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THE BOOK

OF

THEATRICAL ANECDOTES.

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

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LONDON:

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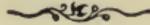
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.

NEW YORK: 416, BROOME STREET.

TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

LONDON  
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## PREFACE.



IN making the following little collection, the Editor has tried to select only such traits and anecdotes as appeared to be *characteristic* either of the Profession or of the actor. There are many jests and stories of a diverting sort, which will be found to have no particular theatrical significance beyond the fact of their having been uttered or occasioned by some player. These have been, as much as possible, left aside. Anything that illustrated character, manners, or stage life in general, has been diligently sought for; while, on the same grounds, stories that turned on mere puns and quibbles have been excluded.

The Editor has also tried to combine with these lighter anecdotes some information of an interesting kind. It is hoped that the whole will be accepted as a tolerably faithful picture of the pleasant world Behind the Scenes.

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# THEATRICAL ANECDOTES.

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## *THE DULNESS OF RETIREMENT.*

AFTER Mrs. Siddons had retired from the stage, she felt thereaction. When Mr. Rogers would be sitting with her of an afternoon, she would say, "O dear! this is the time I used to be thinking of going to the theatre. First came the pleasure of dressing for my part, and then the pleasure of acting it. But that is all over now!"

## *A SITUATION SPOILED.*

THERE is a peculiar sense of burlesque produced, which is indeed almost unique, when anything ludicrous arises in a tragic situation on the stage. Nothing produces so much genuine enjoyment. One hot night, at a country theatre, when playing Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Siddons was parched with thirst, and the manager sent for a pot of porter. She was in the midst of the great sleeping scene, when he returned. A general hush. He asked where she was, and in reply a scene-shifter pointed to her on the stage. The boy with the foaming pot in his hand coolly walked on and presented it

to her. In vain she haughtily waved him away with "her grand manner." The people at the wing stamped and beckoned, and at last, amid roars and shrieks of laughter, he was got off the stage. The "theatre cat" has often been seen to make its way on to the scene during the last few months at the London theatres, and invariably chooses some awkward moment such as a declaration of love, a dying agony, for its entrance. The leading comedian does not produce such a roar as this four-footed player.

## *A TOUT PUNISHED.*

THE old actors had a sort of broad wit, which was in combination with the events of daily life, and which was infinitely superior to the mere "word catching" and indifferent punnings or similitudes which go to make up the "fun" of our day. This they may have caught from the plays in which they acted. Thus what a good practical retort was that of Quick's when dragged by an importunate furniture broker into a furniture shop, and forced to listen to

panegyrics of tables and chairs which he did not want. At last the actor asked if he were the owner of the shop. The man rushed eagerly to fetch his master, who came bowing and smirking. "What can I do for you, sir?" "*Just hold your man a moment until I get out of the shop.*"

#### AWKWARD ENTHUSIASM.

HOLMAN was once acting Chamont at Cheltenham, where the theatre is very small and the stage sloping. In the great passage with Monimia—

"So may this arm  
Throw him to th' earth, like a dead dog  
despised."

He carried out the stage direction, "starts from the sofa and rushes forward," so impetuously that, chiefly owing to the steepness of the little stage, he lost his balance and plunged headlong into the orchestra, smashing a violoncello, and drawing blood from the nose of its player. The confusion was immense; but the actor found that he was unhurt, and able to resume his part.

#### A GOOD-NATURED RE-MARK.

DOUGLAS JERROLD'S stage jests were excellent, not only for their closeness, but also for their severity. As when it was said at the Haymarket that some one had actually "been bred on these boards." "He looks as though he had been cut out of them," was the answer.

#### TO ADAPTERS AND OTHERS.

HE suggested a motto for the French adapters, "*Aut scissors aut nullus.*"

#### "DONE TO ORDER."

A NEW play he was told had been done to order. "It strikes me," he said, "it will be done to a good many orders."

#### CARDINAL WOLSEY.

HE was told that a well-known tragedian was about to attempt Cardinal Wolsey. "Wolsey! Linsey woolsey!"

#### ACTOR TURNED WINE-MERCHANT.

IT was mentioned that an actor had turned wine-merchant. "I hope his wine off the stage," he said, "will be better than his whine on it."

#### STAGE DIRECTIONS.

SOME of the old stage directions were truly absurd for their comprehensiveness. Colman, the younger, mentions a repentant miser in the fifth act of a play who is directed to "lean against the wall and grow generous."

#### PUFFS.

THEATRICAL advertisement has become an elaborate art in our day. But though we have theatres that claim to be "the

prettiest," and to "have the best company in London," this is modest compared with some of fifty years ago. One was thus conceived:—"The new opera, called '*Don John*,' was received throughout with *roars of laughter! and shouts of applause!!* and the acting of Mr. C. Kemble, Mr. Liston, Mr. Jones, Mr. Abbót, &c., was hardly surpassed *even in the days of Garrick!!!* The music absolutely *enchanted!* and *electrified!* the audience—almost every piece being encored:—and, whilst Miss Stephens, in the *Second Violetta*, so exceeded all her former successful efforts, as to add another laurel even to *her high* reputation, Miss Hallande, in the *First Violetta*, made as triumphant a *debut* as was ever made by *any* singer on the English stage!!!" It was justly remarked that at this time there was no need of critics. The play-bills contained all that any one could desire.

#### A BEREAVED PAIR.

MR. DONALDSON told Mr. John Taylor that he had seen Quin and Mrs. Pritchard performing as Chamont and Monimia in Otway's pathetic play of "the Orphan." Both were old, and very bulky in their figures, and nothing, he said, could have been more ludicrous than to hear Quin, mouthing out,

"Two unhappy orphans, alas! we are."

But both were so respected, and had such dignity, that the audi-

ence listened with the utmost gravity.

#### SPARTAN FORTITUDE.

THE following was written on a dreary tragedy called "The Fall of Sparta"—

"So great thy art—that while we viewed  
Of Sparta's sons the lot severe,  
We caught the Spartan fortitude,  
And saw their woes without a tear."

#### GOLDSMITH.

WHEN "She Stoops to Conquer" was in rehearsal, Goldsmith took great pains to impress on the actors how he wished each part to be done. On the night of performance he was amazed to find young Marlow presented as an Irishman. The actor when remonstrated with, justified himself, saying, that he spoke his part as nearly as he could according to the instructions, only he did not give it quite so strong a brogue.

#### IMPROMPTU.

DURING the French war an actor was playing the stormy part of Barbarossa at Plymouth, to an audience chiefly of sailors. By a happy inspiration he introduced into the Eastern tyrant's part the following lines:

"Did not I,  
By that brave knight, *Sir Sidney Smith's*  
*assistance,*  
And in conjunction with the gallant  
NELSON,  
Drive Bonaparty and his fierce marauders  
From Egypt's shores!"

Thunders of applause saluted this impromptu.

## SEVERE.

THERE was a well-known quack doctor, with whom Garrick was at war, and who brought out some indifferent plays. Garrick wrote this epigram on him:—

“For physic and farces  
His equal there scarce is :  
His farces are physic,  
His physic a farce is.”

There is real “fun” in these neat lines, and it is almost impossible to repeat them without a laugh.

## WELL-PAID SYMPATHY.

WHEN Garrick was playing Lear, one of the soldiers, who, according to an old custom, stood at each side of the stage, was so affected that he fainted away. The gratified actor sent for him to the green room, and presented him with a guinea. On the next night, when Garrick was playing Ranger, in the comedy, another soldier became affected with a sham faint, to the great amusement of the audience and actors.

## FACES OR FASCES.

QUIN had some odd tricks of pronunciation, such as “Keeto” instead of “Cato.” Many of the great Irish actors, such as Macklin and Sheridan, could not get rid of this mode of pronunciation, which to this day is heard in Dublin. On one occasion, when rehearsing for Coriolanus, he bade his army “lower

their fasces,” which all the ranks did promptly. He meant, however, that they should lower their “faces.”

## BARRY v. GARRICK.

THE contest of Barry and Garrick at rival theatres, in Romeo and Juliet, gave rise to some pleasant jests and epigrams. One was:—

“Well, what’s to-night?” says angry Ned,  
As up from bed he rouses :  
‘Romeo again!’ and shakes his head,  
‘A plague o’ both your houses!’”

This was said to have been by Garrick himself. Infinitely superior were Berenger’s lines:—

“The town has found out different ways  
To praise the different Lears :  
To Barry gives its loud huzzas,  
To Garrick only tears.”

Besides the “elegant compliment,” as it would have been styled in those days, there was here the nicest criticism on the acting of the two competitors.

## QUIN’S HUMOUR.

QUIN’S jests were of the roughest kind. Once at Epsom races he was required to share his bed with a clergyman. When the latter was getting in, Quin saw that his linen was not over-clean and cried out, “What! parson, are you coming to bed in your cassock?” This is an excellent specimen of the coarse vigour of Quin’s wit.

Of the same character are the following:—

DURING one day, at a place

where there was a sort of struggle to get at the dishes, Quin declared, "Gentlemen, if I ever dine at a public ordinary again, I will have basket-handled knives." A person had helped himself to an enormous portion of bread, which Quin attempted to take. "Sir, that is my bread," said the gentleman.—"I beg your pardon," said Quin, humbly, "I thought it was the loaf." This smart answer did not exhaust his treatment of the same situation.

WHEN a gentleman, who had helped himself to nearly all the pudding, asked if he should help him, "With all my heart," said the other, "but which *is* the pudding?"

OF Macklin, Quin said, "If God writes a legible hand, that fellow is a villain," and once thus began an address to him: "Sir, by the lines—I mean *the cordage*—of your face," &c.

#### THE DOCTOR HOAXED.

GARRICK delighted in elaborate practical jokes, which he would plan and carry out with the laborious elaboration of the elder Matthews. The eccentric Dr. Monsey was often his butt. One evening, when the Doctor called, he found Garrick ill in bed, though announced for the part of King Lear. The actor, in feeble and whining tones, explained that he was too ill to act, but that there was a player at the theatre called Marr, so absurdly like him and

such a mimic, that he had ventured to entrust him with the part, and was certain the audience would not perceive the difference. The other seriously remonstrated with him on the danger of attempting such a trick, the disrepute and the certain ruin that would follow if he were found out. Garrick persisted, and begged the Doctor to attend and report the result. On his departure Garrick leaped up, rushed to the theatre, and acted the part. The Doctor, bewildered, and half doubting, hurried back at the close of the play, only to find the actor in his bed again, though he had not had time to get rid of his Lear's dress.

#### MEAGRE RECOLLECTIONS.

ARTHUR MURPHY was intimate with Garrick for many years, at one time quarrelling with and pursuing him with the fiercest hate, at another borrowing money from him, and loading him with fulsome panegyric. Much was expected from his "Life of Garrick," but it is a very meagre performance. He lived long after Garrick, and was often asked for his opinion of the great actor. "Mr. Murphy, you, sir, knew Mr. Garrick?"—"Yes, sir, I did, and knew him well—intimately."—"Now, sir, what did you think of his acting?" and the questioner prepared for a long series of recollections, which, bating a certain garrulity and diffuseness, would yet be interesting. "Off the stage, sir," was the

invariable answer, delivered slowly and with due emphasis, "he was a mean, pitiful, *sneaking*, little fellow; but *on* the stage" (here a pause, and throwing up his eyes), "O my great God!" Mr. Rogers often put this question, and was always thus answered.

#### TRUE DIGNITY.

MR. ST. JOHN, one of the Bolingbroke family, wrote an indifferent tragedy, which was accepted by Kemble. In the green room, one day, he chose to quarrel with the great actor on the score of the delay in bringing out his piece. Some angry words passed, when at last the "gentleman" so far forgot himself as to tell the "player" that he was a man he could not call out. "But you are a man," was the becoming answer, "whom I can turn out; so leave my room instantly!" The other did so, but, after a little reflection, returned and apologised. His play was performed,—a favour which its author did not deserve, though the hope of it may have prompted his apology.

#### A TAR IN THE PIT.

SAILORS are generally hearty patrons of the drama. Stephen Kemble told Mr. Taylor that when he was manager at Portsmouth, where "business" was so indifferent that the theatre could only be opened once or twice in the week, he was waited on by a sailor, with a request that he would open the house

for him, "for," he added, "I sail to-morrow, and God knows if I shall ever see a play again!" The cost, he was told, would be five guineas, which he cheerfully paid, insisting, however, that no one was to see the performance but himself. He selected "Richard the Third." The house was duly lit; while the sailor took up his position in the front row of the pit, and laughed and applauded at intervals. At the end he thanked the manager cordially for the entertainment, and took his leave.

#### FORCIBLE PRAISE.

Mrs. CLIVE, who was always quarrelling with Garrick, and yet heartily admired him and his gifts, was one night standing at the wing when he was acting King Lear. She was so oddly affected by the performance that at one moment she was heard abusing him, at the next sobbing bitterly, and at last rushed away, declaring, "D—n him! *he could act a gridiron!*"

#### THE RULING PASSION STRONG IN LIFE.

HULL, the founder of the Theatrical Fund, had long been stage manager at Covent Garden, and had acquired, even in private life, a habit of making speeches and explanations in the style of his theatrical addresses to the audience. During some riots in London a mob gathered before his house, and

insisted on having beer. He sent them out a barrel; but, having drunk it, they insisted on more, and proceeded to break his windows. He presented himself at his drawing-room windows, and addressed them in this style:—

“Ladies and gentlemen,—I lament exceedingly to be under the necessity of offering an apology this evening; but I am obliged to state that all the strong beer is gone, and in this predicament, having, at a very short notice, procured a cask of small, we hope *to meet with your usual indulgence.*”

#### PROSE AND POETRY.

AN actor named Wignell, noted for his composure, when opening the play of Cato with the well-known lines, was interrupted with shouts for a Prologue, which they fancied belonged to the play. The grave actor had begun:

“The dawn is overcast; the morning  
lowers,  
And heavily, with clouds, brings on the  
day.”

At this moment, the audience began to vociferate “Prologue! prologue! prologue!” when Wignell, finding them resolute, without emotion, pause, or change of voice, but in all the pomp of tragedy, proceeded, as if it were part of the play,—

“Ladies and gentlemen, there has been no Prologue spoken to this play, these twenty years—  
The great, the important day, big with the fate  
Of *Cato* and of Rome.”

This put the audience in good

humour; they laughed immoderately, clapped, and shouted, “Bravo!” Still Wignell continued, with his usual stateliness and composure.

#### THE EFFECT OF A LOOK.

THE power of Garrick’s piercing eyes and expression has often been described. When, as Macbeth, he said to one of the murderers “There’s blood upon thy face,” he did so with such earnestness and reality that the man forgot his proper answer (“’Tis Banquo’s then”) and replied, “Is there, by G——!” He fancied, as he confessed afterwards, that he had broken a blood-vessel.

#### JOCOSENESS IN TRAGEDY.

THIS great player was supposed to be so affected by acting as to identify himself completely with the character. But it is stated that when he was playing Lear with King, and by his broken voice and apparent grief had left hardly a dry eye in the house—his own emotion being supposed to have quite overcome him—he whispered to King, on whose shoulder he was supporting himself—at the same time putting his tongue in his cheek—“D——n it, Tom, we are doing the trick.”

#### “THE EARLY VILLAGE COCK.”

PERHAPS the most familiar of theatrical stories is that of the actor who uttered “’Tis I, my lord, the early village cock.”

It is not so well known that the incident occurred when Cooke was acting. A tailor, with histrionic tastes, had offered to supply him with a suit of clothes on the terms of being allowed to support this part. The audience roared at his appearance, which caused him to stop abruptly at the word "cock," while Cooke growled out sardonically, "Why the Devil, then, don't you crow?"

