more civilised than they were in earlier days – that is, our provincial galleries: that of Liverpool, for instance – as the obese, little low comedian, Hollingsworth, once experienced. He was looking at the house through the aperture in the curtain, when the twinkle of his eye being detected by a ruffian aloft, the latter, running a penknife through an apple, hurled it, perhaps at random, but so fatally true, that the point of the knife struck the unoffending actor so close to the eye that for some time his sight was despaired of. The gallery patrons of the drama in London were as rude, but less cruel, in their ruffianism. An orange, flung at a lady in court dress, seems to have been a favourite missile for a favourite pastime. I meet with one of these ruffians in presence of a magistrate, who solemnly assures him, that if he is ever guilty of a similar outrage, he will be taken on to the stage and compelled to ask pardon of the house – an honour at which the fellow would, probably, have been exceedingly gratified.

We have a sample of the coolness of an Irish debutant and the patience of an audience of the last century; the first, in the person of Dexter, whom Garrick, on the secession of Barry from his company, brought over, with Ross and Mossop, from Dublin. Dexter, on the night of his first appearance, in "Oroonoko", was comfortably seated in the pit, where he remained chatting with his friends and supporters until the "second music" commenced. This music, in the old days, was ordinarily played half an hour before the curtain rose. This was a long period for an audience to be kept further waiting; but it was a short period wherein a tragedian might prepare and deck himself for a sort of solemn ordeal. The *début* proved successful; and Garrick generously expressed great

admiration and hopefulness of the young actor, who, nevertheless, soon fell out of estimation of the audience, as might have been expected, from the cool and careless proceeding of his first night, when he walked out of a crowded pit to hastily dress himself for an arduous part.

This was a sort of liberty which a French pit would not have tolerated. It bore, however, with other freedoms. When it laughed, as the children were brought in, in "Inez de Castro," Madame Duclos, who was the weeping Inez, turned suddenly round, and exclaimed, "Fools! it is the most touching part of the piece!" and then resumed weeping. Again: Du Fresne, acting Sévère, in "Polyeucte," speaking low as he was confiding a perilous secret to a friend, was interrupted by cries of "Louder! louder!" "And you, sirs, not so loud!" cried the calmly-angry actor, to a pit which took the rebuke meekly; – as meekly as our public took the verdict of Foote, who says, in his *Treatise on the Passions*, – "There are twelve thousand playgoers in London; but not the four and twentieth part of them can judge correctly of the merits of plays or players."

Then, considering the measure of respect which actors used to profess that they entertained for audiences, the liberties which the former occasionally took with the latter was remarkable. When Mrs. Griffiths's "Wife in the Right" was coldly received, she laid the blame on Shuter (Governor Andrews), who had neglected to attend rehearsal. On a succeeding night, accordingly, the audience hissed Shuter as soon as he appeared. He defended himself by asserting that illness had kept him from rehearsal; "but, gentlemen," said he, "if there is any one here who wants to know if I had been drunk three days before, I acknowledge that I had, and beg pardon for that." The audience forgave the rude actor and condemned the play.

Again: a few years subsequently, at York, Mrs. Montagu was cast for the Queen in Hull's romantic play, "Henry II." She was a great favourite; and she claimed the more agreeable part of Rosamond, which had been taken by Mrs. Hudson, – the play being acted for her benefit. Mrs. Montagu refused to study the part of Queen Eleanor; and under the plea of illness preventing study, she sent an actor forward to state that she would read the part. Mrs. Hudson's friends insisted on Mrs. Montagu appearing, to explain her own case; and then the imperious lady swept on to the stage, with the saucy exclamation, "Who's afraid?" and the equally saucy intimation that she *would* read the part, for she had not had time to learn it. This excited the wrath of the house; and some one cried out that the audience would rather hear it read by the cook-wench at the next ale-house than by her. Then, dame Montagu, as she was called, fired by the remark, and by cries forbidding her to read and commanding her to act, looked scornfully at the pit, flung the book which she held into the centre of the crowd, and with a "There! – curse you all!" swept off the stage, amid the mingled hisses and laughter of the house. But she was not permitted to act again.

Covent Garden audiences were more patient with saucy actresses; and they could even bear with Mrs. Lesingham, the handsome and too intimate friend of Harris, the proprietor, coming on to speak a prologue, in which she was so imperfect, that a man stood close to her with a copy, to prompt her in the words. For less disrespect than this, the same audience had demanded the dismissal of an actor, and condemned him to penury. Macklin suffered twice in this way, from the capricious but cruel judgment of the house; and having here mentioned his name, I will proceed to notice the career of a man who belongs to so many eras.

CHAPTER III
CHARLES MACKLIN

A little child, about the last year of the reign of William III., – a boy who is said to have been born, *Anno Domini* 1690, was taken to Derry, to kiss the hand of, and wish a happy new year to, the old head of his family, Mr. M'Laughlin. This ceremony was kept up in the family circle, because the M'Laughlins were held to be of royal descent, and the Mr. M'Laughlin in question to be the representative of some line of ancient kings of Ireland!

In the summer of 1797, an old actor is dying out in Tavistock Row, Covent Garden. Hull and Munden, and Davies and Ledger, and friends on and off the stage, occasionally look in and talk of old times with that ancient man, whose memory, however, is weaker than his frame. He has been an eccentric but rare player in his day. He had acted with contemporaries of Betterton; had seen, or co-operated with, every celebrity of the stage since; and did not withdraw from that stage till after Braham, who was among us but as yesterday, had sung his first song on it. He gave counsel to old Charles Mathews, and he may have seen little Edmund Kean being carried in a woman's arms from the neighbourhood of Leicester Square to Drury Lane Theatre, where the pale little fellow had to act an imp in a pantomime. The old man, carried, in the summer last named, to his grave in the corner of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, was the child who had done homage to a traditional king of Ireland, so many years before. If Macklin (as Charles M'Laughlin came to call himself) was born at the date above given, the incidents of his life connect him with very remote periods. He was born two months before King William gained the battle of the Boyne;[9] and he lived to hear of Captain Nelson's prowess, to read of the departure to India of that Lieutenant-Colonel Wellesley, whose career of martial glory culminated at Waterloo, and to have seen, perhaps, a smart young lad, just then in his teens, the Hon. Henry Temple, – now Viscount Palmerston and Prime Minister of England! Five sovereigns and five-and-twenty administrations, from Godolphin to Pitt, succeeded each other, while Charles Macklin was thus progressing on his journey of life.

Charles Macklin represents contradiction, sarcasm, irritability, restlessness. It came of a double source, – his descent and the line of characters which he most affected. His father was a stern Presbyterian farmer, in Ulster; his mother, a rigid Roman Catholic. At the siege of Derry, three of his uncles were among the besiegers, and three among the besieged; and he had another, – a Roman Catholic priest, who undertook to educate him, but who consigned the mission to Nature. I have somewhere read that at five-and-thirty, Macklin could not read, perfectly; but *that* is a fable; or at eight or nine, he could hardly have played Monimia, in private theatricals, at the house of the good Ulster lady, who looked after him more carefully than the priest, and more tenderly than Nature.