### THE UNLUCKY DRESSER.

THE following droll scene occurred on the stage, nearly a hundred and fifty years ago:— "Lothario, after he is killed by Altamont, in the fourth act, lies dead *by proxy* in the fifth, raised on a bier, covered with black cloth by the property man, and the face whitened by the barber, the coat and periwig generally filled by one of the dressers. Most of the capital actors, in the established theatres, have generally a dresser to themselves, though these are paid by the manager to be ready on all occasions, for stage guards, attendants, &c. Mr. Powell played "the gallant gay Lothario," and one Warren, his dresser, claimed a right of lying for his master, and performing the dead part, which he proposed to act to the best advantage, though Powell was ignorant of the matter. The fifth act began, and went on as usual, with applause; but about the middle of the distressful scene, Powell called aloud for his man Warren, who as loudly replied, from the bier on the

stage, "Here, sir." Powell (who, as we have said before, was ignorant of the part his man was doing) repeated, without loss of time, "Come here, this moment, you scoundrel, or I'll break all the bones in your skin." Warren knew his hasty temper; therefore, without any reply, jumped off, with all his sables about him, which, unfortunately, were tied fast to the handles of the bier, and dragged after him. But this was not all; the laugh and roar began in the audience, till it frightened poor Warren so much, that, with the bier at his tail, he threw down Calista (Mrs. Barry), and overwhelmed her with the table, lamps, books, bones, together with all the lumber of the charnel-house. He tugged till he broke off his trammels, and made his escape, and the play at once ended, with immoderate fits of laughter; even the grave Mr. Betterton "smiled at the tumult, and enjoyed the storm;" but he would not let "The Fair Penitent" be played any more that season, till poor Warren's misconduct was something forgot."

### BARRY'S PATHOS.

THE descriptions left of the effect produced by the old actors in Shakespeare's plays show that the art of acting is lost, or that audiences have not the same interest and nice intelligence. Thus when Barry gave the passage, in Othello, "I'll tear her all to pieces," his muscles were seen to stiffen, the veins to distend, and finally a great

burst of passion bore down all before it. Women were heard shrieking with terror, and men shouting. Instead of blustering out "O, Desdemona, away, away!" he would look a few seconds in Desdemona's face, "as if to read her feelings and disprove his suspicions," then turning away as the adverse conviction gathered in his heart, he spoke falteringly, and gushed into tears. He always received a graceful compliment for his speech to the Senate, besides the three rounds of applause which greeted it. For when the Duke observed, "I think this tale would win my daughter too," there was a yet heartier burst.

#### FLIGHT FROM THE ALTAR.

AN excellent story, says Lamb, is told of Merry, of Della Cruscan memory. In tender youth he loved and courted a modest appanage to the Opera,—in truth, a dancer,—who had won him by the artless contrast between her manners and situation. She seemed to him a native violet, that had been transplanted by some rude accident into that exotic and artificial hotbed. Nor, in truth, was she less genuine and sincere than she appeared to him. He wooed and won this flower. Only for appearance sake, and for due honour to the bride's relations, she craved that she might have the attendance of her friends and kindred at the approaching solemnity. The request was too amiable not to be

conceded: and in this solicitude for conciliating the good-will of mere relations, he found a presage of her superior attentions to himself, when the golden shaft should have "killed the flock of all affections else." The morning came: and at the "Star and Garter," Richmond—the place appointed for the breakfasting—accompanied with one English friend, he impatiently awaited what reinforcements the bride should bring to grace the ceremony. A rich muster she had made. They came in six coaches—the whole *corps-duballet*—French, Italian, men, and women. Monsieur de B., the famous *pirouetter* of the day, led his fair spouse, but craggy, from the banks of the Seine. The Prima Donna had sent her excuse; but the first and second Buffa were there; and Signor Sc—, and Signora Ch—, and Madame V—, with a countless cavalcade besides of chorusers, figurantes! at the sight of whom Merry afterwards declared, that "then, for the first time, it struck him seriously that he was about to marry—a dancer." But there was no help for it. Besides, it was her day; these were, in fact, her friends and kinsfolk. The assemblage, though whimsical, was all very natural. But when the bride—handing out of the last coach a still more extraordinary figure than the rest—presented to him as her *father*—the gentleman that was to *give her away*—no less a person than Signor Delpini himself—with a sort of pride, as much as

to say, "See what I have brought to do us honour!"—the thought of so extraordinary a paternity quite overcame him; and slipping away under some pretence from the bride and her motley attendants, poor Merry took horse from the backyard to the nearest sea-coast, from which shipping himself to America, he shortly after consoled himself with a more congenial match in the person of Miss Brunton, relieved from his intended clown-father, and a bevy of painted buffas for bridesmaids.

#### *BARRY AND THE BARBER.*

THE following little story belongs to a large class of theatrical anecdotes the point of which generally turns upon some blunder that takes place upon the stage. It is so well told by Mr. Bernard that it may be given in his own words:—"Fawcett was a member of a club in the city, where his songs and jokes and professional character rendered him a man of note. One of his companions was a peaceable pains-taking barber, who always encored his effusions, in return for which Fawcett gave him an order for a wig, and desired the knight of the curling-tongs to bring it to the theatre on a particular night, and fit it on himself, when the actor had to perform a particular character, which depended more on its appearance, than its language. The barber, who knew nothing more of a theatre than its outside presented, supposed that Fawcett must be as great a man there as

he was at the club: punctual to his time, he accordingly strutted up to the stage-door, with no small importance, and was conducted to Fawcett's room. The wig fitted to a hair, and he received, with his customer's thanks, a direction to find his way downstairs. Making a wrong turning, he descended some steps which led to the back of the stage, and, meeting with no obstacle, strolled down to the second wing, O.P. This happened to be the first night of Barry's performance, who was engaged for a limited period; and had stipulated in his article, that the same order and attention which was observed on Garrick's nights, should be maintained during his. Not a sound was to be heard behind the scenes, nor a figure to be seen, save the prompter at his particular post. The barber made his appearance at the wing in the midst of Othello's address, and protruded his body so far as to become visible to half the house. The sudden glare of lights and human faces at first astounded, and then transported him, and there being no one in the way to remove him, he soon excited the risibility of the pit by his gestures and grimaces. The Moor was not of a more fiery temperament than Barry, who attributed this intrusion to design, particularly when flashing his full eye upon the fellow, and interlarding his oration with side speeches, they, instead of effecting his removal, served only to stupify and root him more firmly to the spot.

Part of Barry's speech accordingly ran thus :— 'For little of this great world can I speak'—(Who are you? What do you do here?)—'more, than pertains to feats of broil and battle ;'—(I'll break every bone in your skin.)—'and therefore little shall I grace my cause'—(Will you be gone, Sir?)—'by speaking of myself'—(An infernal rascal.) To these several pointed addresses the barber yielded no other response than 'Go to the devil !' which was loud enough, however, to be heard in the first row of the pit. Barry now concluded this to be a scheme on the part of Garrick, to ruffle and insult him ; and when he quitted the stage, rushed on the unconscious criminal with all the fury of a hungry hyena, grasped him by the throat, shook him most unmercifully, and would no doubt have proceeded to determine how far the barber's head resembled one of his own blocks, when the actors interposed, and set the man at liberty. Growling, and shaking himself like a tousled cur, he looked at Barry an instant with a smile of ineffable contempt, and then exclaimed, 'Never mind, Master Sambo,—never mind,—I'll do your business for you, depend on it !'—'Do my business, you villain !' shouted Barry, 'what do you mean?'—'Why, you black rascal !' said the barber (evidently mistaking Othello for a *bonâ fide* Moor), 'I'll speak to Mr. Fawcett, and have you discharged !' The merriment that Fawcett's name occasioned, neither suited Barry nor the

barber. Garrick and Fawcett were summoned ; and the latter, perceiving in an instant the truth of the case, explained his friend's ignorance and misapprehension. He was at length permitted to conduct the bewildered barber to the door, receiving himself a broadside from the manager, as a means of conciliating Barry."

*" I WILL RETURN ANON."*

MR. DICKENS used to relate with much humour a little scene he witnessed at the Rochester theatre. An actor had forgotten his part, and could not get the prompter to give him the "word." After many adjurations, and the usual appeals to his own invention, he assumed a tragic port, addressed his companion with, "I will return *anon!*" and stalked off the stage to seek the neglectful prompter.

*ROUGH TREATMENT.*

A STORY is told of the American actor Forrest and a player called Selwyn, who enthusiastically got himself "cast" for the part of Lucullus in *Damon and Pythias*, in order to have the honour of playing with the great tragedian. "The rehearsals all went smoothly. 'Here I seize you,' said Mr. Forrest.—'Certainly, sir,' replied Mr. Selwyn, cheerfully.—'Here I put you off, at first entrance,' said Mr. Forrest.—'Quite right, sir,' replied Selwyn, who was getting on capitally.—'You must give yourself up to me,' said Mr. Forrest.—'Never fear, sir,' re-

plied Selwyn, with a trusting smile. The eventful night arrived. Selwyn was beautifully attired in spotless tights and Roman tunic. The whole company admired him as he stood in a graceful attitude at the wing. Then his cue was given, and he walked upon the stage, 'a thing of beauty.' He spoke his little lines with modest emphasis. Suddenly the muscular tragedian advanced upon him like an angry tiger upon a gentle lamb; seized him; shook him in the air; threw him from side to side; released him only to pounce upon him again, like a cat playing with a mouse; swabbed the stage with him as if he had been a floor-clout; held him at arm's-length, amid the eager plaudits of the gallery boys, and at last flung him out of sight through the first entrance, and landed him in front of the prompter's box, a dirty, sore, perspiring, dishevelled, bruised, disgusted heap of humanity. 'Ah!' said a friend, coming up to him as he lay panting upon the floor; 'I see that you have been playing with Forrest.'—'No,' groaned Selwyn, trying in vain to rise; 'Forrest has been playing with me! and a nice object he's made of me!' Mr. Selwyn modestly but firmly declined to make a second appearance on the stage—at any rate, as Lucullus."

#### COOKE AND THE LIVERPOOL AUDIENCE.

THERE was a rough genuineness about Cooke, which, in

spite of his coarseness and even brutal tastes, interests. At Liverpool, when he was reeling about the stage and scarcely able to articulate, a storm of hisses broke out. He turned on them. "What! do you hiss me—*me*, George Frederick Cooke! *You contemptible money-getters!* You shall never again have the honour of hissing me. Farewell. I banish *you*." Then, after a pause, he added, "*There is not a brick in your dirty town but what is cemented by the blood of a negro.*" There is a kind of grandeur and rude savagery in this address which is highly characteristic of the man.

#### KEMBLE'S APPEAL.

KEMBLE, interrupted by the crying of a child in the gallery, at last came forward, and in his deep solemn tones addressed the audience: "Ladies and gentlemen, unless the play be stopped, the child cannot possibly go on." This speech has been attributed to various facetious actors, who are supposed to have uttered it ironically, but the gravity and habitual earnestness of Kemble, together with the belief that he was giving a dignified rebuke, adds greatly to the point of the story.

#### A DYING PRAYER.

"TOM COOKE" was required at the eleventh hour to take an actor's place in the play of George Barnwell, at a country theatre. News of one of Nelson's victories had just come in, and

the whole town was in a state of excitement. Cooke got through the part fairly, until he came to the end, where he was stabbed by his son, and when his knowledge ceased. He was told to "say anything—invent something," when, after some proper gaspings, he suddenly threw his hat into the air and shouted, "*Nelson for ever!*" The roars of applause that followed shook the roof, and he received all the honours of the night.

#### A POLITE REQUEST.

MACKLIN, when sitting at the back of the boxes, was prevented from seeing the stage by a gentleman who stood up in front. He tapped him with his stick on the shoulder and addressed him with the most studious politeness: "When anything entertaining occurs on the stage, perhaps you would let me and my friend know: for you see, my dear sir, that at present *we must totally depend upon your kindness.*"

#### THE JEW AND MRS. SIDDONS.

WHEN Mrs. Siddons was playing "Mrs. Beverley," at Bath, the theatre was hushed into the most sympathetic stillness. Her whispers were eagerly caught, and, according to the favourite expression, a pin might have been heard to drop. Suddenly a little Jew started up in the pit and called out angrily: "My Got! who dat sphit in my eye?"

#### ODD ADVERTISEMENT.

KEMBLE and Lewis happened to meet in Dublin, when a manager engaged both to join their talents at his theatre for "one night only." He advertised the combined attraction in the following strange terms:—"They never performed together in the same piece, *and in all human probability they never will again.* This evening is the summit of the manager's *climax.* He has constantly gone higher and higher in his efforts to delight the public; beyond this *it is not in nature to go.*"

#### WELL DESERVED.

ACTORS have often had to suffer from the bad taste of friends and patrons, who offer some trifling civilities and expect a gratuitous exhibition in return. Such designs have often been pleasantly frustrated. Thus Shuter being asked for the special object of entertaining the company, remained purposely as dull and silent as possible, until one of the party, losing all patience, exclaimed, "Come, Mr. Shuter, when do you intend to begin to be comical?" "Gad," said the actor, rising, "I forgot my fool's dress, but I'll go and fetch it if you will be my substitute until I come back." This was thought very droll, but Shuter did not return.

#### A POLITE REQUEST.

LISTON was subjected to a similar attempt during the re-

vival of Tom Thumb, when he was asked to the house of a city magnate. At dessert he was surprised to see the servants come in to clear away the tables and set back the chairs, the guests standing round, while the host smilingly explained that these preparations were made "to make room for Mr. Liston to favour the company with *Lord Grizzle's dancing song before the children went to bed.*" This scene must have been a bit of comedy. Liston withdrew.

#### SERVE THEM RIGHT.

THIS suggests a well-known story told of Mr. Sothern, who was asked to dine at a mess, where the officers insisted, after dinner, he should "give his famous drunken scene from *David Garrick.*" The actor good humouredly waived off this request, and found many ingenious excuses, but his ill-bred hosts were positive, and grew uproarious in their pressing. The actor accordingly consented, and gave the scene faithfully. At the close, it will be remembered, the actor drags down a curtain, as he leaves the stage, and on this occasion, affecting to be carried away by the situation, he caught at the table-cloth, and swept off glasses, plates, &c. This rough and ready rebuke was fairly deserved, no matter who the hero of the story was.

#### "STICK TO THE COO!"

BOSWELL tells, with an air of doubt and complacency mingled,

how one night in the gallery of a theatre he had given imitations of the lowing of a cow. This performance drew forth, as might be expected, the applause of the groundlings, who shouted loudly, "Encore the coo! encore the coo!" "Bozzy" naively owns that he was encouraged to go on and offer imitations of the notes of other animals, but these were inferior, and saluted as failures by the audience. An old Dr. Blair beside him whispered that he had better "Stick to the coo, mon! you'd better stick to your coo!" There is something inexpressibly grotesque in the whole scene, and the fashion in which it so nicely harmonizes with Boswell's character.

#### BATHOS.

THE platitudes found in prologues are well known, as well as the curiously universal adoption of the same topics and allusions. At any amateur performance are sure to be heard expressions of feigned timidity and alarm, with an invitation at the close to "give but your applause!" Bowles, the poet, once heard Mrs. Siddons deliver two lines:—

"The volunteers, rewarded by no pay,  
Except their feelings on some future  
day,"

—a delightful specimen. The idea, not merely of rewarding a "person with their own feelings," but of deferring that payment until "a future day" is excellent.

## PREACHERS AND ACTORS.

A NICE distinction was once made by an actor in conversation with a prelate. Archbishop Sancroft said to Betterton: "I don't know how it is that you actors, when speaking of merely imaginary things, contrive to affect your audience as if they were real things; whereas we clergymen, when speaking of real things, seem only to affect our audience as though we were speaking of imaginary things." Betterton suggested that it might be because "actors spoke of imaginary things as though they were real, whereas in the pulpit real things were spoken of as imaginary."

## RUSTICS AT THE PLAY.

MR. JULIAN YOUNG sent his gardener and wife to the Bristol theatre as a treat, and asked them both how they liked it. The following dialogue took place:—"Well, Robert, what did you see last night?" (No answer, but a look of bewilderment and annoyance at the question).—"Well, sir," after a pause, "I see what you sent us to see."—"Well, what was that?"—"Why the play, in course."—"Was it a tragedy or a comedy?"—"I don't know what ye mane. I can't say no more than I have said, nor no fairer. *All I know is, there was a precious lot on 'em on the theayter stage; and there they was in and out, and out and in again.*" The wife was asked for

her opinion.—"Ah, dear sir, and we had the *pantrymine*, and what I liked best in it *was where the fool fellar* stooped down and grinned at we through his legs." Many a play would deserve the honest gardener's criticism; and "in and out, and out and in again," would fitly describe certain grand spectacular performances.

## A MANAGER'S LETTER-BOX.

THERE is often a certain grotesqueness connected with attempts of candidates for the stage. Their pride and ambitious sense of their own merits contrasts in a very entertaining way with the modest character of their present position. Every manager could contribute some diverting chapters to this department of human weakness.

"SIR," wrote an applicant, "I have took the liberty of Troubling you with those few lines, to Ask you if you have an Engagement Vacant in Your Company. To Let You know My Accomplishments, I am Active and Ready, Quick at my Lessons, And further, Sir, the Chief which i Can Play is Norval in 'Douglas,' and Lothair in the 'Miller and his Men;' And have no Objection of being Usefull at the Sides as a Pheasant, &c. As My Inclination for treading the Stage is So Strong, That i am like Lothair, 'Without the Stage my life is But a Blank,' my Services is Useless to Others and Miserable to Myself. And further, i have to State, I am

Very Expeditious at Writing Plays, and have no Objection of Supplying you with a Melodrame Every 3 Months free of Expence; and i have one now in my Possession Which i have lately Wrote, Entitled The (Assassins of the forest,) in 5 Acts, Which, sir, is yours, if you think Proper to Engage Me.”

“SIR,” wrote another postulant, “Allow me, with the utmost respect *and becoming fortitude*, the privilege, as well as the honour, though an entire stranger, of soliciting your attention towards the enclosed. A self-interrogation had long perplexed my mind, concerning whether I was capable of undertaking the difficult, as well as *resolute part*, of an author:—many proofs, I imagined, announced me incompetent, and yet others appeared convincing me to the contrary. The generality of mankind are too apt in imagining themselves exulting in a state of future prosperity; instead of employing resignation to make themselves content in whatever wretched capacity the precarious will of Providence may judge necessary. Of the former disposition am I; therefore, I threw aside every obstacle, and consigned my all to chance. Emboldened by every favourable idea on my own side, I commenced the present production; nor were my exertions reluctantly given, but indefatigable in its progress, though I was continually teased by voices forbidding such an undertaking: my last consideration, is that of

receiving any emolument from the drama, but candidly, if I may employ the expression, the smiles of aspiring Fame! I shall now conclude, with humbly soliciting *for an insurmountable favour on your part*, which is, to use your never-failing talent, in whatever situation you think proper, if you suppose the enclosed worthy of such noble indulgence! but if it should so happen as to be entirely rejected, *whick I shall know by not observing any announcement of its representation in your bills*, why, I shall make myself perfectly contented, as I am most *rigidly* assured that I could not have entrusted any dramatic attempt whatever into the hands of a man more zealous in wishing to give satisfaction than yourself; and therefore, without any apology, allow me to repeat boldly, what I would wish to be:—An Object worthy of your Regard.”

Another novice offered himself to Macklin for Othello, and giving the speech to the Senate as a specimen of his powers, was observed to use his left arm again and again with great violence. “Pray, sir,” said Macklin, “make more use of your right arm. You are now addressing the Senate.” The actor naïvely explained that he had lost his arm, in a man-of-war, many years before!

Another gentleman thus offered himself and his peculiar combination of talents:—“I am a Salamander, and sing comic songs.” Another, that “he was

a beautiful whistler." But better than these, are some that found their way into the *New Monthly Magazine*, nearly fifty years ago, illustrated, it would seem, by the comments of either Leigh Hunt or Hazlitt.

To a country bumpkin the abstract notion of "a play-actor" is a something which inspires a mysterious respect amounting to awe, and at the time a sense of familiarity which almost "breeds contempt." These two opposite feelings are delightfully blended and confused together in the epistle which follows:—

"MR. WRENCH, — SIR, — Please to excuse my freedom as streanger to you, but I have had the pleasure of seeing you many times at the theatre in Oxford. Mr. Wrench, J. W\*\*\* presents most respectful compliments to Mr. W. begs the favor of his company at dinner to day at 2 o'Clock to meet a few friends—And in the evening we intend to visit your theatre. Sir, I hope you will excuse this short notis.

"Monday Morning, 4th Sept. 1815. An answer is requested.

"J. W\*\*\*, Porter of—  
"College."

The next specimen shall be from two aspirants after theatrical fame. The infinite summariness of the first, and the cool manner in which the writer desires to be waited upon at his own residence, are remarkable. He evidently thinks that, now his mind is made up on the matter, nothing remains but to

arrange the preliminaries of his engagement.

"Aug. 13, 1815.

"TO MR. MATHEWS,—SIR,— I write these few lines to you, hoping that i shall succeed in what I am trying for—i am very unhappy, now my mind is all on being a stage-actor, and if you would have the goodness to stepp down to 35, Devonshire-street, Portland-place, to-day, i shall be very much a bloiged to you, as I have not time to come to the Haymarket.

"I remain yours,—R. R\*\*\*."

The other is from a very different person:—

"SIR,—I now wait upon you in order to offer myself to your acceptance as a tragic performer of the first characters—having studied Shakespear and other celebrated authors for several years—but I bring with me no other recommendation to your notice but my own abilities—not having appeared on any stage yet—still if you should have the goodness to grant my suit, I think I may justly say with Norval, something makes me bold to say I will not shame thy favor. The salary I should expect would not be more than 15s. per week. Pardon me, if I through ignorance have erred in addressing you—not knowing the way in which the theatrical affairs are generally transacted.

"Your humble Servant,

"W. K\*\*\*.

"N.B. If you think it worth your trouble, as I am now in waiting, I would give you a specimen or two of my abili-

ties—knowing, from report, your innate worth and love of justice.

“To Mr. T. Dibdin, Manager, Surry Theatre.”

The following is from an author—and what is more, a poet—and what is most of all, a patriot!—

“Scarboro’, Dec. 9, 1804.

“DEAR SIR,—I have written a play, ‘Patriotic Incidents, or the Nightly Watch; in five acts.’ Altogether pro tem pore—the title will convince—it will readily be licensed, and I am confident it possesses merit. One (a factitious, whimsical, hypocritical, satirical, avaricious) character I purposely contrived for you. Quere, can I have it introduced in London? In what time? How must I proceed? What obstacles will oppose me? How shall I oppose *them*? What terms? Is Mr. Kelly accessible? for I want a ‘patriotic overture’ composing, and a ‘patriotic song’ setting to music—viz.

for four voices. { England, arise! *see*, where the gathering foe,  
Like a fierce *tyger*, ere he takes his leap—  
Rise, o arise! uplift a mighty blow—  
Headlong destruction! Ruin! on them heap!!

Overture, (which immediately strikes up at the conclusion of 5th Act,) to have for its various movements, ‘God Save the King’ — ‘Rule Britannia’ — ‘Hearts of Oak’ — ‘Britons Strike Home.’ Hope you will not be offended at my having taken this liberty with you, nor at my urging you to favor me with as early an answer as pos-

sible. And let me entreat you to keep my name (——) secret, for I mean to be known only as, Dear Sir, Yours, &c.,  
WM. RUMBERT.

“N.B. Best respects to Mrs. —— . Perhaps I may err in my superscription—for I only heard per chance you were at Drury-lane. If you are not, permit me to say you deserve to be there.”

The following effusion is the joint production of two brothers, who seem, in this instance, to have been sick of too much health. The “bons,” (as they call them,) with which the worthy proprietor of Vauxhall had favoured them, were anything but *bons* to them! Their consternation at the unremitting attacks that are made upon them—their tender solicitude lest Mr. Barrett should suspect them of disaffection to his interests, in not helping to fill his gardens with orders—and their innocent despair at the “distressing necessity” to which they are reduced of being compelled to solicit the favour of being allowed to forego the favour he had conferred upon them—all this is the perfection of *naïveté*.

“London, Aug. 1, 1820.

“MUCH RESPECTED SIR,—Your kind generosity was so great that you bestowed on us, your horn-players at Wauxhall, two Bons, which we with the most grateful sensibility accepted; but in the course of time, we find hout that this intended favor was for us an severe

punishment. We are every day besieged; they say, two bons make a little party, and for this reason, in the course of the season, more than 300 person ask, and constantly plag us for the bons—so that we are at last under the distressing necessity to solicit your kind permission and consent to renounce and give up the bons. But if we lose the bons, we wish never and never to lose your kind protection. Consequently, we most humbly solicit the favor to be always at your service, at least as long as we can decently do our duty, as we prefer the engagement at Wauxhall to any other at London.

“We remain, with the greatest respect, much respected Sir,  
Your most grateful and humble Servants,

“JOSEPH & PETER ———

“Horns at Wauxhall,

“To G. N. BARRETT, Esq.,  
Strokwell.”

We shall conclude our extracts, for the present, with an epistle sent from a clown at the Dublin Theatre to his wife in London. The following, like the specimen which precedes it, is certainly neither prose nor verse; but we will venture to say that it is *poetry*, if the simple outbursts of a sincere and deep-seated affection are such. In the midst of its infinite confusion of times, persons, and things, there are touches of passion which nothing purely fictitious ever possessed. The benediction that intervenes between the two postscripts is the sublime of simple nature.

The reader must not be content with a single perusal of this letter. On the first reading, its somewhat recondite orthography may perhaps interfere with its effect. But when it can be read over without pausing to puzzle out the meaning of the words, he who can so read it, and not be touched by it, even to the very verge of tears, may be assured that he is either not made of “penetrable stuff,” or that his heart and affections are not in a healthful state. We should shrewdly suspect such a person of being secretly addicted to melo-drams!

“Friday Morning.

“MY DEAR AINGEL,—I reaseved your Leater, and I am a stonisht that you did not start off the moment the theatre closed, after what I have rote to you and leting you know what a situation I am in. I am a stonisht that you did not pay more a tencion—was you in a straing country I wold not serve you so—you are braking my hart by eanchis—I have ben bad a nuf before I reseved this Leter—but this has cut me to the senter of my hart. I am walking the streets from morning to night and till morning again—if you are not started before you reaseve this Leter, I shal expect you will start of on the recpt of this Leater, wich you will reaseve on Monday, 12 of November, wich I shall expect you will come of by the male at night; and if you are not over in Dublin on the thursday folowing, I shal start on the

friday following, if I am able to start—for it is no use for you to come over here then—for you lose your engagement—for Mr. Joneston says he must engage sum one else in your situation—so you know my sentiments. Dam the election and the theatre—if you wish to make me happy you will mind what I have to do to you,

“So no more from your ever loving and obedient husband.

“If it ruins me I will start on Friday if you are not over on Thursday. If you start on Monday night you will be in Dublin on Thursday. God bless your eyes. The theatre is shut up, and I have just money a nose left to bring me to holey head—and if you are not over on Thursday the 15, or Friday the 16, by God I will come of if I walk all the way from the head to London—thearfor do not come if you do not come of in time. O fany—I did not think you would treat me so—to leave me in a strange country—I could not treat poor Lobskey so—much more your loving husband.”

#### A STRANGE DRAMA.

COLMAN says it would be impossible to give an idea of the “cart-loads of trash” that are sent to a London manager. The very first piece that was sent to him when he undertook the management, was on a nautical subject and by a nautical gentleman. During the principal scene of the five acts—and it was a tragedy—the hero declaimed from the mainmast of a man-of-

war, without once descending from his position!

#### APPEAL TO RHYNO.

REYNOLDS was present at some ludicrous scene that occurred during the performance of a new play called “The Captives.” In the fifth act a character called Rhyno rushed on the stage announcing to the hero, “My liege, the Citadel is taken!” to the surprise of the audience, who had not heard that there was a war or siege going on. The person addressed, after commanding many military manoeuvres and reciting an invocation to Mars, turned towards the messenger, exclaiming with enthusiasm, “Charge, then, charge! *Now art thou ready, Rhyno!*” which, as may be conceived, brought the play to a close in roars of laughter.

#### A WALKING CONTRADICTION.

“FLY!” says Charlotte, in Reyrol’s play of “Werther,” “Lose not a moment! Suicide!” Sebastian answers, “I’m rooted here and have not power to stir!” As he spoke he “crossed” Charlotte, and stalked off the stage, to the great amusement of the audience.

#### A SCHOOL OF ACTING DESCRIBED.

MRS. CRAWFORD’S (formerly Mrs. Barry) criticism on the Kemble school, “All Paw and pause.”

## GENUINE ACTING.

A GROCER in Lichfield, who was going to London, received from his neighbour Peter Garrick a letter of introduction to the great David Garrick. Before presenting it he happened to visit the theatre, saw David in "Abel Druger," and returned to his native town without presenting the letter. He explained the reason to Peter on his return. "Your brother may be rich, as I daresay the man who lives like him must be; but, by G—d, though he be your brother, Mr. Garrick, he is one of the shabbiest, meanest, most pitiful hounds I ever saw in the whole course of my life." This was a real compliment to the actor's gifts. Peter Garrick himself told the story to Johnson, who again related it to Mr. Kirkham.

## A PIOUS MANAGER.

THE editor of this little collection once attended a performance that took place in a sort of canvas theatre which had been opened for the season. The manager came forward with a sort of devotional manner—indeed it was said that he had been a field preacher—to thank the audience for past favours, with a view to obtaining future ones. "He had secured," he said, "their old favourite, who would make his first appearance next week, with the permission"—here he cast his eyes upwards—"of the Great Manager of all."

## ELECTIONEERING ON THE STAGE.

THEODORE HOOK, when a little boy, was allowed to go behind the scenes at the Haymarket Theatre. When Lewis's "Knight and the Wood Demon" was being performed, the various supernatural noises and warnings were produced—the lad noted with much interest—by an enormous speaking-trumpet used by the prompter. One night when the Westminster election was raging and great political excitement, Theodore prevailed on the prompter to allow him to make the noise for him, to which the latter incautiously agreed. Just as the fiend was ascending through the trap a deep roar attended him, and the astonished audience heard the words "SHE-R-I-DAN FOR EVER!" given in melo-dramatic accents.

## "GAGS."

"GAGS" have always been an essential a portion of an actor's stock as his wigs and rouge pots. Some make it a practice—a well-known comic actor is a signal instance—of "gagging" all through their part, if not to the embarrassment, at least to the comparative extinction, of their companions. Some of the traditional "gags" are jealously preserved and handed down; and it is often thought of great importance, when a part is attempted, "to get the gags" from the fortunate player who has their custody. The modern ver-

sion of the "Critic" teems with gags—allusions to the "Christy Minstrels," and the like—for which Mr. Charles Mathews lately attempted a pleasant justification. There are some gags in the "School for Scandal," especially that precious question about the letter from the country, "Was the postage paid?" and in the recent revival of the "Rivals" there were a number of jests introduced certainly not warranted by the original text. Sheridan, therefore, seems to be the chief victim.

### "WHICH BE JOEY?"

MISTAKES like the following happen more frequently than is supposed. Two countrymen went to Covent Garden to see Joe Grimaldi as clown. They arrived at "half-price," during the last act of "George Barnwell," when Charles Kemble as Barnwell, and Murray as Thoroughgood, were on the stage, and exciting great applause. One of the countrymen was heard to say to the other, "Which be Joey?"