In after years, Quin said of Macklin that he had – not *lines* in his face, but *cordage*; and again, on seeing Macklin dressed and painted for Shylock, Quin remarked that if ever Heaven had written villain on a brow it was on that fellow's! One can hardly fancy that the gentle Monimia could ever have found a representative in one who came to be thus spoken of; but he is said to have succeeded in this respect, perfectly, and in voice, feature, and action, to have counterfeited that most interesting of orphans with great success.

It was a fatal success, in one sense. It inspired the boy with a desire to act on a wider stage. It created in him a disgust for the vocation to which he was destined, – that of a saddler, – from which he ran away before he was apprentice enough to sew a buckle on a girth; and the lad made

[9] It is quite apocryphal that Macklin was two months old when his father was killed at the Battle of the Boyne. When he was in full possession of his faculties he said he was born in November 1699. As he died in 1797 he had accomplished ninety-seven years, the age stated on his coffin-lid, and was in his ninety-eighth year. —*Doran MS.*Dr. Doran no doubt means that Macklin's father was not killed at the Battle of the Boyne.

off for the natural attraction of all Irish lads, – Dublin. His ambition could both soar and stoop; and he entered Trinity College as a badge-man or porter, which illustrious place and humble office he quitted in 1710.

Except that he turned stroller, and suffered the sharp pangs which strollers feel, – and enjoyed the roving life led by players on the tramp, little is here known of him. He seems to have served some five years to this rough and rollicking apprenticeship, and then to have succeeded in being allowed to appear at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1725, as Alcander, in "Œdipus." His manner of speaking was found too "familiar," that is, too *natural*. He had none, he said, of the hoity-toity, sing-song delivery then in vogue; and Rich recommended him to *go to grass again*; and accordingly to green fields and strolling he returned.

I suppose some manager had his eye on Macklin at Southwark Fair, in 1730, for he passed thence immediately to Lincoln's Inn Fields. He played small parts, noticed in another page, and was probably thankful to get them, not improving his cast till he went to Drury Lane, in 1733, when he played the elder Cibber's line of characters, and in 1735 created Snip in the farce of the "Merry Cobler," and came thereby in peril of his life. One evening, a fellow actor, Hallam, grandfather of merry Mrs. Mattocks, took from Macklin's dressing-room, a wig, which the latter wore in the farce. The players were in the "scene room," some of them seated on the settle in front of the fire, when a quarrel broke out between Hallam and Macklin, which was carried on so loudly that the actors then concluding the first piece were disturbed by it. Hallam, at length, surrendered the "property," but, after doing so, used words of such offence that Macklin, equally unguarded in language, and more unguarded in action, struck at him with his cane, in order to thrust him from the room. Unhappily the cane penetrated through Hallam's eye, to the brain, and killed him. Macklin's deep concern could not save him from standing at the bar of the Old Bailey on a charge of murder. The jury returned him guilty of manslaughter, without malice aforethought, and the contrite actor was permitted to return to his duty.

Among the friends he possessed was Mrs. Booth, widow of Barton Booth, in whose house was domiciled as companion a certain Grace Purvor, who could dance almost as well as Santlow herself, and had otherwise great attractions. Colley Cibber loved to look in at Mrs. Booth's to listen to Grace's well-told stories; Macklin went thither to tell his own to Grace; and John, Duke of Argyle, flitted about the same lady for purposes of his own, which he had the honesty to give up, when Macklin informed him of the honourable interest he took in the friend of Mrs. Booth. Macklin married Grace, and the latter proved excellent both as wife and actress – of her qualities in the latter respect I have already spoken.

For some years Macklin himself failed to reap the distinction he coveted. The attainment was made, however, in 1741, when he induced Fleetwood to revive Shakspeare's "Merchant of Venice," with Macklin for Shylock.

There was a whisper that he was about to play the Jew as a serious character. His comrades laughed, and the manager was nervous. The rehearsals told them nothing, for there Macklin did little more than walk through the part, lest the manager should prohibit the playing of the piece, if the nature of the reform Macklin was about to introduce should make him fearful of consequences. In some such dress as that we now see worn by Shylock, Macklin, on the night of the 15th of February,[10] 1741, walked down the stage, and looking through the eyelet-hole in the curtain, saw the two ever-formidable front rows of the pit occupied by the most highly-dreaded critics of the period. The house was also densely crowded. He returned from his survey, calm and content, remarking, "Good! I shall be tried to-night by a Special Jury!"

There was little applause, to Macklin's disappointment, on his entrance, yet people were pleased at the aspect of a Jew whom Rembrandt might have painted. The opening scene was spoken in

[10] 14th of February (2d edition).

familiar, but earnest accents. Not a hand yet gave token of approbation, but there occasionally reached Macklin's ears, from the two solemn rows of judge and jury in the pit, the sounds of a "Good!" and "Very good!" "Very well, indeed!" – and he passed off more gratified by this than by the slight general applause intended for encouragement.

As the play proceeded, so did his triumph grow. In the scene with Tubal, which Dogget in Lansdowne's version had made so comic, he shook the hearts, and not the sides of the audience. There was deep emotion in that critical pit. The sympathies of the house went all for Shylock; and at last, a storm of acclamation, a very hurricane of approval, roared pleasantly over Macklin. So far all was well; but the trial scene had yet to come.

It came; and there the triumph culminated. The actor was not loud, nor grotesque; but Shylock was natural, calmly confident, and so terribly malignant, that when he whetted his knife, to cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there, a shudder went round the house, and the profound silence following told Macklin that he held his audience by the heart-strings, and that his hearers must have already acknowledged the truth of his interpretation of Shakspeare's Jew. When the act-drop fell, then the pent-up feelings found vent, and Old Drury shook again with the tumult of applause. The critics went off to the coffee-houses in a state of pleasurable excitement. As for the other actors, Quin (Antonio) must have felt the master-mind of that night. Mrs. Pritchard (Nerissa), excellent judge as she was, must have enjoyed the terrible grandeur of that trial-scene; and even Kitty Clive (Portia) could not have dared, on that night, to do what she ordinarily made Portia do, in the disguise of young Bellario; namely, mimic the peculiarities of some leading lawyer of the day. And Macklin? – Macklin remarked, as he stood among his fellows, all of whom were, I hope, congratulatory, "I am not worth fifty pounds in the world; nevertheless, on this night am I Charles the Great!"

That Pope was in the house on the third night, and that he pronounced Macklin to be the Jew that Shakspeare drew, is not improbable; but the statement that Macklin, soon after, dined with Pope and Bolingbroke at Battersea is manifestly untrue, for the latter was then living in retirement, at Fontainbleau. It could not have been in such company, at this period, that Pope asked the actor, why he dressed Shylock in a red hat, and that Macklin replied, it was because he had read in an old history that the Jews in Venice were obliged, by law, to wear a hat of that decided colour; – which was true.

Macklin was proud and impetuous, and often lost engagements, by offending; and regained them by publicly apologising. He was an actor well established in favour, when, in the season of 1745-46, he made his first appearance as an author in an *àpropos* tragedy for the '45 era, "Henry VII., or the Popish Impostor." The anachronism in the title is only to be matched by the violations done to chronology and propriety in the play, – a crude work, six weeks in the doing. It settles, however, in some degree, the time when Macklin left the Church of Rome for that of England. It must have been prior to the period in which he wrote the above-named piece. After it took place, he used to describe himself "as staunch a Protestant as the Archbishop of Canterbury, and on the same principles;" – a compliment, I suppose, to John Potter!

After playing during four seasons at Drury Lane, Macklin spent from 1748 to 1750 in Dublin, where he and his wife were to receive £800 a year. He delighted the public, and helped to ruin the manager, Sheridan, who was unable to fulfil his engagement, and got involved in a lawsuit. From 1750 to 1754[11] Macklin was at Covent Garden, where one of his most extraordinary parts was Mercutio, to Barry's Romeo! – a part for which he was utterly unfit, but which he held to be one of his best! – not inferior to Woodward's! His view of the rival Romeos, too, had something original in it. Barry, he said, in the garden scene, came on with a lordly swagger, and talked so loud that the servants ought to have come out and tossed him in a blanket; but Garrick sneaked into the garden, like a thief in the night. And at this critical comment the latter did not feel flattered.

[11] Macklin does not seem to have been at Covent Garden in 1754. He had a farewell benefit at Drury Lane, 20th December 1753, after which he opened his tavern.

In 1754[12] Macklin introduced his daughter, with a prologue, and withdrew himself from the stage, to appear in a new character, that of master of a tavern, where dinners might be had at 4s. a head,[13] including any sort of wine the guest might choose to ask for! The house was under the Piazza, in Covent Garden; and Mr. Macklin's "Great Room in Hart Street" subsequently became George Robins' auction-room. I do not like to contemplate Macklin in this character, bringing in the first dish, the napkin over his arm, at the head of an array of waiters, who robbed him daily; that done, he steps backwards to the sideboard, bows, and then directs all proceedings by signs. The cloth drawn, he advances to the head of the table, makes another servile bow, fastens the bell-rope to the chair, and hoping he has made everything agreeable, retires!

The lectures on the drama and ancient art, and the debates which followed, in his Great Room, the "British Inquisition," were not in much better taste. The wits of the town found excellent sport in interrupting the debaters, and few were more active in this way than Foote. "Do you know what I am going to say?" asked Macklin. "No," said Foote, "*do you?*" On the 25th of January 1755, Charles Macklin was in the list of what the *Gentleman's Magazine* used to politely call the "B – ts," as failing in the character of vintner, coffee-man, and chapman. His examination only showed that he had failed in prudence. He had been an excellent father, and on his daughter's education alone he had expended £1200.

He remained disengaged till December 12th, 1759, when he appeared at Drury Lane, as Shylock, and Sir Archy Macsarcasm, in "Love à la Mode," a piece of his own. From the profits received on each night of its being acted, Macklin stipulated that he should have a share during life. The arrangement was advantageous to him, although this little piece was not at first successful. After a season at Drury, he passed the next at the Garden, and in 1763[14] reappeared in Dublin, at Smock Alley, then at Crow Street, and Capel Street, under rival managers Mossop, Sheridan,[15] or Barry, and with more profit to himself than to them. In 1773 he returned to Covent Garden, where he made an attempt at Macbeth, which brought on that famous theatrical "row" which Macklin laid to the enmity of Reddish and Sparks, and of which I have spoken, under that year. With intervals of rest, Macklin continued to play, without increase of fame, till 1780,[16] when he produced his original play, the "Man of the World," and created, at the age, probably, of ninety years, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, one of the most arduous characters in a great actor's repertory. The Lord Chamberlain licensed this admirable piece with great reluctance, for though the satire was general, it was severe, and susceptible of unpleasant and particular application. Shylock, Sir Pertinax, and Sir Archy, were often played by the old actor, whose memory did not begin to fail till 1788, when it first tripped, as he was struggling to play Shylock. The aged actor tottered to the lights, talked of the inexplicable terror of mind which had come over him, and asked for indulgence to so aged a servant; and then he went on, now brilliantly, now all uncertain and confused. He was to play the same character for his benefit, on May 7th, 1789, and went into the green-room dressed for the part. Whether he was then in his 90th or his 100th year, the effort was a great one; and, anticipating it might fail, the manager had requested Ryder, an actor of merit, who had been a great favourite and a luckless manager in Ireland, to be ready to supply Macklin's place.

The older performer seeing good Miss Pope in the green-room, asked her if she was to play that night. "To be sure I am, dear sir," she said; "you see I am dressed for Portia." Macklin looked vacantly at her, and, in an imbecile tone of voice, remarked, "I had forgotten; who plays Shylock?" "Who? why you, sir; you are dressed for it!" The aged representative of the Jew was affected; he

[12] Miss Macklin made her first appearance, as a woman, on 10th April 1751, on the occasion of her father's benefit.

[13] Cooke, whose account of this matter is very full, says 3s. a head.

[14] Macklin was at Drury Lane, 1759-60; Covent Garden, 1760-61; and was in Dublin, at Crow Street, in 1761-62.

[15] Sheridan was not manager after 1759. Macklin acted under the management of Dawson also.

[16] 1781. The "Man of the World" was produced 10th May 1781.

put his hand to his forehead, and in a pathetic tone deplored his waning memory; and then went on the stage; spoke, or tried to speak, two or three speeches, struggled with himself, made one or two fruitless efforts to get clear, and then paused, collected his thoughts, and, in a few mournful words, acknowledged his inability, asked their pardon, and, under the farewell applause of the house, was led off the stage, for ever.

As an actor, he was without trick; his enunciation was clear, in every syllable. Taken as a whole, he probably excelled every actor who has ever played Shylock, say his biographers; but I remember Edmund Kean, and make that exception. He was not a great tragedian, nor a good light comedian, but in comedy and farce, where rough energy is required, and in parts resembling Shylock, in their earnest malignity, he was paramount. He was also an excellent teacher, very impatient with mediocrity, but very careful with the intelligent. Easily moved to anger, his pupils, and, indeed, many others stood in awe of him; but he was honourable, generous, and humane; convivial, frank, and not more free in his style than his contemporaries; but naturally irascible, and naturally forgiving. Eccentricity was second nature to him, and seems to have been so with other men of his blood. His nephew and godson, the Rev. Charles Macklin, held an incumbency in Ireland, which he lost because he would indulge in a particular sort of Church discipline. At the close of his sermon he used to administer the benediction, and the bagpipes. With the first he dismissed the congregation, and, taking up the second, he blew his people out with a lusty voluntary.