### A RECOGNITION.

ZUCHELLI, a famous baritone singer, whose fame was well known on the continent, came to the London Opera House. When Michael Kelly saw him behind the scenes, he started and said, "We have met before. Were you ever in Wine Tavern Street, Dublin?" The signor admitted the fact. It turned out that he was no other than

"Teddy Kelly, of the Cross Puddle," an old schoolfellow of Michael Kelly's.

### INCONVENIENT HOMAGE.

ON the last night of Macready's engagement at Paris, he performed Othello, and when he was called before the curtain a vast number of his French audience leaped on the stage and overwhelmed him with embraces. This *épanchement du cœur*, as they would have called it, brought its inconveniences, and many faces showed the effects of their contact with that of the Moor.

### "BUSINESS."

HISTRIONIC "business" has its sacred traditions. In comedies of the last century, when a gentleman was surprised in his garden reading, the invariable "business" was to throw away the book into the adjacent stream or shrubbery. This was considered to be easy carelessness of high life. Garrick, in the scene with his mother in Hamlet, used to have the back legs of his chair shortened, so that it would tumble over with a touch as he rose hastily. That the grave-digger in the same play should wear a number of waistcoats, is held equally sacred.

### A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE.

"I LIKE Wrench," a friend said to Elliston, "because he is

the same natural easy creature *on* the stage, that he is *off*."—"My case, exactly," retorted Eliston; "I am the same person *off* the stage that I am *on*." "The inference, at first sight," says Charles Lamb, who reports or invents the story, "seems identical; but examine it a little, and it confesses only that one performer was never the other always, *acting*."

#### CHARY PRAISE.

THERE is a well-worn story of Mrs. Siddons, which is yet excellent of its kind. On her first appearance at the Edinburgh theatre, her playing was received coldly, and without the slightest applause, so much so that she vowed, if her next point failed, she would never set foot in Scotland again. The point was given; there was a pause, when a voice in the "put" was heard, "That's no' bad!" This cautious criticism produced first laughter, and then the applause she was so eager for.

#### FREE AND EASY.

AN American actor was pressing familiarly on Mr. Macready at rehearsal, and was checked by the rebuke: "Sir, do you want to shake hands with your king?"—"I don't know about that," was the reply, "I always do so with my own president."

#### "THE NAIL."

THE same tragedian was greatly put out by the stupidity

of an inferior actor at rehearsal, who would persist in coming down the stage in front of him. The carpenter was called and told to drive a brass-headed nail into the floor. "Now, sir," said Macready, "remember you are not to proceed beyond that spot." At night, during the performance, he became quite confused in his part, and kept his head down, without giving the proper cue. "What are you about, sir?" growled the tragedian, under his breath.—"Ain't I looking for that blessed nail of yours?" The idea that the remedy for his failing should itself become the cause of a fresh failing, is highly ludicrous.

#### SHOULD AN ACTOR FEEL?

IT is stated that Betterton, when playing Hamlet, was actually seen to turn pale as the ghost appeared. Miss Kelly used to relate that she felt the hot tears dropping from Mrs. Siddon's eyes as the great actress bent over her when playing one of her most pathetic characters. Supposing, however, that such sensibility was exhibited every night, it is evident that it would become a mere habit; and the question has often been discussed as to whether the mere signs of artificial emotions, duly regulated by study and genius, are not more effective? Johnson took a highly characteristic view of the matter, when he declared that if Garrick was ever so carried away by his acting as to feel for the moment like Richard, he deserved hanging

each time he played the character.

*AN EYE TO THE MAIN CHANCE.*

THE humours connected with strolling companies are endless. One Jenny Whitely, a well-known manager, was playing Richard, and in the famous "tent scene" delivered the lines with the singular interpolation:—

"Hence babbling dreams! you threaten here in vain!"

("That man there, in the brown wig, has got into the pit without paying.")

"Richard's himself again."

*SOLDIERS AT THEATRES.*

A GUARD of soldiers always attends at Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres. This custom is said to be owing to a dispute that took place on the stage between Quin and some young "bloods" of the day, when the watch had to be summoned. King George the Second sent for the offenders and lectured them, and, to prevent such impropriety in future, ordered that a guard should attend every night.

*SALARIES OF ACTORS.*

ABOUT a hundred years ago, when Drury Lane Theatre, under Garrick's direction, had reached the highest prosperity, the salary of the leading actors averaged fifteen pounds a week. The names of 160 performers

were on the books. Nearly that number of plays were always ready for performance, each with its caste of players celebrated in each character. A good leading comedian now receives about 25*l.* a week. Two well-known performers, of great popularity, are known to make over ten thousand a year each! The usual terms in the provincial theatres is to share the profits of each night, with the manager, after all expenses are paid.

*GARRICK AND LORD MANSFIELD.*

THERE is a little-known but highly characteristic story of Garrick, which shows the nice and delicately ordered nature of his mind. At a dinner party he was asked by Lord Mansfield to repeat the dagger scene in "Macbeth" for the company. This rather awkward request Garrick did not refuse, but began to explain the difficulties of conveying the idea of the situation under such circumstances. "The mind of the spectator," he said, "should be prepared. It should be recollected that Macbeth was a nobleman highly honoured by the king, &c., and that he was bound to protect him as his guest, and yet was in his chamber for the purpose of murdering him." "Then he sees the apparition," continued the actor, who had been artfully preparing the minds of the guests all the time that he had been unfolding the difficulties of doing so, and exclaims, "Is this

a dagger which I see before me?"—"That's all very true," interrupted Lord Mansfield, with singular *gaucherie*, "but, surely, you can recite a portion of it for us?"—"Impossible," said the actor, coldly. He then changed the subject, "Where are we to meet again, my Lord?"

#### A COMPLIMENT.

WHEN Kemble was superintending the building of Covent Garden Theatre, the following "neat" epigram was written:—

"Actor and architect, he tries  
To please the critics one and all:  
This bids the private tiers to rise,  
And that the public tears to fall."

#### A DEFAULTER ACQUITTED.

KEMBLE'S formality and "noble Roman" manner often furnished amusement to the jester. This haughty bearing, however, was sometimes checked by mortifying circumstances. One night, when "Pizarro" was "running," there was a long wait, and it was announced that one of the actors was absent, and that the indulgence of the audience was requested for a few moments. Kemble then presented himself rather abruptly, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, at the request of the principal performers in the play of this evening, I am to inform you that the person alluded to is Mr. Emery!" He had scarcely retired when the delinquent himself, his face red with haste, and in his great-coat and dirty boots, rushed on

the stage, and panted out his excuses. "Ladies," he said,— "for you I must particularly address—my wife—my wife," (here his feelings overcame him for a moment,) "*was confined but an hour since*, and I—" (but here he was interrupted by a tremendous burst of applause, the motive for which it would be hard to define nicely, though it probably meant sympathy), "and I ran for the doctor." Roars of affectionate interest broke forth. He attempted to add further explanation; he would not be listened to, and retired triumphant and consoled, with his hand on his breast. This "rehabilitation," it may be conceived, was not very agreeable to Kemble, who was destined, however, to receive further mortification before the play concluded. Rolla has to try and corrupt a sentinel, who was played by Emery, when the following dialogue took place:—

*Rolla.* Have you a wife?

*Sentinel.* I have.

*Rolla.* Children?

*Sentinel.* I had two this morning.—*I have three now.*

This rather happy hit produced such a roar of delight that the gravity of the scene was lost, and Kemble himself forced to retire without being able to add another word.

#### TIT FOR TAT.

SOME of the jests and repartees that have passed between rival dramatic authors, or between authors and managers, are of a very superior class.

Thus Garrick said, with some complacency, to Foote, "I see, after all, you are acting one of my pieces at the Haymarket."—"Pooh," said the other, "I must have some sort of ventilation for my little house in this hot weather." Here are all the elements of surprise so necessary to a witty situation: Garrick's air of triumph at an enemy's being obliged to fall back on one of his productions: Foote's apparent acceptance of the position, and, lastly, the rather ignominious use for which the piece was adapted.

So with Sheridan's reply to Monk Lewis, who was offering for a wager *all* the money brought by his successful "Castle Spectre." "No," said Sheridan, coolly, "but I will bet you all that it is worth." A very different thing.

So when Boaden, who had gone about calling Drury Lane "a wilderness," (from its vast size,) came to Sheridan with a new piece, the latter said, good-humouredly, "You are entitled to call my theatre a wilderness, but it is too much to expect me to give you an opportunity of proving your words." This is very happy.

#### ODD PHRASES.

IN Victor's "History of the Theatres" occurs a quaint phrase. He is criticising the "Earl of Essex," and describes the last act, "where Essex and Southampton are going to execution,

*which proved an agreeable incident."*

THEATRICAL biographers, such as Boaden, Murphy, Campbell, have some very strange and inflated phrases. Murphy, that Mrs. Cibber, "with her expressive and harmonious voice, spoke daggers in every sentence," and adds, that it was "the thunder and lightning of virtue." "The audience," says Boaden on another occasion, "was for once electrified without noise." "Demetrius," says Murphy, describing the close of a tragedy, "presents a bowl of poison to his wife. She obeys, and dies soon after. Dumnorix weeps over her, and falls on his own sword. It is unnecessary to add that this catastrophe made no impression, and that the piece ended in a cold, languid, and unimpassioned manner." Campbell, the poet, has the most extraordinary expressions in his "Life of Mrs. Siddons," but it is believed not to have been his work at all.

#### THUNDER.

STAGE thunder seems to have been produced in the same way from the earliest days. In a prologue to "Every Man in his Humour" occur the lines :

"Nor roll'd bullet heard  
To say it thunders, nor tempestuous drum  
Rumbles to tell you when the storm  
is come."

The sheet of metal, violently agitated, is indeed the most convenient and therefore the most popular "property," but

the "roll'd bullet" gives the effect of the distant thunder with far more effect. Peas, rattled in a hollow roller, is the conventional mode of representing rain; while the whistling wind is, or used to be, produced by turning a sort of treadwheel on which a cloth was laid. This suggests the wintry Crimean scene in one of Mr. Robertson's pieces, so elaborately got up at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, where the characters seemed to have infinite difficulty in closing the door of the hut against the wind; and a shower of some white liquor was artfully thrown in, as the door opened, to give the idea of snow and sleet.

#### AGE OF ACTORS.

THERE is certainly something remarkable in the longevity of actors. It might reasonably be assumed that the hard work coming at the close of the day, the strain on the lungs, and the mental exertion, would tend to a speedy wearing out the system. Dr. Clarke Russell has collected many instances of old age in actors. Wilks lived to 88; Mrs. Clive, Beard, Betterton, Reeley to 75; Murphy, Jack Johnstone, King, Vining, and Wallack to 78. Dowton reached 88, Colley Cibber 86, Yates 97, Macklin to some years over 100! Mrs. Glover was 68, Garrick 65, Harley 72, Liston 69, Pope and Quin 73. This list might be vastly extended. Miss Farren, Munden, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Hartley,

Wewitzer, Quick, Mrs. Mattocks, Bensley, Tate Wilkinson, Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Abington, Moody, Charles Kemble, Charles Young, Mrs. Glover, Richard Jones, Mrs. Bartley, Charles Mackay, Farren, Hartley, Vandenhoff, Lady Becher, Paul Bedford, were all septuagenarians. To these may be added the names of Buckstone, Webster, Phelps, Macready, Mathews. The Law and the Stage are certainly the most healthy and most hard-working of professions.

#### YOUTHFUL VANITY.

ONE of the most amusing instances of juvenile confidence is found in the life of Charles James Mathews, father of the present excellent comedian who bears the same name. Edwin, the famous actor, had died and left a vacancy at Covent Garden. Mathews had been bitten with a mania for acting, and had figured a good deal in private theatricals of a very obscure sort. He was then a boy of fourteen. "To give an idea," he says, "of my peculiar modesty at this period, the news of poor Edwin's demise was no sooner made known than I made up my mind, inexperienced and ignorant as I was, to succeed him. I lost no time in writing to Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, tendering my services for his situation. I luckily preserved a copy of my absurd letter, and have also carefully cherished Mr. Harris's reply in evidence of my own vanity and folly.

“SIR,—The lamented death of Mr. Edwin making an opening in your establishment inspires me to offer myself as a candidate to supply the vacancy. I have never performed in any public theatrical representation yet, having been much engaged in business, but I trust this will not operate against me. I already am perfect in Lingo and Bowkitt, and know more than half of Old Doiley. Salary is no object, as I only wish to bring my powers into a proper sphere of action. I do not wish to blaze out awhile and then evaporate. Being at present bound to my father and under indentures, of course his consent will be necessary; but this is the only impediment I am aware of. Your immediate answer, if convenient, will be of great consequence to, sir, your obedient servant,

C. M.’

“Mr. Harris’s reply was simply as follows:—

“SIR,—The line of acting which you propose is at this time so very well sustained in Covent Garden theatre, that it will not be in my power to give you any eligible situation therein.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,  
T. HARRIS.’

“In justification of this gentleman’s rejection of my valuable services, and in confirmation of my vanity, I have only to add, that those excellent actors, Messrs. Munden and Fawcett, were deservedly established favourites in the line to which I aspired.”

### UNPLEASANT PREDICATION.

PALMER, the original Joseph Surface, was at one time so oppressed with debt that he never left Drury Lane Theatre, and lived altogether in his dressing-room. Being later engaged at the Haymarket he was conveyed there in a cartful of scenery, concealed in a piece of stage furniture.

### A MANAGER’S EXPLANATION.

THE well-known York manager, Tate Wilkinson, when any of his actors became “contrary” would address some such earnest appeal as the following to the public:—

“Theatre Royal, Hull.

“Mr. Wilkinson respectfully informs the public, that he feels himself at present much perplexed, and very unhappy, at being under the necessity of requesting their indulgence to Mr. Dunn, on Tuesday next, he having at a very short notice undertaken Mr. H. Johnson’s very pleasing part of Young Leonard, in the new comedy of ‘Folly as it Flies:’ it must be well known that Mr. H. Johnson is in possession of a principal range of characters at Covent Garden Theatre. Mr. W. truly laments he has it not in his power as manager to cast a play in the best manner for the public; but it is evidently the contrary, and he is very sorry for it.”

“ Mr. Garrick, Mr. Barry, Mr. Quin, and Mr. Woodward, were certainly first-rate actors, but Mr. Wilkinson has seen the two first give up Hamlet, and act the Ghost; and Mr. Quin, Justice Balance, in ‘The Recruiting Officer;’ and Mr. Woodward, Gibbet, in ‘The Beaux’ Stratagem;’ and if a part is really good, allotted by the manager, and exactly suits the abilities of the actor, why certainly that constitutes a first part to the actor, sooner than any other for which his talents are not adequate.”

#### THE PLAYER BETRAYED.

QUICK entered the kitchen of an inn at Sheffield and walked up to the fire, where a goose was roasting. When he was gone, a countryman, who had been eyeing him intently, asked the landlord who that “comical little chap” was. The landlord told him. On which the countryman, slapping his thigh with great knowingness, said to a companion, “Dom it, I *thowht* he was a player. *Didn’t ye see how he eyed the goose?*”

#### A HISTRIONIC SPIT.

THIS suggests another story. An actor of some reputation was sitting by the kitchen fire, pleasantly watching his supper, a roast fowl, as it turned on the spit. When thus engaged, another starved-looking actor would come in periodically, gaze wistfully at the roast, and mutter dejectedly, “It will never

be done!” At last the future consumer protested angrily. “You are not aware, sir, that this bird is for me?” The other then explained that he was waiting for the spit, without which they could not begin their performance.

#### A BLUNT SPEECH.

AN eccentric being named Winter was the dresser of the York Theatre. He delighted in “taking down” affected performers. A rather foppish Mr. Dwyer came panting into the green room after performing in the “Liar,” and flung himself into a chair, declaring himself utterly exhausted. The dresser coolly remarked, “Ah, you should see Mr. Bennett after playing harlequin. That *was* fatigue.”

#### PLAY BILLS.

SATIRISTS have often made a favourite subject of the vanity of players, and pretty often without just cause. The punctilios and jealousies, however, that used to arise from such a trifling matter as a place in the play-bills, or the size of the letters in which their names were to be announced, might be some justification for these attacks. In Garrick’s day there were some absurd customs and contests on this subject. Leading actors would always insist on their names and titles appearing in “displayed” letters, and on the names of others being given in smaller characters. These, again, required that those of lower degree should have smaller letters.

In short, there was a sort of | lowing bill is a fair specimen of  
 “hierarchy of type.” The fol- | this singular system :—

By the COMPANY of COMEDIANS.

At the

THEATRE ROYAL in *Covent Garden*,

*This present Monday, being the 17th of Oct. 1748, will be presented*

The FIRST PART of

King HENRY the Fourth,

With the Humours of *Sir John Falstaff*.

The Part of *Sir John Falstaff* to be performed

By Mr. QUIN.

The *King* by Mr. SPARKS,

(It being the first Time of his Appearance on that Stage.)

The *Prince of Wales* by Mr. RYAN.

Prince John	}	by	{	Miss Hippisley.
Westmoreland				Mr. Holtham.
Northumberland				Mr. Paget.
Sir Walter Blunt				Mr. Ridout.
Douglas				Mr. Anderson.
Vernon				Mr. Gibson.

*Worcester* by Mr. DANCE.

The *Two Carriers* by Mr. ARTHUR and Mr. DUNSTALL.

*Francis* by Mr. COLLINS.

Gadshill	}	by	{	Mr. Bencraft.		{	by	{	Mr. Oates.	
Bardolph				Mr. Marten.					Sheriff	Mr. Smith.
Pete				Mr. Stoppelaer.					Traveller	Mrs. Bembridge.
				Hostess						

*Lady Percy* by Mrs. WOFFINGTON.

And the Part of *Hotspur* to be performed

By Mr. DELANE,

Who has not appear'd on that stage these Seven Years.

Boxes, 5s.—Pit, 3s.—First Gal. 2s.—Upper Gal. 1s.

*No persons to be admitted behind the Scenes, or any Money to be returned after the  
 Curtain is drawn up.*

PLACES for the BOXES to be taken of Mr. PAGE, at the Stage-door of the THEATRE.

This bill offers an amusing study. First it will be seen that there are no less than five different sizes of letter—"QUIN," "SPARKS," "RYAN," "ARTHUR," and "Hippisley." This was a mere general sketch, as it were, of the relative dignity of all the actors. But the rank of the bright particular stars had to be emphasized more strictly. The words "to be performed by" were always insisted on by players of the first rank, which thus became a special token of honour. When that could be conceded, the next degree was the enjoyment and strict monopoly of a whole line, as "The King by Mr. Sparks." The humbler fry were herded together. It was not until long after that the inconvenience of these nice distinctions were got rid of; and it was considered a great reform when the line "to be performed by" was abolished. "These disputes," says Wilkinson, "occasioned much murmuring. Sometimes a lady took the lead, and her rival was *bottomed*, and the hero placed in the middle. But all would not do; and in the year 1757, the line of 'to be performed by' was obliterated, and the great letters for the principal were continued, which Mr. Kemble for his own ease and quiet of the theatre has entirely banished."

#### DOWTON ON LARGE TYPE.

"MY dear Elliston, I am sorry you have done this: you know well what I mean—this cursed quackery, these big let-

ters. I cannot endure that my name should be so particularized. . . . If there really be any advantage in it, why should I or any single individual take it over the rest of our brethren. But it has a nasty disreputable look, and I have fancied the whole day the finger of the town pointed at me, as much as to say, 'That is he. Now for the Reward!'"

#### SHORT AND BLUNT.

QUIN once wrote to a manager to hint to him that he was disengaged.—"I am at Bath, yours, JAMES QUIN." To which came a reply quite as laconic, but more forcible,—"Stay there, and be damned, yours, JOHN RICH."

THERE is another little correspondence quite as blunt and curt. The veteran, Mrs. Garrick, thinking of her Davy, wrote to Kean,—"Dear sir, you cannot play Abel Drugger, yours, EVA MARIA GARRICK." The actor replied,—"Dear madam, I know it, yours, EDMUND KEAN."

#### UNANSWERABLE.

HOLLAND was "starring" it at York, where also happened to be one of the inferior actors of Drury Lane. In "Macbeth" this underling was playing one of the murderers, and in his reply to Macbeth's "There's blood upon thy face," instead of the usual half whisper, literally vociferated, "'Tis Banquo's then,"

in a tragic tone. The actor after the scene was over quietly hinted to him that there was no necessity to deliver that speech in quite so pointed a manner, when the other replied roughly, "Hark ye, Master Holland, I've my reputation to make in this town as well as you!"

#### A SECOND FATHER.

DR. GLOVER was a well-known physician who later went on the stage. When he was in Cork, a man was hanged for sheep-stealing, whom he contrived to smuggle away to his house and actually restore to life. A few nights later the doctor was on the stage acting Polonius, when a voice came from the pit, "Doctor, shure you're my second father, and have brought me a second time into the world, and are bound to maintain me." This was the revived sheep-stealer now very drunk. The sheriff was actually present, and recognised his victim, but good-naturedly retired while the bystanders succeeded in getting the man away.

#### DEAD ALIVE.

MOSSOP'S stateliness is always amusing. He was once acting Osmin, in the "Mourning Bride," where he had to stab Selim, a mere subordinate character. Selim should have remained dead on the stage, but being unluckily seized with a fit of coughing was obliged to put up his hand to loosen his stock, which convulsed the audience.

When the curtain fell, the enraged tragedian railed at the unfortunate player for daring to do such a thing. "Sir," he replied, "I must have choked if I did not." "Sir," said Mossop, "you should choke a hundred times rather than spoil my scene!"

#### AN EFFICACIOUS HINT.

ON occasions when payments were much in arrear at Smock Alley, Mossop, as Lear, was being supported in the arms of his faithful Kent, who suddenly whispered that he would let him drop on the stage, if he did not give his honour that he would pay him that night. Much alarmed, Mossop whispered, "Don't talk to me now." "I'll do it," said the other, and the tragedian actually had to give his word.

#### STAGE ADVERTISEMENT.

IN one of the rapturous bursts of panegyric of their own pieces, in which it is the fashion for theatrical managers of our day to indulge, we read of a triumph of scenic effect, representing old London Bridge, with "the *still* waters of the Thames gliding *swiftly* beneath."

#### STAGE FEASTS.

ONE of the most ingenious departments of stage delusion is connected with these banquets, which so often could furnish forth the scenic table. The humour of many pieces seems to

turn on the sight of comic actors eating and drinking voraciously, or being interrupted, getting drunk, etc. Pastebord fowls and tarts, and toast and water, usually form the staple of their Barmecide feast. There is, however, a time-honoured convention—usually honourably observed by managers—that on the occasion of the performance of “No Song no Supper,” a real leg of mutton shall be provided. This used to be considered an important privilege at the country theatres. A modern Frenchman has almost made a reputation by his representation of a man eating his supper; and he is said to fast the whole day, in order to give due realism to the part, as well as to leave sufficient space for the amazing quantity of edibles he is obliged, by the necessities of his part to consume. Mrs. Crawford told Charles Lamb a pretty story of her own childhood, when she was a half-starved struggling little maid.” In some child’s part, where in her theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl (oh! joy to Barbara!), some comic actor, who was for the night caterer for this dainty—in the misguided humour of his part, threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (oh! grief and pain of heart to Barbara!), that when she crammed a portion of it into her mouth, she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and what with shame of her ill-acted part, and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears,

which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.”

#### WOOD v. GLASS.

MAHON, a sort of dandy actor, had to sing a well-known song of Dibdin’s in “The Jubilee”—

“Behold, this fair goblet was carved from  
the tree,  
Which, oh! my sweet Shakespeare was  
planted by thee.”

The property man at the wing presented him with the proper wooden cup, but the actor disdained such a vulgar material, and sent for a handsomely-cut glass rummer. He sang the song with this in his hand, the

“Fair goblet carved from the tree,”  
to loud hissing from the audience.

#### “LAKERS.”

O’KEEFE heard some Irishmen say, as a strolling manager passed, “Hush, boys, look! That’s the *ringlader* of them all.” English rustics were more blunt, and used to come up to the strollers, stare, and, with a loud shrill voice ask, “Daw ye toomble to-noight.” In certain districts they were contemptuously known as “lakers.”

#### PIT REFRESHMENTS.

At the Dublin and London theatres oranges and apples (“Chase your oranges, Chase numparell’s,” was the well-known cry) were the favourite refreshment in the pit. There was

something more refined in the notion than in the present shrill invitation, "Any soda water, bottled ale, porter, or stout!" which disturbs the *entreacte*. In the Limerick theatre in the old times a sort of rustic elegance was reached,—peaches, at a half-penny each, being the favourite refreshment.

### SOVEREIGN & "H. B."

ON some old Belfast playbills in the last century was to be seen the odd heading, "By permission of the Sovereign of Belfast." This was then the customary designation of the mayor of the town. On some of the Isle of Man playbills is sometimes to be read, "By permission of his honour, the H. B. of Douglas." This abbreviation, it seems, refers not to the well-known caricaturist, but to the functionary known as "High Bailiff."

### THE TAKING OF STRASBURG AT ISLINGTON.

A VAST enclosed shed, covered in and about the size of a railway station, with enormous galleries all round, I found gave a fair idea of the country about the devoted city. That country, too, was well laid down in earth-mould and sawdust, than which nothing could be better for the easy manœuvring of artillery and cavalry. At the far end we could make out the towers and battlements of the devoted city, with slanting timber approaches from the ground, by which you

could ascend to the gates. The cathedral was in the distance, sentries were seen peering over the walls, and a cab actually drove over the drawbridge. This was not a mere scenic town, where a tower is usually a foot or so higher than the human figure that guards it; but really of enormous dimensions. Suddenly we hear the sound of music, and looking down to the lower end, see the glitter of gold lace. It is the French army arriving to defend the town; the band of the establishment—whom I think I had seen at Cremorne Gardens, before they took service under the tricolour—leading; at the head of his legions debouched the gallant Uhrich himself, mounted, in the red trousers and cocked-hat trimmed with swan's-down, while his legions, at least fifty or sixty strong, had the white gaiters, knapsacks, tentes d'abri, &c., of the regular French force. I mention the number of this relieving force in no spirit of mockery; for in the theatrical world such would be justly accounted an enormous army. The staff, however, was moderate, consisting, I think, of one mounted officer; but the force of artillery that followed was surprising. It consisted of no less than four batteries, each well horsed and appointed. We followed them with our eyes, saw them traverse the mould and sawdust of the outlying country, and slowly ascend the zigzag staging, a school of fortification in great favour with the Vaubans of the theatres, and enter the devoted fortress. The arrival

of this ominous contingent naturally produced confusion in the outlying district, and I was not at all surprised that the country people had taken the alarm, and were now coming in from one of the doors in a most effective procession—the national costume, the blouses, the women's large white caps—and their worldly goods with them. It was curious to see how even the circus horses, who had a short time before been cantering round with star riders on their backs, were now "requisitioned" for more serviceable functions. It showed the awful nature of the crisis. This sorrowful procession comprised also led goats, little children on ponies, and one remarkably well-fed cow—the family's little all; and, strange to say, a flock of sheep of at least twenty. But the exposing a camel and dromedary to bombardment seemed a needless piling of horrors; though I wondered at the partiality which could exempt from enclosure an intelligent elephant which had recently gone through its sagacious performances on the very *enceinte* of the fortress. It seemed unfair to the other animals, especially as elephant flesh has been proved by connoisseurs to be a delicacy.

All this strange gathering was got safely within. Yet though the enemy must have been actually in sight, and though I had a suspicion that the French troops were hard at work dressing against time, and exchanging their clothes for those of the hated Germans, still the spirit of the population was so fine,

that they descended the inclined planes, and clustered on the lowest edge to sing the "Marseillaise," accompanied by an orchestra down below on the *enceinte*, or *in* the *enceinte*. Not only that, but after they had gone in, there was farther time for the sentinel on duty to receive the visit of a young lady to whom he was apparently betrothed, and hear her sing the well-known "You are going far away from your poor Jeanette." She had not time to give the second verse, for a peculiar jingling and thudding at the other end told us that the Uhlans were at hand. Those terrible horsemen came charging in, rode boldly on, to, or within, the *enceinte*, and actually tried to get into the town. But they little knew the stuff the brave Uhrich was made of. Instantly he with some of his gallant fellows—the rest were then fitting on Prussian helmets—had come on the walls, shots were exchanged, two or three of the Uhlans fell from their horses cleverly, and the rest had to canter away in very dashing style. These were merely scouts; the rest of the German army was coming on; and here they were now with the spiked helmets, though the tunics seemed more like second-hand familiar grey suits of a volunteer corps. Still they made a far better show than the French. I was glad to see the Bavarians—emphasised by the regular sea-shell helmet—very conspicuous. It would have been an ill-compliment to these fine fellows, on whom the brunt of the work has lain, to

merge them in the general defenders of the German wars. Lastly came a very fair staff, in front of a tall bluff-looking old gentleman in a scarlet cloak and blue trousers, and whom we all recognised—such are the uses of the illustrated papers—as the pious King William. By his side rode a gentleman in an English Windsor uniform, and rather handsome, and whom I dimly recalled in a lower station—I think walking round a ring and cracking a whip to keep the trained horse going. And yet here he was now raised to the dignity of Chancellor of the Empire! But I noticed he was rather coldly treated by his royal master, who bore himself very stiffly and apart, as if he did not wish to commune with his faithful soldier. But see, what does this mean? An open barouche-and-four, containing three general officers in cocked hats, and escorted by cavalry, has arrived, and is driven slowly and deliberately round, so as to be in view of all, actually within a yard or so of the Strasbourg sentries, whose chassepots could have readily disposed of the slender guard, whose innocence was no less to be admired! Perhaps they feared to endanger the life of the illustrious prisoner—for such he was—whose surrender for private reasons was thus post-dated to Strasbourg. I confess the effect was far finer, and there was a noble incongruity, a Regulus-like degradation in the sovereign's being thus led round under his still resisting city. The king behaved with

true Cæsaric dignity. But when the occupant of the barouche descended and humbly presented his sword, I thought the royal captor was gruff in his bearing. He never deigned a single remark; and Count von Bismarck was too strongly engaged with his English Windsor uniform to take any notice of the victim of reverse, who was then led away ignominiously out of the arena—I mean out of the *enceinte*.

No doubt inflamed by this triumph, the Germans now rushed to the attack. They, too, had their four batteries, so much resembling what we had seen before, that I knew at once they had been captured. The enemy came down out of their fortress to the *enceinte*. Nothing could have been more spirited than the conflict: the firing was tremendous. His Majesty remained within a few feet of the struggle, looked on in an unconcerned fashion, and was never noticed. The terrible Count, all the time within pistol-shot of the chassepots, escaped as by a miracle, rather conveying the idea that he felt himself out of range.

Then a very curious scene took place, which I was privileged to witness. The ground was covered with the dead and wounded, and I was glad to see that a feeling of humanity prompted the Germans to send a mounted flag of truce, or more correctly, a mounted man bearing a flag of truce, into the fortress. On this, all the country people—I recognised them individually—who had driven in the sheep, cattle,

camels, came out now for this holy office, carrying stretchers, on which they bore off their dead and wounded to sad and solemn music. Indeed, these poor people seemed to have too much work cast upon them; for the same persons had formed the chorus of the "Marseillaise," driven in the cows, had then done duty as Bavarians, then as French, &c., and were now part of an ambulance corps, all within, say, ten minutes. But I must not linger over this exciting siege, whose rapidity did so much credit to the Germans. Now came the final assault: cannons roared, rockets flew, the town took fire, the besiegers went up the inclined plane. Valour was of no avail for the defence; and amid a great deal of red fire and a choking mephitic vapour, Strasbourg was taken.