When Macklin left the stage, his second wife, the widow of a Dublin hosier, and a worthy woman, looked their fortune in the face. It consisted of £60 in ready money, and an annuity of £10. Friends were ready, but the proud old actor was not made to be wounded in his pride; he was made, in a measure, to help himself. His two pieces, "Love à la Mode," and the "Man of the World," were published by subscription. With nearly £1600 realised thereby, an annuity was purchased of £200 for Macklin's life, and £75 for his wife, in case of her survival. And this annuity he enjoyed till the 11th of July 1797, when the descendant of the royal M'Laughlins died, after a theatrical life, not reckoning the strolling period, of sixty-four years.

If Macklin was really of the old school, that school taught what was truth and nature. His acting was essentially manly, there was nothing of trick about it. His delivery was more level than modern speaking, but certainly more weighty, direct, and emphatic. His features were rigid, his eye cold and colourless; yet the earnestness of his manner, and sterling sense of his address, produced an effect in Shylock that has remained, with one exception, unrivalled.

Boaden thought Cooke's Sir Pertinax noisy, compared with Macklin's. "He talked of *booing*, but it was evident he took a credit for suppleness that was not in him. Macklin could inveigle as well as subdue; and modulated his voice almost to his last year, with amazing skill."

In his earlier days, Macklin was an acute inquirer into meaning; and always rendered his conceptions with force and beauty. In reading Milton's lines —

> "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that for-bid-den tree – whose mortal taste
> Brought Death into the world, and all our woe,"

the first word in capitals was uttered with an awful regret, the suitable forerunner, says Boaden, "to the great amiss" which follows.

Macklin's chief objection to Garrick was directed against his reckless abundance of action and gesture; all trick, start, and ingenious attitude were to him subjects of scorn. He finely derided the Hamlets who were violently horrified and surprised, instead of solemnly awed, on first seeing the Ghost. "Recollect, sir," he would say, "Hamlet came there to see his father's spirit."

Kirkman gives us a picture of Macklin, in his old age, which is illustrative of the man, and his antagonism to Quin. The scene is at the Rainbow Coffee House, King Street, Covent Garden, in

1787, where some one of the company had asked him if he had ever quarrelled with Quin. "Yes, sir," was the answer. "I was very low in the theatre as an actor, when the surly fellow was the despot of the place. But, sir, I had – had a lift, sir. Yes; I was to play the – the – the boy with the red breeches; – you know who I mean, sir; – he, whose mother is always going to law; – you know who I mean!" "*Jerry Blackacre*, I suppose, sir?" "Aye, sir, —*Jerry*. Well, sir, I began to be a little known to the public; and egad, I began to make them laugh. I was called the *Wild Irishman*, sir; and was thought to have some fun in me; and I made them laugh heartily at the boy, sir, – in Jerry.

"When I came off the stage, the surly fellow, who played the scolding Captain in the play; Captain – Captain – you know who I mean!" "*Manly*, I believe, sir?" "Aye, sir, – the same *Manly*. Well, sir, the surly fellow began to scold me; told me I was at my tricks, and that there was no having a chaste scene for me. Everybody, nay, egad, the manager himself, was afraid of him. I was afraid of the fellow, too; but not much. Well, sir, I told him I did not mean to disturb *him* by my acting, but to *show off a little myself*. Well, sir, in the other scenes I did the same, and made the audience laugh incontinently; – and he scolded me again, sir. I made the same apology; but the surly fellow would not be appeased. Again, sir, however, I did the same; and when I returned to the green-room, he abused me like a pickpocket, and said I must leave off my *d – d tricks*. I told him I could not play otherwise. He said I *could*, and I *should*. Upon which, sir, egad, I said to him flatly, – 'you lie.' He was chewing an apple at this moment; and spitting the contents into his hand, he threw them in my face." "Indeed!" "It is a fact, sir! Well, sir, I went up to him directly (for I was a great *boxing cull* in those days), and pushed him down into a chair, and pummelled his face d – bly."

"You did right, sir."

"He strove to resist, but he was no match for me; and I made his face swell so with the blows, that he could hardly speak. When he attempted to go on with his part, sir, he mumbled so, that the audience began to hiss. Upon which, he went forward and told them, sir, that something unpleasant had happened, and that he was really very ill. But, sir, the moment I went to strike him, there were many noblemen in the green-room, full dressed, with their swords and large wigs (for the green-room was a sort of state-room then, sir). Well, they were all alarmed, and jumped upon the benches, waiting in silent amazement till the affair was over.

"At the end of the play, sir, he told me I must give him satisfaction; and that when he changed his dress, he would wait for me at the Obelisk, in Covent Garden. I told him I would be with him; – but, sir, when he was gone, I recollected that I was to play in the pantomime (for I was a great pantomimic boy in those days). So, sir, I said to myself, 'd – the fellow; let him wait; I won't go to him till my business is all over; let him fume and fret, and be hanged!' Well, sir, Mr. Fleetwood, the manager, who was one of the best men in the world, – all kindness, all mildness, and graciousness and affability, – had heard of the affair; and as Quin was his great actor, and in favour with the town, he told me I had had revenge enough; and that I should not meet the surly fellow that night; but that he would make the matter up, somehow or other.

"Well, sir, Mr. Fleetwood ordered me a good supper, and some wine, and made me sleep at his house all night, to prevent any meeting. Well, sir, in the morning he told me, that I must, for *his sake*, make a little apology to him for what I had done. And so, sir, I, to oblige Mr. Fleetwood (for I loved the man), did, sir, make some apology to him; and the matter dropped."

Macklin's character has been described in exactly opposite colours, according to the bias of the friend or foe who affords the description. He is angel or fiend, rough or tender, monster, honest man or knave, – and so forth; but he was, of course, neither so bad as his foes nor so bright as his friends made him out to be. One thing is certain, that his judgment and his execution were excellent. In a very few tragic parts, he acted well; in comedy and farce, where villainy and humour were combined, he was admirable and original. Of characters which he played originally (and those were few), he rendered none celebrated, except Sir Archy, Sir Pertinax, and Murrough O'Doherty, in pieces of

which he was the author. His other principal characters were Iago, Sir Francis Wronghead, Trappanti, Lovegold, Scrub, Peachum, Polonius, and some others in pieces now not familiar to us.

That Macklin was a "hard actor" there is no doubt; Churchill, who allows him no excellence, says he was affected, constrained, "dealt in half-formed sounds," violated nature, and that his features, which seemed to disdain each other, —

"At variance set, inflexible, and coarse,
Ne'er know the workings of united force,
Ne'er kindly soften to each other's aid,
Nor show the mingled pow'rs of light and shade."