#### ASTLEY.

OLD Astley was a very eccentric personage, in his speech and manners. The managers of Covent Garden Theatre once applied to him for the loan of some of his stud for a pantomime. Characteristically enough, he seemed to think that his horses would be disgraced by appearing on a common stage, where mere actors figured. "Why, damme, sir," he added, in his odd English, "it's scandalous magnesium! Then let Mr. Harris lend me Mrs. Siddons to sing in my amphitheatre!" After his return from a visit to France, he was asked, it may be presumed by a *confrère* of the circus, "had

he seen the French Prince of Wales over there?" "Go, you ignoramus," he answered, "there ain't no Prince of Wales in France—he's the *Dolphin* there—why I might ha' learned him to ride if I would."

#### RICHARDSON ON MAC- READY.

DR. CLARK RUSSELL quotes an amusing criticism of Richardson's, the showman, in whose presence Macready was being praised. He was asked had he seen him? "No, muster," he answered, "I knows nothing of him; in fact, he's some waga-bone as nobody knows—one of them chaps as ain't had any edication for the thing. *He never was with me, as Edmund Kean and these riglars was.*"

#### MR. WEBSTER'S EARLY DAYS.

A SIMPLE and really touching account has been given by Mr. Webster of his early struggles in theatrical life. At nineteen he had married a widow with a family; and then began a series of privations, met with indomitable courage. He tried in every direction for engagements, but without success, walking vast distances to all the country theatres. "I had heard that Mr. Beverley, of the Tottenham Street Theatre—now called the Queen's,—the father of that great scenic artist who now wields the brush where dear Clarkson Stanfield once held sway, was about to open the

Croydon Theatre for a brief season. I applied to him for walking gentleman. 'Full.' For little business and utility. 'Full.' For harlequin and dancing. 'Didn't do pantomime or ballet; besides didn't like male dancers; *their* legs didn't draw.' For the orchestra. 'Well,' said he, in his peculiar manner, and with a strong expression which need not be repeated, 'why just now you were a walking gentleman!' 'So I am, sir; but I have had a musical education, and necessity sometimes compels me to turn it to account.' 'Well, what's your instrument?' 'Violin, tenor violoncello, double bass, and double drums.' 'Well, by Nero!'—he played the fiddle, you know—'here, Harry' (calling his son), 'bring the double—no, I mean a violin—out of the orchestra.' Harry came with the instrument, and I was requested to give a taste of my quality. I began Tartini's 'Devil's solo,' and had not gone far when the old gentleman said that would do, and engaged me as his leader at a guinea a week. Had a storm of gold fallen on me it could not have delighted Semele more than me. I felt myself plucked out of the slough of despond. I had others to support, board myself, and to get out of debt. I resolved to walk to Croydon, ten miles every day, to rehearsal, and back to Shoreditch on two-pence a day—one pennyworth of oatmeal and one pennyworth of milk—and I did it for six weeks, Sundays excepted, when I indulged in the luxury of shin of beef and ox-cheek. The gen-

tlemen in the gallery pelted the orchestra with mutton pies. At first indignation was uppermost, but on reflection we made a virtue of necessity, and collecting the fragments of the not very light pastry, ate them under the stage, and, whatever they were made of, considered them ambrosia. At the end of the sixth week I had so pleased Mr. Beverley and his son Harry, that I was asked to give a specimen of my terpsichorean abilities in a sailor's hornpipe. I essayed the task, buoyed up with hope, dashed on the stage, got through the double shuffle, the toe and heel, though feeling faint: but at last, despite every effort, I broke down through sheer exhaustion, consequent upon a near approach to starvation, and the curtain dropped on me and my hopes, and I burst into an agony of tears. However, this mourning was soon turned into joy, for Mr. Beverley behaved like a father to me, and engaged me as walking gentleman and harlequin for his London theatre, where I made my first appearance as Henry Morland in the 'Heir-at-Law,' which, to avoid legal proceedings, he called 'The Lord's Warming Pan.' From the Tottenham Street Theatre I went to the English Opera, now the Lyceum; from there to Drury Lane, thence to the Haymarket; from there to Covent Garden, the Olympic, the Adelphi—and here I am, such as I am."

When we see this admirable actor playing the Poor Author in the play of "Masks and Faces,"

and performing on his violin for the children, this graphic account of his early life always comes back to us. Perhaps, too, the recollection of his own early struggles has helped to make the character so truthful and interesting.

#### DROLL TRANSPOSITIONS.

ACTORS, in their nervousness, have sometimes made curious alterations in the text. The best, and best known, is the one that was addressed to Hamlet: "Stand back, my lord, and let the parson cough!" instead of "let the coffin pass." There is a grotesque appropriation in the new shape which is highly diverting. On another occasion, an actor was playing Sir Edward Mortimer, and came to the passage—

"You may have noticed in my library a chest."

The very cumbrous nature of the line made him not unnaturally glide into an awkward transposition—

"You may have noticed in *my chest* a library."

On which the performer who was playing with him could not help laughing. Sir Edward had then to say—

"You see he changes at the word."

On which the other replies—

"And well I may!"

Which caused the whole house to roar.

Charles Kemble was said to have fallen into one of these mistakes when playing Shylock. Instead of

"Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?"

he said—

"Shall I lay surgery upon my poll?"

#### A MISER.

SOME rather original manifestations of the passion of avarice are recorded of Moody, the well-known performer of Irish parts. A friend named Barford had helped him for some hours to cut wood. It was a hot summer's day, and the assistant asked for some beer. Moody reluctantly filled out a tumbler and recorked the bottle, when his friend asked for a little more. "I own," said the actor, with singular candour, "you deserve it, but it goes to my heart to give it to you."

He lent some money to Brereton, a brother player, which was not at once repaid. The first time they met Moody looked earnestly at him, and vented a kind of noise between a sigh and a groan. On every succeeding occasion he repeated this extraordinary sort of appeal, until the other became so annoyed that he flung down the money. "Well, I did not *ask* you for it, Billy," said Moody, with gentle reproach. When Sheridan was in arrear to him for salary the actor threatened to present himself on the hustings, and state his grievance to the the electors. This procured him payment.

#### AN ECCENTRIC MANAGER.

ELLISTON had a sort of stately eccentricity—a Malvolio-like stateliness which infinitely di-

verted his contemporaries. Elia was never weary of dwelling on his oddities, which his own fine touch could illustrate with an almost Shakspearean delicacy. Elliston had gone down to a theatre of his own at Birmingham, and had occasion to reprimand an actor who was very deficient in his part. To his astonishment, the performer retorted with a volley of abuse, adding that if another word was said he would kick him into the pit. It might be supposed that the offender was discharged on the spot; but Elliston, who did not even know the names of his own performers, rushed at once to the stage manager, and asked who the man was. He was told. "A great man—a very great man, sir," was his remark! *He threatened to kick me—the lessee of Drury Lane.* Such a man must go to London. He mustn't waste his energies here." It is said he really engaged the actor for Drury Lane on the spot. There is something coherent in this incoherency, and it is not so surprising that Elia should have taken delight in studying such a being.

#### FALSE COMPLIMENT.

EDMUND KEAN was rather fond of paying well-meant compliments to his brethren. "You are the best Iago I ever played to," he said to a painstaking young actor at Edinburgh, who only smiled in return for such handsome praise. Kean asked him the reason, when the other candidly replied, "I can scarcely believe that, for I know of seven other

poor Iagos to whom you have said the same thing." "Do you?" was the answer; "then Edmund Kean is a greater humbug than I took him for." This was only the tragedian's ill-luck. In all the professions such compliments are frequently paid and accepted, though their insincerity may be perhaps undetected.

#### A MODERN PLAY DAMNED.

THE good genuine old-fashioned damning, with all the conditions favourable, we come in for as rarely as we do for a good fire. Such a piece of fortune came about when a certain comedy called "Ecarté" was submitted to this time-honoured process. The piece was said to be the work of a noble person—of itself a most dangerous challenge to the low irreverence of a British audience. The theatre had been gorgeously restored and decorated only a few weeks before, so as to be a fitting casket for the new dramatic jewel. The more than luxurious stalls were filled with what are called "swells," whose rather vacuous countenances seemed to reflect by anticipation the congenial entertainment that was to follow. There was a general boudoir air over the whole, save only in the ranks of unsympathising and almost derisive faces, seen through the dark shadows of the pit. It was easy also to discern the faces of "some devilish good-natured friends," invited to participate in the coming triumph;—"it's full of faults, you know," as the author might

modestly say to them ; “ but really not so bad as you might think.” The “ swells,” it must be said, heartless always, seemed to enjoy their friend’s discomfiture more than any people in the house. Everything was done for this wonderful play that the most lavish outlay of money could do. Beautiful scenery ; a wardrobe of dresses that would set Madame Elise up in business ; furniture that seemed to have been carted wholesale from some nobleman’s house, and with which the stage was furnished as by upholsterer’s men ; breakfasts, dinners, picnic baskets of hams and fruits and champagne from Messrs. Fortnum and Mason’s, that really made the audience hungry to look at. The only things wanting were such trifles as acting and a play. It was a merry evening ! every one going away in spirits and good-humour ; a state of mind rare in the present condition of things theatrical. The piece seemed to be all about one of those quiet and eminently sarcastic men, who get into gay country houses, who are much overlooked, but all the time are using their eyes and ears, putting down the shallow, setting up the weak, &c. It is a certainty that a villain of insinuating manners, but underneath his gentlemanly exterior “ of the deepest dye,” should be invited to meet the party. Such a ruffian was actually here, with matrimonial designs ; and in the end was unmasked (and actually put in irons) by the sarcastic gentleman. It was easy to analyse what was in the mind of the

author. With all amateurs it is a dear truth, that this gentlemanly reserve, this “ quietness” of eye and manner, is the grand element of dramatic art, and in their novels and plays men with such gifts always figure. Women are specially partial to these persons. Another delusion is, that only a gentleman can give true pictures of high life and manners. The villain was “ baffled” through the piece in the most amusing ways. If he offered his arm to a lady, the cynical man interposed with a smile and carried off the lady, while the villain muttered, “ Curses on him !” If he wanted to be alone with any one, this unpleasant gentleman intervened, with an air as who should say, “ I have baffled you, my boy, in the most skilful way.” It was no more than an adroit tendering of his elbow on which the lady laid her hand. But as a grotesque situation, what could rival the following ? The country-house guests are walking in the woods previous to a picnic, when they meet “ the beggar woman,”—so described in the bills—sinking with exhaustion on the ground. The beggar woman happens to be the villain’s betrayed wife ; but this is not known. She is fainting, the ladies cannot bring her to herself, when some one suggests to the midshipman of the party, “ What if you sing her that old song of Home ! *Do !*” The midshipman at once complied, amid literally screams of laughter. That situation alone, and the hearty laughter I en-

joyed as he sang on his lamentable ballad, looking her steadfastly in the face, as though he really believed it would have a medicinal effect, was worth the whole price of a stage-box. What shall we say of the deep disclosures of intricate villany that followed? How the wristband was turned up, to show a mark on the arm, with perfect gravity. From that moment set in the most uproarious mirth. Every incident was the occasion, unfairly perhaps, of new mirth, and the curtain fell amid uproarious demonstrations.

#### MACKLIN INSTRUCTING A PUPIL.

IN Macklin's garden there were three long parallel walks, and his method of exercising their voices was thus: his two young pupils with back boards (such as they use in boarding schools) walked firmly, slow, and well, up and down the two side walks. Macklin himself paraded the centre walk: at the end of every twelve paces he made them stop, and turning gracefully, the young actor called out across the walk, "How do you do, Miss Ambrose?" she answered, "Very well, I thank you, Mr. Glenville." They then took a few more paces, and the next question was, "Do you not think it a very fine day, Mr. Glenville?" "A very fine day, indeed, Miss Ambrose," was the answer. Their walk continued; and then, "How do you, Mr. Glenville?"—"Pretty well, I thank you, Miss Ambrose."

And this exercise continued for an hour or so (Macklin still keeping in the centre walk), in the full hearing of their religious next-door neighbours. Such was Macklin's method of training the management of the voice: if too high, too low, a wrong accent, or a faulty inflection, he immediately noticed it, and made them repeat the words twenty times till all was right.

#### SPORT TO YOU, DEATH TO ME.

ONE Stuart, an actor at Crow Street Theatre, Dublin, by one of those curious whims which for an audience seem irresistible had been selected as a sort of theatrical butt. "The characters intrusted to Stuart were rather of an underling kind, such as Oswald, or Lord Stanley, or 'The coach is at the door,' and in such parts he gave no great sublimity. Yet certain of the audience adopted a fancy to give thundering applause to every line and word he spoke, either in 'tragedy, comedy, pastoral, history, or poem unlimited;' so that, by this nightly custom, the real and genuine monarch of the boards was totally overlooked—and whether it was a Hamlet or a Lear, an Othello or a Posthumus, Beatty Stuart's single line engrossed all the applause. Smith, the capital London actor, coming over to Dublin, had Richard for one of his characters. Stuart was the Catesby, and Stuart received his usual share of plaudit. Smith was astonished and con-

fused, and strutted and stamped; and when he went off, laid a strict injunction on the manager never to send that actor on with him again: however, this unhappy applauding persecution continued night after night. At length, poor baited Stuart ventured suddenly to stop, walk forward, and thus address the audience:—

“Gentlemen (or whoever it is that have got it into their heads to hunt me down in this manner), I acknowledge I am no very great actor, nor do they give me any very great parts to spoil; but in such as I am allotted, I do my best, and by my endeavours, poor as they are, I contrive to support myself, my wife, and my family of children. If you go on this way with me the manager must turn me off, and thus you deprive me of my morsel of bread. It may be fine fun for all of you, but remember’—(and he clapped his hand to his breast in a feeling and affecting manner, and burst out with) remember the fable of the boys and the frogs—‘tis sport to you, but death to me!’

“This heart-sent appeal had an instantaneous effect, and he it spoken to the humanity of a Dublin audience, from that night Mr. Stuart never had one hand of applause.”

#### A BOLD AUTHOR.

CONGREVE’S brilliant comedy, “The Way of the World,” was heartily hissed on its first performance. The author came forward at the close, and coolly

asked the audience, “Is it your intention to damn this play?” “Yes, yes! off! off!” were the cries that saluted him. “Then I can tell you,” he answered, “this play of mine *will be a living play when you are all dead and damned!*” He then walked away slowly.

#### A STAGE TRICK.

IT was one of the old conventional arts of the tragedian in the days when tragedies were acted, to keep himself a little drawn back beyond the other actor who was taking part in the scene. When two experienced “stagers” got together, it became amusing to see each trying to carry out this device at the other’s expense. O’Keefe one night saw Macklin and Sheridan engaged in this little competition, and each retreating as his rival retired. They both presently found themselves driven up against the back scene.

#### ABSURD SITUATION.

MRS. DANCER—the actress who had married three times, and who had been Dancer, Barry, and Crawford—was very near sighted. One night, in the part of Calista, the tragedy was on the point of culminating, after a fine performance, by the heroine stabbing herself, when she dropped her dagger. Owing to this defect in her eyes, she could not see where to pick it up. The attendant pushed it towards her with her foot; but this was no help. Finally the

confidant was obliged, from sheer necessity, to pick it up and present it to her mistress with great courtesy. The latter then proceeded to despatch herself according to form.

#### PRAISE AND NO PRAISE.

THE following little scene is said to be a faithful picture of Garrick's sensitiveness, when another of his profession was praised, as well as a specimen of the little arts by which he nervously tried to enfeeble that praise. As a specimen of character it is excellent.

*Nobleman.*—Now, Mr. Garrick, Mossop's voice—what a fine voice, so clear, full, and sublime for tragedy.

*Garrick.*—Oh! yes, my Lord; Mossop's voice is, indeed, very good—and full—and—and—But—my Lord, don't you think that *sometimes* he is rather too loud?

*Nobleman.*—Loud? Very true, Mr. Garrick,—too loud,—too sonorous!—when we were in College together, he used to plague us with a spout and a rant and a bellow. Why we used to call him "*Mossop the Bull!*"—But then, Mr. Garrick, you know, his step!—so very firm and majestic—treads the boards so charmingly!

*Garrick.*—True, my lord: you have hit his manner very well indeed, very charming! But do you not think his step is sometimes rather *too* firm?—some-what of a—a stamp; I mean a gentle stamp, my lord?

*Nobleman.*—Gentle! call you it, Mr. Garrick? not at all!—at

College we called him "*Mossop the Paviour!*"—But his action—his action is so very expressive.

*Garrick.*—Yes, my lord, I grant, indeed, his action is very fine,—fine—very fine: he acted with me originally in *Barbarossa*, when I was the *Achmet*; and his action was—a—a—to be sure *Barbarossa* is a great tyrant—but then, *Mossop*, sticking his left hand on his hip, a-kimbo, and his right hand stretching out—thus! You will admit that sort of action was not so very graceful.

*Nobleman.*—Graceful, Mr. Garrick! Oh, no! by no means—not at all—everything the contrary—His one arm a-kimbo, and his other stretched out!—very true—why, at College, we used to call him, "*Mossop the Teapot!*"

#### FRIENDLY CRITICISM.

ANOTHER good-natured fragment of conversation has been preserved,—Emery, Cooke, and Inledon being overheard discussing John Kemble. "He has no natur," said Emery, "not a bit. But then he never wur the feyther of a child, and that accounts for it." "With the voice," said Cooke, "of an emasculated French horn, and the face of an itinerant Israelite, he would compete with me, sir—me, George Frederick Cooke! Wanted me to play *Horatio* to his *Hamlet*, sir! Let him play *Sir Pertinax*, that's all. I would like to hear him attempt the dialect." Then Inledon: "Attempt! The fact is, my dear

boys, he'd attempt anything ! Why, he actually attempted to sing, d—— me, in the presence of the national singer of England, Charles Incledon !”

### SKATING ON THE STAGE.

THE late device of skating on the stage was lately introduced in Meyerbeer's "L'Etoile du Nord," and made the "Pas de Patineurs" and such things the rage. As is well known, little wheels are attached to the foot, on which the skater glides through nearly all the curvetings and gyrations that would be feasible on ice. This art, however, was practised on the public stage more than a hundred years ago; and a brother of Giordani's, who was a dancer, often added this feat to the attractions chosen for his benefit at the theatre in Dublin, which bore the racy name of "Smock Alley." He, however, used the ordinary skates, and a number of serpentine grooves were cut lightly on the boards, the course of which the artist followed.

### VANITY.

COLMAN and Harris had many disagreements, when both were managers of Covent Garden Theatre. After one very angry dispute, in which the other partners joined, Colman snatched up the poker—not for any violent purpose, but to rake and "rattle about" all the coals in the fire-place—exclaiming vehemently, "Well, I can stir a fire better than any man in this room !”

### A MISTAKE.

ONE night at the Dublin theatre, Digges, when playing Hamlet, burst a blood-vessel. With the permission of the audience, "She Stoops to Conquer" was promptly substituted, the comedy performers happening to be in the house at the time. A country gentleman, who had come up specially to see Digges in his great part, had just gone out for some refreshment, having left just as Hamlet parted with the ghost. On his speedy return, he saw a convivial scene going on, with a chorus and laughter and jocular remarks. He was so bewildered that he first fancied that he had mistaken his road, and gone to the other theatre; then that this was some revised version of the piece, he not being very deeply read in Shakespeare. It was some time before he discovered the truth.

### A GOOD DEVICE.

IN 1784 an Irish clergyman arrived in London, bringing with him no less than ten plays,—five tragedies, and as many comedies, one or two at least of which he wished to submit to the London managers. "One of his tragedies," says O'Keeffe, who tells the story, "was called 'Lord Russell,' and one of his comedies 'Draw the long Bow.' Mr. Harris received him at his house with his usual politeness, and sat with great patience and much pain listening to the Doctor reading one of his plays to him ;

when he had got to the fourth act, Mr. Harris remarked that it was very fine indeed—excellent; ‘but, sir, don’t you think it time for your hero to make his appearance?’—‘Hero, sir! what hero?’—‘Your principal character, Lord Russell. You are in the fourth act, and Lord Russell has not been on yet.’—‘Lord Russell, sir!’ exclaimed the Doctor; ‘why, sir, I have been reading to you my comedy of ‘Draw the long bow.’—‘Indeed! I beg you a thousand pardons; but I thought it was your tragedy of ‘Lord Russell’ you had been reading to me.’ The angry author started from his chair, thrust his manuscript into his pocket, and ran down stairs out of the house. When I again met the Doctor, he gave a most terrible account of the deplorable state of the English stage, when a London manager did not know a tragedy from a comedy. I laughed at his chagrin so whimsically detailed to me, and he was all astonishment and anger at my ill-timed mirth. This reverend gentleman (his dramatic mania excepted) was a man of piety and learning; and I believe Mr. Harris’s witty expedient effectually cured him of profane play-writing, and changed a mad scholar into an edifying divine. He translated some of the books of Milton into Greek, which were, I understood, printed at Oxford.”

#### STAGE DRESS.

THE absurdities of stage costume have been often described.

O’Keeffe recalled some amusing instances. “I saw Barry,” he says, “play Othello, the Venetian Moor, in a complete suit of English regimentals, and a three-cocked gold-laced hat!—and Thomas Sheridan, in Macbeth, dressed in scarlet and gold English uniform; and when king, he wore a Spanish hat turned up before, with a diamond and feathers in the front. All the characters in the play of ‘Richard III.’ appeared in the same modern clothes as the gentlemen in the boxes wore, except Richard himself, who dressed as Richard, and thus looked an angry Merry Andrew among the rest of the performers. In the play of ‘Henry VIII.’ none wore the habits of the times but Henry himself: his whole court were apparelled in the dress only known two hundred years after. Some of the great performers,” he adds, “had peculiar tricks of fancy in their acting. Digges, in Macbeth, preparing for his combat with Macduff, always put his fingers to the bosom of his waistcoat, and flung it entirely open: this was to show he was not *papered*—a previous defence, which was thought unfair and treacherous; he then with his open right hand gave a few taps to the side of his hat, drew his sword, and fought until he was killed.” Macklin—not Garrick or Kemble—was really the first reformer of stage costume. He was the first to play Shylock in the correct Jewish dress of the time; and there is a curious picture by Zoffany representing him in the

trial scene. He is there shown in this old-fashioned dress, but the rest of the company look like the English lawyers and courtiers of George III.'s time. It might be a scene at Westminster Hall. Garrick played Macbeth and Othello in the costume of the English army of his time. Kemble is entitled to the credit of having made a wholesale reform.

## SEVERE.

FITZ BALL, the dramatist, and grand compounder, in his day, of "blue fire," "terrific combats," and other melodramatic elements, was complacently repeating, in presence of Douglas Jerrold, that "some one had called him the Victor Hugo of the English stage." — "Much more likely the Victor *Noggo*," said the bitter Jerrold. This is not a perfect "jest," but for its rude severity and spontaneity, it is admirable.

## "A HOBBY."

THEATRICAL lawsuits are often fruitful in pleasantry. A question of acting "The Agreeable Surprise" without leave from the manager of the theatre, who had the copyright, had given rise to a suit. One of the counsel read, with some contempt, the "nonsense" burden of Lingo's well-known song—

"Amo Amas,  
I love a lass ;"

and which runs—

"Tag rag merry derry  
Periwig and hatband,  
Hic hoc horum, genitivo."

and asked O'Keeffe if he were the author of *these* words. The dramatist was a little abashed. But the judge came to his aid. "Oh, that is nothing," he said; "Shakspeare for *his* clown had recourse to the same humorous experiment." It was then urged on the piratical side that "Lingo was quite a hobby of mine," to which the lively Colman replied, "But you should not take a hobby out of my stable."

## MACKLIN AT REHEARSAL.

LEE LEWES, at a morning rehearsal, introduced what he thought was a pleasant gag into one of Macklin's comedies, and which he considered very smart. Macklin was directing the rehearsal. "Hoy! hoy!" he said, "what's that?"—"Oh," said the other, "only a little of my nonsense!"—"Oh, that was it," said Macklin; "but I think that *my* nonsense is better than yours: so keep to that, if you please, sir!"

This excellent actor and author was particularly *exigeant* at these rehearsals, and quite tired out the performers, one of whom exclaimed at last, "Why, this is worse than the Prussian exercise." Macklin, after a pause, looked steadily at the actor and then said, "Suppose we all go and sit a little in the green room." They followed him in, when he took out his watch, laid it on the table and said, "Now we'll sit here just one hour." They sat there the whole hour, when he rose and said, "Now that we are all in good humour

again, we'll go back to the stage to begin our rehearsal again."

### A STAGE LORD MAYOR.

DURING Sheridan's management in Dublin there was a facetious actor named Sparks, "who was the stock lord-mayor in plays like 'Richard the Third,' and, being a dignified figure, had *some blank verse dukes* palmed upon him, which he even looked upon as a hardship: so, to get rid of them without downright quarrelling with his interest, he turned them into downright drollery. Mr. Sheridan, who was the Richard, and was ever averse from mirth mixing, *and intruding on his serious scenes, where capitally concerned*, addressed honest Isaac thus one morning: 'Mr. Sparks, you are an excellent comedian; in most of the parts you undertake you are unrivalled. But, sir, I hope you will pardon me for what I have done; I have taken the liberty to set down Mr. Pakenham for the lord-mayor in to-morrow's bills. You know, my dear sir, that the extraordinary good humour your very appearance throws the whole audience into, without any sinister design in you, so totally disconcerts the gravity and proper attention that should attach to so interesting a scene of the play wherein you are concerned, that my feelings are discomposed for the whole evening after.'—'Very well, mighty well, Mr. Sheridan; I thank you, sir, for many holidays I am likely to

enjoy, during this suspension from my civic office.' But mark the consequence of this change of magistrates—no sooner did the new lord-mayor make his appearance, than the gods above began to show their fierce resentment, by shouting out, 'Off! off!'—accompanied with whole volleys of potatoes, &c., which obliged Richard himself to apologise for the affront he had put upon them, by the removal of their favourite; and all was hushed for that night."

The quaint style in which this story is told—it was in fact dictated by Lee Lewes—will not have escaped the reader.

### THE BEST SORT OF CRITICISM.

EDMUND KEAN was complaining to Mrs. Garrick of the unfairness of the newspaper criticisms on his acting. "You should write your own," said the old lady, then nearly a hundred years old: "*Davy always did.*" This lively speech was, however, scarcely true, though Davy often prompted, or "inspired," the critiques on his acting.

### PROPHETIC.

ONE night, when Edmund Kean was playing Shylock at an obscure country theatre, he was so pleased with the young actor who had acted Tubal, that he went up to him, clapped him on the shoulder, and said to him heartily: "Sir, you have played Tubal finely; persevere, and you will become a great

actor!" The humble being thus encouraged was Mr. Phelps, whose "Man of the World," at least, justifies the sagacity of the tragedian.

A SHAKSPEREAN ENTHUSIAST.

JACK REYNOLDS, brother of the dramatist, was very fond of the stage, and, attending a masquerade as Shylock, took the trouble of learning the whole part by heart, so as to be ready with appropriate answers or quotations. Even after the masquerade was over, he could not refrain from "pointing every moral," or adorning every occasion with a line from this favourite play, to the great annoyance of his family. Thus, when he was reprov'd for carousing by his grandmother and asked, why he got up so late, he replied:

"I'll not answer that,  
But say it is my humour."

At dinner, when he was asked from what part of the turkey he would choose to be helped, he replied, with emphasis,

"Nearest his heart!"

Again, when some debtors came to the family to beg time and indulgence, he startled the whole party by bursting forth into a vehement and fierce denunciation—

"Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,  
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud.  
Jailer look to them."

He was so much in earnest

that the poor debtors were in serious terror, until the rest of the family made him recant, which he did graciously, by repeating the fine passage that begins—

"The quality of mercy is not strained."

A DRAMATIST'S NOTE BOOK.

REYNOLDS, when a mere youth, having dramatized the "Sorrows of Werther" with some success, was encouraged to turn his talents to the subject of Rousseau's "Eloisa." "I will describe," he says, "my absurd and laborious fashion of composition. I was, in fact, a thinker upon paper; and made it a rule, by asking myself written questions, and my characters questions, and by hints and references and directions, to fill four pages every day." Here is a specimen from the commonplace book:—

SCENE.—A garden. — *Enter Eloisa.*—Then follows, "Well now, my darling, what have you to say for yourself?"

Again in the following page:

"Vide Rousseau—St. Preux, Lord Edward Bomston, and M. Wolmar—three lovers—bravo Julie! Quære—Can I venture to introduce the letter of the French child of nature in the novel of— I forget the name—

"My dear Mamma,

"Though I am dying for love of the Marquis, I cannot refuse the Count nightly assignations. Can you tell me the reason?

"I remain, ma chère Maman,  
"Yours, &c., &c."

“But the actors—the cast—neither Holman, nor Pope, will play BOMSTON, notwithstanding he is a *lord*.”

“The rose by any other name, would smell as sweet.”

“Rousseau, when he named this proud character, forgot the unfortunate associations, which the habit of converting the long open O, into the short sounding U, might create in the breasts of his English readers. But who is to play BOMSTON? Wroughton, Farren, or Frank Aikin?—Curse BOMSTON!”

#### THE CLIVE “SPELLING.”

THE famous Kitty Clive was notorious for her bad spelling. The following is a specimen, taken from a letter of condolence:—

“There is nothing to be said on these molancholy occasions To a person of understanding—fools Can not *feel*, people of sence *must* and *will*, and when they have sank their spirits till they are ill, will find that nothing but submission can give any any Consolation to ineveit able miss fortune.”

#### KEAN AND TALMA.

KEAN had taken his wife to see Talma, in “Orestes,” a performance about which he was enthusiastic. He was provoked at finding her so cold during the representation. “You don’t understand the thing. Nothing was ever like him. He is worth both me and John Kemble put toge-

ther.” When, however, the mad scene arrived, she was completely converted, and became as rapturous as she had before been cold: “I never saw anything to compare with it.” Her husband was quite piqued. “I think that I can do better than that,” he said; “only wait till you see my mad scene!”

#### JEREMY DIDDLE.

THE name of “Jeremy Diddler” has done useful service in English conversation. As is well known, it is the title of a character in the amusing farce of “Raising the Wind.” Not so well known, perhaps, is the fact that it was modelled on a strange being named Bibb, well known to the taverns and Bohemian society of his day for his inveterate “impecuniosity.” His acquaintance with friends generally commenced in a manner characteristic of his habits, viz., by a small loan. Mr. Taylor first met him at a low gambling house in Soho.

“Baddeley, the actor was also there. A dispute arose between Baddeley and the doctor, which was likely to terminate seriously, but the rest of the assembly interposed, lest the character of the house should be called in question, and their nocturnal orgies suppressed. The house went under the name of the ‘Royal Larder,’ which was merely a cover to conceal its real purpose, that of a place for the meeting of gamblers.

“I was very young at the time, and being ignorant of the

game, I had not courage to engage at the hazard-table. It was a meeting of a very inferior kind, for a shilling was admitted as a stake. I had a very few shillings in my pocket, which Bibb borrowed of me as the box came round to him, and lost every time.