But "Cits and grave divines his praise proclaimed," and Macklin had a large number of admiring friends. In his private life, he had to bear many sorrows, and he bore them generally well, but one, in particular, with the silent anguish of a father who sees his son sinking fast to destruction, and glorying in the way which he is going.

Ten years before Macklin died, he lost his daughter. Miss Macklin was a pretty and modest person; respectable alike on and off the stage; artificially trained, but yet highly accomplished. Macklin had every reason to be proud of her, for everybody loved her for her gentleness and goodness. As a child, in 1742, she had played childish parts, and since 1750, those of the highest walk in tragedy and comedy, but against competition which was too strong for her. She was the original Irene, in "Barbarossa," and Clarissa, in "Lionel and Clarissa," and was very fond of acting parts in which the lady had to assume male attire. This fondness was the cause, in some measure, of her death; it led to her buckling her garter so tightly that a dangerous tumour formed in the inner part of the leg, near the knee. I do not fancy that Miss Macklin had ever heard of Mary of Burgundy, who suffered from a similar infirmity, but the actress was like the Duchess in this, – from motives of delicacy she would not allow a leg which she had liberally exhibited on the stage, to be examined by her own doctor. Ultimately, a severe operation became necessary. Miss Macklin bore it with courage, but it compelled her to leave the stage, and her strength gradually failing, she died in 1787,[17] at the age of forty-eight, and I wish she had left some portion of her fortune to her celebrated but impoverished father.

Miss Macklin reminds me of Miss Barsanti, the original Lydia Languish, whose course on the London stage dates from 1777.[18] The peculiarity of Miss Barsanti, – a clever imitator of English and Italian singers, – was the opposite of that which distinguished Miss Macklin. She had registered a vow that she would never assume male attire; nevertheless, she was once cast for Signor Arionelli, in the "Son-in-Law," a part originally played by Bannister. This was after her retirement from London, and when she was Mrs. Lisley, – playing in Dublin. The time of the play is 1779, but the actress, who might have worn a great coat, if she had been so minded, assumed – for a music-master of that period, in London – the oriental costume of a pre-Christian, or of no period, worn by Arbaces, in *Artaxerxes*!

Miss Barsanti was an honest woman who, on becoming Mrs. Lisley, wished to assume her husband's name, but that gentleman's family forbade what they had no right to prohibit. Her second husband's family was less particular, and in theatrical biographies, she is the Mrs. Daly, the wife of the active Irish manager, of that name; who is for ever memorable as being the *only* Irish manager who ever realised a fortune, and took it with him into retirement.

There remain to be noticed, before we pass to the Siddons period, several actresses, of higher importance than the above ladies, as well as actors, whose claims are only second to those of Macklin.

[17] Should be 1781.

[18] Her English playing ended in 1777, after which year she acted only in Ireland.

CHAPTER IV
A BEVY OF LADIES; – BUT CHIEFLY, MRS. BELLAMY, MISS FARREN, MRS. ABINGTON, AND "PERDITA."

A dozen more of ladies, all of desert, and some of extraordinary merit, passed away from the stage during the latter portion of the last century. Mrs. Green, Hippisley's daughter, and Governor Hippisley's sister, – the original Mrs. Malaprop, and, but for Mrs. Clive, the first of petulant Abigails, finished in 1779[19] a public career which began in 1730.[20] In the same year,[21] but after a brief service of about eight years, Mason's Elfrida and Evelina, the voluptuous Mrs. Hartley, in her thirtieth year, went into a retirement which she enjoyed till 1824. She was "the most perfect beauty that was ever seen," – more perfect than "the Carrara," who was "the prettiest creature upon earth." Her beauty, however, was of feature, lacking expression, and though an impassioned, she was not an intelligent actress, unless her plunging her stage-wooers into mad love for her be a proof of it. No wonder, had Smith only not been married, that he grew temporarily insane about this young, graceful, and fair creature.

Then, from the London stage, at least, fell Mrs. Baddeley, at the end of the season, 1780-81. She was a pretty actress with a good voice, and so little love for Mr. Baddeley and so much for George Garrick that a duel came of it. The parties went out, to Hyde Park, on a November morning of 1770. Baddeley was stirred up to fight Davy's brother, by a Jewish friend, who, being an admirer of the lady, wanted her husband to shoot her lover! The two pale combatants fired anywhere but at each other, and then the lady rushed in, crying, "Spare him!" without indicating the individual! Whereupon, husband and friend took the fair one, each by a hand, and went to dinner; and the married couple soon after played together in "It's well it's no worse!"

But worse did come, and separation, and exposure, and *Memoirs* to brighten Mrs. Baddeley, which, like those of Mrs. Pilkington, only blackened her the more. She passed to country engagements, charming audiences for awhile with her Polly, Rosetta, Clarissa, and Imogen, till laudanum, cognac, paralysis, and small sustenance, made an end of her, when she had lost everything she could value, save her beauty.

The third departure was of as mad a creature as she, Miss Catley – the Irish songstress, all smiles and dimples, and roguish beauty; who loved, like Nell Gwyn, to loll about in the boxes, and call to authors that she was glad their play was damned; and to ladies, to stand up that she might look at them, and to display the fashion of her dress, which those ladies eagerly copied. Her "Tyburn top," which she wore in Macheath, set the mode for the hair for many a day; and to be *Catley-fied* was to be decked out becomingly.

A more illustrious pair next left the stage more free to Mrs. Siddons, or her coming rendered it less tenable to them; namely, Mrs. Yates and George Anne Bellamy – the former appearing for the last time for the benefit of the latter. More than thirty years before, as Mrs. Graham, young, fat, and weak-voiced, she failed in Dublin. In 1753-54, she made almost as unsatisfactory a *début* at Drury Lane in a new part, Marcia, in "Virginia," in which she only showed promise. Richard Yates then married and instructed her, and she rapidly improved, but could not compete with Mrs. Cibber, till that lady's illness caused Mandane ("Orphan of China") to be given to Mrs. Yates, who, by her careful acting, at once acquired a first-rate reputation. In the classical heroines of the dull old classical

[19] Her last appearance was 26th May 1780.

[20] I cannot find any mention of her earlier than 1735.

[21] 1780.

tragedies of the last century, she was wonderfully effective, and her Medea was so peculiarly her own, that Mrs. Siddons herself never disturbed the public memory of it by acting the part.

When Mrs. Cibber died in 1765,[22] Mrs. Yates succeeded to the whole of her inheritance, some of which was a burthen too much for her; but she kept her position, with Mrs. Barry (Crawford) for a rival, till Mrs. Siddons promised at Bath to come and dispossess both. Mrs. Yates recited beautifully, was always dignified, but seems to have wanted variety of expression. With a haughty mien, and a powerful voice, she was well suited to the strong-minded heroines of tragedy; but the more tender ladies, Desdemona or Monimia, she could not compass. To the pride and violence of Calista she was equal, but in pathos she was wanting. Her comedy was as poor as that of Mrs. Siddons; her Jane Shore as good; her Medea so sublime as to be unapproachable. I suspect she was a little haughty; for impudent Weston says in his will: "To Mrs. Yates I leave all my humility!"

In one character of comedy she is said, indeed, to have excelled – Violante, in the "Wonder," to the playfulness, loving, bickering, pouting, and reconciliations, in which her "queen-like majesty" does not seem to have been exactly suitable. Her *scorn* was never equalled but by Mrs. Siddons, and it would be difficult to determine which lady had the more lofty majesty. In passion Mrs. Yates swept the stage as with a tempest; yet she was always under control. For instance, in Lady Constance, after wildly screaming,

> "I will not keep this form upon my head,
> When there is much disorder in my wit,"

she did not cast to the ground the thin white cap which surmounted her headdress, but quietly took it from her head, and placed it on the right side of the circumference of her hoop! Mrs. Yates died in 1787.

George Anne Bellamy is unfortunate in having a story, which honest women seldom have. That pleasant place, Mount Sion, at Tunbridge Wells, was the property of her mother, a Quaker farmer's daughter, named Seal, who, on *her* mother falling into distress, was taken by Mrs. Gregory,[23] the sister of the Duke of Marlborough, to be educated.

Miss Seal was placed in an academy in Queen's Square, Westminster, so dull a locality, that the rascally Lord Tyrawley had no difficulty in persuading her to run away from it, in his company, and to his apartments, in Somerset House. When my lord wanted a little change, he left Miss Seal with her infant son, and crossed to Ireland to make an offer to the daughter of the Earl of Blessington. She was ugly, he said, but had money; and when he got possession of both, he would leave the first, and bring the latter with renewed love, to share with Miss Seal.

The lady was so particularly touched by this letter, that she sent it, with others, to the earl, who, rendered angry thereat, forbade his daughter to marry my lord, but found they were married already. Tyrawley hoped thus to secure Lady Mary Stewart's fortune; but discovering she had none at her disposal, he naturally felt he had been deceived, and turned his wife off to her relations. Having gone through this amount of villainy, King George thought he was qualified to represent him at Lisbon, and thither Lord Tyrawley proceeded accordingly.

He would have taken Miss Seal with him, but she preferred to go on the stage. Ultimately she *did* consent to go; and was received with open arms; but she was so annoyed by the discovery of a swarthy rival, that she listened to the wooing of a Captain Bellamy, married him, and presented him with a daughter with such promptitude, that the modest captain ran away from so clever a woman, and never saw her afterwards.

---

[22] Mrs. Cibber died on 30th January 1766.

[23] Mrs. Bellamy calls this lady Godfrey.

Lord Tyrawley, proud of the implied compliment, acknowledged the little George Anne Bellamy, born on St. George's day, 1733, as his daughter. He exhibited the greatest care in her education. He kept her at a Boulogne convent from her fifth to her eighth year, and then brought her up at his house at Bexley, amid noble young scamps, whose society was quite as useful to her as if she had been at a "finishing" school.

Lord Tyrawley having perfected himself in the further study of demi-rippism, went as the representative of England to Russia, leaving an allowance for his daughter, which so warmed up her mother's affections for her, that George Anne was induced to live with her, and George Anne's mother hoped that her annuity would do so too, but my lord, having different ideas, stopped the annuity, and did not care to recover his daughter.

The two women were destitute; but the younger one was very youthful, was rarely beautiful, had certain gifts, and, of course, the managers heard of her. She had played Miss Prue for Bridgewater's benefit, in 1742, and gave promise. In 1744, Rich heard her recite, and announced her for Monimia. Quin was angry at having to play Chamont to "such a child;" but the little thing manifested such tenderness and ability, that he confessed she was charming. Lord Byron thought so too, and carried her off in his coach to a house at the corner of North Audley Street, which looked over the dull Oxford Road to the desolate fields beyond. Much scandal ensued; amid which Miss Bellamy's half-brother appeared, shook his sister as a pert baggage, and sorely mauled my lord; but Lord Byron lived to murder Mr. Chaworth in a duel, to be found guilty of slaughtering the poor man, and consequently, being a peer, to be discharged on paying his fees!

Then Miss Bellamy went among some Quaker relations who had never previously seen her, and charmed them so by her soft, and winning, and simple Quakerish ways, that they would have made an idol of her, if Friends ever made an idol of anything, but lucre and themselves. A discovery that she was an actress brought this phase of her life to an end, and it was followed by a triumphant season on the Dublin stage, from 1745 to 1747, where she made such a sensation, reigned so like a queen, and was altogether so irresistible and rich, that Lord Tyrawley's family acknowledged her. My lord himself became reconciled to her, through old Quin, and would have spent her income for her after she was re-engaged at Covent Garden, in 1748, if she would only have married his friend, Mr. Crump. Rather than do that, she let a Mr. Metham carry her off from Covent Garden, dressed as she was to play Lady Fanciful, to live with, quarrel with, and refuse to wed with him.

What with the loves, caprices, charms, extravagances, and sufferings of Mrs. Bellamy, she excited the wonder, admiration, pity, and contempt of the town for thirty years. The Mr. Metham she might have married she would not, – Calcraft and Digges, whom she would have, and the last of whom she thought she *had* married, she could not; for both had wives living. To say that she was a syren who lured men to destruction, is to say little, for she went down to ruin with each victim; but she rose from the wreck more exquisitely seductive and terribly fascinating than ever, to find a new prey whom she might ensnare and betray.

Meanwhile, she kept a position on the stage, in the very front rank, disputing pre-eminence with the best there, and achieving it in some things; for this perilous charmer was unequalled in her day for the expression of unbounded and rapturous love. Her looks glowing with the passion to which she gave expression, doubled the effect; and whether she gazed at a lover or rested her head on the bosom of her lord, nothing more tender or subduing was ever seen, save in Mrs. Cibber. She was so beautiful, had eyes of such soft and loving blue, was so extraordinarily fair, and was altogether so irresistible a sorceress, that Mrs. Bellamy was universally loved as a charming creature, and admired as an excellent actress; and when she played some poor lady distraught through affection, the stoutest hearts under embroidered or broad-cloth waistcoats, crumbled away, often into inconceivable mountains of gold-dust.

She laughed, and scattered as fast as they piled it, and in the gorgeous extravagance of her life began to lose her powers as an actress. She had once almost shared the throne assumed by Mrs.

Cibber, but she wanted the sustained zeal and anxious study of that lady, and cared not, as Mrs. Cibber did, for one quiet abiding home, by whomsoever shared, but sighed for change, had it, and suffered for it. When her powers began to decay, her admirers of all schools deplored the fact. In tragedy, natural as she was in feeling, she belonged to the old days of intoned cadences; and the old and the rising school mourned over her, yet both were compelled to avow that only in the ecstasy of love was Mrs. Bellamy equal to the Cibber, and in that Mrs. Cibber, when acting with Barry, in the younger days of both, was often George Anne's superior.

From reigning it like a queen on and off the stage, – imperious and lovely, and betraying everywhere, – to the figure of a poor, bailiff-persecuted, famishing wretch, stealing down the muddy steps of old Westminster Bridge to drown herself in the Thames, how wide are the extremes! But in both positions we find the original Volumnia of Thomson, the Erixine of Dr. Young, and the Cleone, to whom Dodsley owed the success of his heart-rending tragedy. To the last, she was as unfortunate as she had been reckless. Two old lovers, one of whom was Woodward, bequeathed legacies to her, which she never received. Those sums seemed as life to her; but, in the days of her pride and her power, and wicked but transcendent beauty, she would have scorned them as mere pin-money; and so she grew acquainted with gaunt misery, till some friends weary, perhaps, of sustaining the burthen she imposed upon them, induced the managers to give her a farewell benefit, in 1784,[24] on which occasion Mrs. Yates returned to the stage to play for her the Duchess, in "Braganza." More than forty years before, the brilliant little sylph, Miss Bellamy, had floated on to the same Covent Garden stage, confident in both intellectual and material charms. Now, the middle-aged woman, still older through fierce impatience at her fall, through want, misery, hopelessness, everything but remorse, had not nerve enough to go on and utter a few words of farewell. These were spoken for her by Miss Farren, before the curtain, which ascended at the words, —

"But see, oppress'd with gratitude and tears,
To pay her duteous tribute she appears;"

and discovered the once beautiful and happy syren, a terrified, old-looking woman, lying, powerless to rise, in an arm-chair. But the whole house – some out of respect for the erst charmer, others out of curiosity to behold a woman of such fame on and off the stage – rose to greet her. George Anne, urged by Miss Catley, bent forward, murmured a few indistinct words, and, falling back again, the curtain descended, for the last time, between the public and the Fallen Angel of the stage.

Half-a-dozen minor lights are extinguished before we come to a name, a desert, and a fortune, more brilliant and lasting than that of George Anne Bellamy, – the name, merit, and fortune of Miss Farren. Mrs. Wilson, the original Betty Hint, in the "Man of the World," is not now remembered either for her genius or her errors. Mrs. Belfille made but one appearance on the London stage, as Belinda, in "All in the Wrong." She wanted animation and humour, but was distinguished for the splendour of her stage wardrobe, which was all her own. She joined Whitlock and Austin's company in the north. Whitlock married Mrs. Siddons' sister Elizabeth, and took her to America, where her acting drew rather the admiration than the tears of the Indians. Mrs. Belfille and Mrs. Whitlock were together in the company named above. On the back of one of their bills I find a MS. note made by Austin, in which he says that Mrs. Belfille was an elegant actress, very fashionable, and genteel in dress and manner; and, he adds, "Mrs. Whitlock could not keep her temper while Mrs. Belfille was with me, in Newcastle, Chester, &c."

A year later, in 1789, the charming Bacchante, Mrs. Beresford, Goldsmith's Miss Richland and Miss Hardcastle, and Sheridan's Julia, in the "Rivals," left the London stage for Edinburgh, where, says Jackson, "her Lady Racket will be remembered as long as one of her audience remains alive."

[24] The benefit took place on 24th May 1785.

Pretty Mrs. Wells, famous for her imitations, now disappears. She was O'Keefe's Cowslip. She was the Jewish gentleman, Mr. Sumbell's, wife, which he denied; and she so far rivalled Mrs. Siddons, that, in "Isabella," as it was the fashion for the house to shriek when the actress shrieked, so, when Mrs. Wells shrieked, her friends shrieked louder than those of Mrs. Siddons', and, *therefore*, thought Cowslip was the greater tragedian of the two. Then, the first of the Miss Bruntons, the Louisa Courtney of Reynold's "Dramatist," finished her seventh and last season, in London, in 1792, as the wife of Della Cruscan Merry. She began as an expected rival of Mrs. Siddons, but London did not confirm the testimony of Bath. Three other actresses passed away before Miss Farren: mad Hannah Brand, who was a sort of female Mossop; Mrs. Esten (who tried to disturb Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, and Miss Farren, but who, failing, settled in the north, and very much disturbed the heart and the purse of the Duke of Hamilton), and Mrs. Webb, the original Mrs. Cheshire to the above Cowslip; than whom actress of more weight never made the boards groan, and who turned her corpulence to account by playing Falstaff.

The first glimpse to be caught of Miss Farren is as picturesque as can well be imagined. Her father, once a Cork surgeon but now manager of a strolling company, is in the lock-up of the town of Salisbury; he fell into durance through an unconscious infringement of the borough law. The story is told, at length, in my *Knights and their Days*. On a wintry morning, a little girl carries him a bowl of hot milk, for breakfast, and she is helped over the ice to the lock-up window by a sympathising lad. The nymph is Miss Farren, afterwards Countess of Derby; the boy is the very happy beginning of Chief Justice Burroughs.

The incident occurred in 1769. Three years later, Elizabeth was playing Columbine at Wakefield. She could sing as well as she could dance, gracefully; and, out of very love for the beautiful girl, Younger brought her out, at Liverpool, where her maternal grandfather had been a brewer of repute and good fortune, and where his grand-daughter proved such a Rosetta, that more than half the young fellows were more deeply in love with her than the paternal Younger himself.

After five years' training, the now radiant girl, glowing with beauty and intelligence, first charmed a London audience, on June the 9th, 1777, by appearing at the Haymarket, as Miss Hardcastle; Edwin making his appearance on the same night, as Old Hardcastle. In that first year of London probation, her Miss Hardcastle was a great success; the town was ecstatic at that and her Maria, in the "Citizen," was rapt at her Rosetta, rendered hilarious by her Miss Tittup, and rarely charmed by her playfulness and dignity, as Rosara (Rosina), in the "Barber of Seville." Of this character she was the original representative. Colman omitted the scene in which the Count was disguised as a tipsy dragoon, on the ground of its being injurious to morality! The same Colman thought the Fool, in "Lear," too gross for a London audience.

In the following year, the success of her Lady Townly transferred her to Drury Lane, where she divided the principal parts with Miss Walpole, Miss P. Hopkins (Mrs. Kemble, subsequently), and Perdita Robinson; and not one of the four was twenty years of age.

Her Lady Townly was no new triumph. She had produced such an effect in it at Liverpool, where, after her father's death, Younger had engaged the whole family, that, on the strength of the promise of fortune to come, tradesmen offered them unlimited credit.

For about a score of years she maintained a pre-eminence which she did not, however, attain all at once, or without a struggle; her most powerful and graceful opponent being Mrs. Abington. Her early days had been of such stern and humble aspect, such a strolling and starving with her stage-mad and improvident father, that an anonymous biographer says of her: "The early parts of the history of many eminent ladies on the stage must be extremely disagreeable to them in the recital; and to none, we apprehend, more than to Miss Farren, who, from the lowest histrionic sphere, has raised herself to the most elevated."

During the years above-named, she played principally at Drury Lane and the Haymarket, and chiefly the parts of fine ladies, for which she seemed born; though she attempted tragedy, now and

then; and assumed low comedy characters, occasionally; but her natural elegance, her tall and delicate figure, her beautiful expression, her superbly modulated voice, her clear and refined pronunciation, made of her fine lady a perfect charm; not merely the Lady Betty Modish, and similar personages, but the sentimental Indianas and Cecilias.

Walpole says emphatically of Miss Farren, that, in his estimation, she was the most perfect actress he had ever seen. Adolphus praises "the irresistible graces of her address and manner, the polished beauties of her action and gait, and all the indescribable little charms which give fascination to the woman of birth and fashion," as among the excellences which secured a triumph for Burgoyne's "Heiress." In that play she acted Lady Emily Gayville.

Among her original characters were Rosara (Rosina), in the "Barber of Seville;" Cecilia, in "Chapter of Accidents;" Sophia, in "Lord of the Manor;" Lady Emily Gayville, in the "Heiress;" Eliza Ratcliffe, in the "Jew;" and Emily Tempest, in the "Wheel of Fortune." In the "Heiress" Adolphus again says of her: – "Whether high and honourable sentiments, burning and virtuous sensibility, sincere and uncontrollable affection; animated, though sportive reprehension; elegant persiflage, or arch and pointed satire were the aim of the author, Miss Farren amply filled out his thought, and, by her exquisite representation, made it, even when faint and feeble in itself, striking and forcible." In fewer words, she had feeling, judgment, grace, and discretion.

It was when playing Rosara that her life became in danger, by her long gauze mantilla taking fire from the side-lights. She was not aware of her peril, till Bannister (Almaviva) had quietly thrown his Spanish cloak around her, and had put out the flames with his hands.

During her stage career she was the manageress of the private theatricals at the Duke of Richmond's, – those most exclusive of dramatic entertainments. She moved, as it is called, in the best society, where she was Queen "amang them a'." Charles James Fox is said to have been more or less seriously attached to her; but long before she withdrew from the stage it was said, and was printed, that when "*one* certain event should happen, a Countess's coronet would fall on her brow."

And thereby hangs a tale that has something in it extremely unpleasant; for this one event, waited for during a score of years, was the death of the Countess of Derby, the only daughter of the Duke of Hamilton.

To the Duchess of Leinster, who knew something of Miss Farren's family in Ireland, the actress was indebted for introductions to Lady Ailesbury, Mrs. Damer, and others, through whom Miss Farren became acquainted with the Earl of Derby, who was himself a clever actor, in private theatricals. A Platonic affection, at least, was soon established. Walpole writing, in 1791, to the Miss Berrys, says: "I have had no letter from you these ten days, though the east wind has been as constant as Lord Derby," not to his wife, whom he had married in 1774, but to Miss Farren, who first came to London three years later.

On the 14th of March 1797, the long-tarrying Countess departed this life; on the 8th of April following, Miss Farren took final leave of the stage, in Lady Teazle. After the play, Wroughton led her forward, and spoke a few farewell words for her, at the end of which she gracefully curtseyed to all parts of the house; and that once little girl who carried milk to her father in the Round House, went home, and was married to the Earl, on the May Day of the year in which he had lost his first wife! Six weeks 'twixt death and bridal! and yet we hear that Miss Farren's greatest charm consisted in her "delicate, genuine, impressive sensibility, which reached the heart by a process no less certain than that by which her other powers effected their impression on their fancy and judgment."

At all events, Miss Farren never acted so hastily, nor Stanley so uncourteously to the memory of a dead lady, as on this occasion, and it was not one for which youthful widowers might find an apology, for the erst strolling actress was considerably past thirty, and her swain within five years of the age at which Sir Peter Teazle married "my lady."

Of the three children of this union, only one survived, Mary, born in 1801, and married, twenty years afterwards, to the Earl of Wilton. Through her, the blood of an actress once more mingles with

that of the peerage; with the same result, perhaps, as followed the match of Winnifred, the dairymaid, with the head of the Bickerstaffes.

No marriage of an English actress with a man of title ever had such results as that which followed the union of Fleury's beautiful sister with the gallant Viscount Clairval de Passy. When the match was proposed, the parents of the lady were in a fever of delight that their daughter should be a viscountess. Doubtless she became so in law and fact; but instead of taking place as such with the Viscount, *he* laid by his title, and out of love for his wife and her profession, turned actor himself! The happy pair played together with success, and when you meet with the names of Monsieur and Madame Sainville in the annals of the French stage, you are reading of that very romantic pair – the happy Viscount and Viscountess Clairval de Passy.

In 1796,[25] after more than a quarter of a century of service, Mrs. Pope, once Garrick's favourite, Miss Younge, withdrew to die, and leave her younger husband to take a less accomplished actress for his second wife. But the loss which the stage felt as severely as it did that of Miss Farren was, in 1798, in the person of a lady, with whom we first become acquainted as a vivacious and intelligent little girl selling flowers in St. James's Park. She is known as "Nosegay Fan." Her father, a soldier in the Guards, mends shoes, when off duty, in Windmill Street, Haymarket, and her brother waters the horses of the Hampstead stage, at the corner of Hanway Yard. Who would suppose that this little Fanny Barton, who sells moss-roses, would one day set the fashions to all the fine ladies in the three kingdoms; that Horace Walpole would welcome her more warmly to Strawberry Hill than an ordinary princess, and that "Nosegay Fan" would be the original and never-equalled Lady Teazle?

Humble, however, as the position of the flower-girl is, there is good blood in her very blue veins. She comes of the Bartons of Derbyshire, and not longer ago than the accession of King William, sons of that family held honourable office in the Church, the army, and in government offices. Fanny Barton ran on errands for a French milliner, and occasionally encountered Baddeley, when the latter was apprenticed to a confectioner, and was not dreaming of the Twelfth Cake he was to bequeath to the actors of Drury Lane. Then ensued some passages in her life that remind one of the training and experience of Nell Gwyn. The fascinating Fanny, in one way or another, made her way in the world, and, for the sake of a smile, lovers courted ruin. This excessively brilliant, though not edifying, career did not last long. Among the many friends she had acquired was that prince of scamps and Bardolphs, Theophilus Cibber, who had just procured a licence to open the theatre in the Haymarket. He had marked the capabilities of the "vivacious" Fanny, and he tempted her to appear under his management, as *Miranda*

[25] Mrs. Pope's name is in the bills for the last time on 26th January 1797.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.