“How Bibb supported himself, having relinquished engraving, it would be difficult to conceive, if he had not levied taxes upon all whom he knew, insomuch that, besides his title of Count, he acquired that of ‘Half-crown Bibb,’ by which appellation he was generally distinguished, and according to a rough, and, perhaps, fanciful estimate, he had borrowed at least 2000*l.* in half-crowns.

“I remember to have met him on the day when the death of Dr. Johnson was announced in the newspapers, and, expressing my regret at the loss of so great a man, Bibb interrupted me, and spoke of him as a man of no genius, whose mind contained nothing but the lumber of learning. I was modestly beginning a panegyric upon the doctor, when he again interrupted me with, ‘Oh! never mind that old blockhead. *Have you such a thing as ninepence about you?*’ Luckily for him I had a little more.

“There was something so whimsical in this incident, that I mentioned it to some friends, and that and others of the same kind doubtless induced Mr. Kenny to make him the hero of his diverting farce, called ‘Raising the Wind.’ Another cir-

cumstance of a similar nature was told me by Mr. Morton. Bibb met him one day after the successful performance of one of his plays, and, concluding that a prosperous author must have plenty of cash, commenced his solicitation accordingly, and ventured to ask him for the loan of a whole crown. Morton assured him that he had no more silver than three shillings and sixpence. Bibb readily accepted them, of course, but said on parting, ‘*Remember I intended to borrow a crown, so you owe me eighteen-pence.*’ This stroke of humour induced Morton to regret that Bibb had left him his debtor.

“Bibb, in his latter days, devised a good scheme to raise the supplies. He hired a large room for the reception of company once a week, which he paid for only for the day. He then, with the consent of his friends, provided a handsome dinner, for which the guests paid their due proportion. There can be little doubt that many extraordinary characters assembled on these occasions. He told me his plan, and requested I would be one of the party. I promised I would attend, and regret that I was prevented, as so motley an assemblage must have afforded abundant amusement.

“Bibb’s father, knowing the disposition of his son, left him an annuity, which was to be paid at the rate of two guineas a week, and which never was to be advanced beyond that sum. This was, however, probably dissipated the next day, and,

when expended, he used to apply to his sister, a very amiable young lady, who was married to a respectable merchant. Having been tried by frequent applications, the husband would not let him enter the door. Bibb then seated himself on the steps, and passengers seeing a man decently dressed in that situation, naturally stopped, and at length a crowd was collected. The gentleman, then desirous of getting rid of a crowd, and probably in compliance with the desire of his wife, found it necessary to submit to her brother's requisition.

"Nothing could subdue the spirit of his character, for he would make a joke of those necessities under which others would repine, droop, and despair. His death was fortunate for it not only relieved him in old age from probable infirmities, which, if they had confined him at home, would doubtless have deprived him of all resources of an eleemosynary nature, but would have reduced him to absolute starvation. It was also, as I have before observed, fortunate, for he escaped the mortification of seeing his character brought upon the stage."

*CHARLES LAMB, AND THE  
FIRST NIGHT OF A NEW  
TRAGEDY.*

GODWIN wrote a tragedy. He chose a story, affecting, romantic, Spanish; the plot, simple, without being naked; the incidents uncommon, without

being overstrained. Antonio, who gives the name to the piece, is a sensitive young Castilian, who, in a fit of his country honour, immolates his sister—but I must not anticipate the catastrophe.

The conception was bold; and the *dénouement*, the time and place in which the hero of it existed, considered, not much out of keeping: yet it must be confessed that it required a delicacy of handling, both from the author and the performer, so as not much to shock the prejudices of a modern English audience. G., in my opinion, had done his part. John Kemble, who was in familiar habits with the philosopher, had undertaken to play Antonio. Great expectations were formed. A philosopher's first play was a new era. The night arrived. I was favoured with a seat in an advantageous box, between the author and his friend M. G. sat cheerful and confident. In his friend M.'s looks, who had perused the manuscript, I read some terror. Antonio, in the person of John Philip Kemble, at length appeared, starched out in a ruff which no one could dispute, and in most irreproachable mustachios. John always dressed most provokingly correct on these occasions. The first act swept by, solemn and silent. It went off, as G. assured M., exactly as the opening act of a piece—the *protasis*—should do. The cue of the spectators was to be mute. The characters were but in their introduction. The passions and the incidents would be developed

hereafter. Applause hitherto would be impertinent. Silent attention was the effect all-desirable. Poor M. acquiesced ; but in his honest, friendly face I could discern a working which told how much more acceptable the plaudit of a single hand (however misplaced) would have been than all this reasoning. The second act (as in duty bound) rose a little in interest ; but still John kept his forces under,—in policy, as G. would have it,—and the audience were most complacently attentive. The *protasis*, in fact, was scarcely unfolded. The interest would warm in the next act, against which a special incident was provided. M. wiped his cheek, flushed with a friendly perspiration,—’tis M.’s way of showing his zeal,—“from every pore of him a perfume falls.” I honour it above Alexander’s. He had once or twice during this act joined his palms in a feeble endeavour to elicit a sound ; they emitted a solitary noise without an echo : there was no deep to answer to his deep. G. repeatedly begged him to be quiet. The third act at length brought on the scene which was to warm the piece progressively to the final flaming-forth of the catastrophe. A philosophic calm settled upon the clear brow of G. as it approached. The lips of M. quivered. A challenge was held forth upon the stage, and there was promise of a fight. The pit roused themselves on this extraordinary occasion, and, as there manner is, seemed disposed to make a ring ; when

suddenly Antonio, who was the challenged, turning the tables upon the hot challenger, Don Gusman (who, by the way, should have had his sister), balks his humour, and the pit’s reasonable expectation at the same time, with some speeches out of the new philosophy against duelling. The audience were here fairly caught ; their courage was up, and on the alert ; a few blows, *ding dong*, as R——s, the dramatist, afterwards expressed it to me, might have done the business,—when their most exquisite moral sense was suddenly called in to assist in the mortifying negation of their own pleasure. They could not applaud, for disappointment ; they would not condemn, for morality’s sake. The interest stood stone-still ; and John’s manner was not at all calculated to unpetrify it. It was Christmas-time, and the atmosphere furnished some pretext for asthmatic affections. One began to cough : his neighbour sympathized with him, till a cough became epidemical. But when, from being half artificial in the pit, the cough got frightfully naturalized among the fictitious persons of the drama, and Antonio himself (albeit it was not set down in the stage directions) seemed more intent upon relieving his own lungs than the distresses of the author and his friends, then G. “first knew fear,” and, mildly turning to M., intimated that he had not been aware that Mr. Kemble laboured under a cold, and that the performance might possibly have

been postponed with advantage for some nights further,—still keeping the same serene countenance, while M. sweat like a bull.

It would be invidious to pursue the fates of this ill-starred evening. In vain did the plot thicken in the scenes that followed, in vain the dialogue wax more passionate and stirring, in vain the action was accelerated, while the acting stood still. From the beginning, John had taken his stand,—had wound himself up to an even tenor of stately declamation, from which no exigence of dialogue or person could make him swerve for an instant. The procession of verbiage stalked on through four and five acts, no one venturing to predict what would come of it; when, towards the winding-up of the latter, Antonio, with an irrelevancy that seemed to stagger Elvira herself,—for she had been coolly arguing the point of honour with him,—suddenly whips out a poniard, and stabs his sister to the heart. The effect was as if a murder had been committed in cold blood. The whole house rose up in clamorous indignation, demanding justice. The feeling rose far above hisses. I believe at that instant, if they could have got him, they would have torn the unfortunate author to pieces. Not that the act itself was so exorbitant, or of a complexion different from what they themselves would have applauded upon another occasion in a Brutus or an Appius; but, for want of attending to Antonio's *words*, which palpably led to the expectation of no less

dire an event, instead of being seduced by his *manner*, which seemed to promise a sleep of a less alarming nature than it was his cue to inflict upon Elvira, they found themselves betrayed into an accompliceship of murder, a perfect misprision of parricide, while they dreamed of nothing less.

M., I believe, was the only person who suffered acutely from the failure; for G. thenceforward, with a serenity unattainable but by the true philosophy, abandoning a precarious popularity, retired into his fast hold of speculation,—the drama in which the world was to be his tiring-room, and remote posterity his applauding spectators at once and actors.

#### ABSENT CRITICS.

IT may be suspected that a performance is often praised in general and conventional terms, by a critic whom either accident or some other business has prevented attending the performance. But to *assail* a piece or performers when the critic has not been present, would be found too daring and risky a proceeding for even the most unscrupulous. Such a proceeding, however, has often taken place in the old "slashing" days of criticism.

On the 5th of October, 1805, says Mr. Cole, a revival of Farquhar's comedy of the "Constant Couple" was announced for that evening at Drury Lane, but postponed on account of the

illness of Elliston. A Sunday paper, however, contained the following account :—

“Last night, Farquhar’s sprightly comedy of the ‘Constant Couple’ was most laboriously and successfully murdered at this theatre. Elliston tamed down the gaiety of Sir Harry Wildair with a felicity which they who admire such doings can never sufficiently extol. The gay knight was, by the care of his misrepresentative, reduced to a figure of as little fantastic vivacity, as could be shown by Tom Errand in Beau Clincher’s clothes. Beau Clincher himself was quite lost in Jack Bannister ; it was Bannister, not the Clincher of Farquhar, that the performance suggested to the audience. Miss Mellon was not an unpleasing representative of Angelica ; but criticism has not language severe enough to mark, as it deserves, the impertinence of Barrymore’s presuming to put himself forward in the part of Colonel Standard. We were less offended, although it was impossible to be much pleased, with Dowton’s attempt to enact Alderman Smuggler. But the acting was altogether very sorry.”

The maligned actors brought an action against the authorities of the paper, who compromised, and got off cheaply, by paying 50*l.* to the theatrical fund.

In the *Theatrical Inquisitor* for October, 1812 (a periodical in continuation of the *Monthly Mirror*), we find the following extract, headed “Newspaper Criticism,” taken from the pages

of the identical journal’s predecessor :—

“Oct. 3d.—We were supremely gratified on Tuesday evening, at Covent Garden Theatre, during the representation of the opera of the “Cabinet,” to hear that Mr. Sinclair had attended to our critical advice, and that his adoption of it was eminently serviceable to his professional character. In executing the *polacca*, he very prudently abstained from any wild flourishes, but kept strictly to the law of melody, by which he gained upon the public ear so strongly, and so deservedly, that he was encored three times, by the unanimous desire of the whole audience ; and we trust, after so decided a victory upon the part of true melody over the vagaries of science, that he will never more be fantastical. Unadulterated nature is modest and simple, and, like the pure beauty, is ever most efficient in attraction when she is unbedizened by the frippery of art. A meretricious female resorts to finery in the hope of acquiring a substitute for the lost loveliness of virtue ; but the most cunning labour of her toilette is not propitious to the aims of her desire.”

On this the *Inquisitor* comments thus :—

“To this exquisitely-laboured piece of criticism there is but one solitary objection,—the opera of the ‘Cabinet’ was indeed underlined at the bottom of the Monday play-bills, for the following night ; but in those of Tuesday it was changed to the ‘English

Fleet,' which was accordingly represented on the Tuesday evening—that very evening on which the reporter of the veracious journal to which we allude heard Mr. Sinclair thrice encored in the *polacca*."

#### PAYMENT FOR ADVERTISEMENTS.

MANAGERS whose half columns of advertisements in the daily papers have become an enormous charge on the weekly receipts, may look back wistfully to the days of Garrick and Sheridan, where, among other "palmy" things enjoyed, was the luxury of being paid by the newspapers for the privilege of inserting the theatrical announcements. Covent Garden received from the *Public Advertiser* 64*l.*, Drury Lane nearly the same, and each theatre besides enjoyed 200*l.* a-year from all the newspapers collectively for accounts of the new plays. The bringer of an early play-bill usually received half-a-crown, just as the speedy bearer of a reporter's packet is rewarded.

#### FLATTERING COMPLIMENT.

DURING his first success at Drury Lane, Kean overheard a knot of old stage carpenters discussing the various performers of Hamlet they had seen in their day. "Well," said one, "you may talk of Henderson and Kemble, and this new man, but give me Bannister's Hamlet.

*He was always done twenty minutes sooner than any one of 'em."* This is truly characteristic.

#### THE UNLUCKY CUE HUNTER.

KEAN was acting at Edinburgh, and announced for Orestes. When he came to rehearsal on the day of performance, he found that he had forgotten nearly the whole part. He said to the Pyrrhus of the night, "Are you a cue-hunter?" Cue-hunter, to the experienced in stage phraseology, implies a matter-of-fact actor, who cannot get on without the exact word; but the beginner to whom the question was put, imagined that it meant, "Are you perfect?" to which he answered with eager acquiescence, "You may rely upon it, sir, that I am to the letter." "The devil you are?" rejoined the inquirer; "then we shall be in a precious mess tonight."

The play begins with an introductory scene between Orestes and Pylades. Then follows the delivery of the embassy to Pyrrhus, who is seated on his throne in full council. All this is detailed in a long diplomatic speech, to which Pyrrhus replies with fencing diplomacy of the same class. Unless this exordium is made clearly intelligible to the audience, the whole play resolves itself into a mystery. Pyrrhus can neither say nor do anything, until he knows what is required of him. The speech begins with these prosaic lines,

of no meaning beyond empty compliment :—

“ Before I speak the message of the Greeks,  
Permit me, sir, to glory in the title  
Of their ambassador, since I behold  
Troy's vanquisher, and great Achilles' son.”

Orestes then goes on to the business of the embassy.

“ Now,” said Kean in the morning to the Pyrrhus, “ I foresee that I shall stick in this speech at night, so as soon as I feel that I am breaking down, I shall wink my off-eye at you, and you can then come to the front and go on with your answer.”

When night came, the first scene went off smoothly enough. With the change, Pyrrhus entered and ascended his throne R. H. ; Orestes was introduced L. H., and began deliberately :—

“ Before I speak the message of the Greeks” (a strong wink of the eye, repeated several times, and then, after a pause, with a quick epigrammatic turn), “ I wish to hear what you have got to say.”

The house rang with applause, which gave the astonished King of Epirus time to collect himself ; and as it was evident the ambassador was determined that he should speak first, he had nothing left for it but to proceed with his reply to uncommunicated proposals, and which, as far as the audience were concerned, might as well have been delivered in Chaldaic.

In the great interview with Hermione, in the fourth act, where Orestes has more to act with his face than to speak in

words, Kean brought down loud acclamations. In the mad scene he threw himself body and soul into the fulness of the situation, and when at fault for the exact words, substituted lines and speeches from the more familiar frenzy of Sir Giles Overreach.

On the following day the papers unanimously condemned the play, but lauded the actor to the skies. The part, they said, was unworthy of the talent he threw away upon it, and the English adaptation of Racine poor and uninteresting. One critic remarked, that towards the conclusion certain passages fell upon the ear as incongruous and unclassical, but this might be owing to the clumsiness of the translation. The same writer said of Pyrrhus, “ Mr. — looked his part well, and was splendidly dressed. This gentleman, who is new to our boards, has promise, but he was evidently imperfect. We would suggest to him the propriety of more careful study when standing by the side of so great an actor as Mr. Kean.”

#### A VETERAN.

IN the year 1839 Mr. Strange, at Edinburgh, witnessed Charles Kean's performance of Hamlet. This gentleman was the son of Sir Robert Strange, the engraver, and had often seen Garrick in the same part, and pronounced its present representation superior. It should, he added, however, as some qualification to this judgment, that he

was over eighty-four years of age. It is curious, however, to think that this old gentleman might have seen every great actor and actress—except the generation of Betterton, Mrs. Porter, and the like, from Garrick to Macready.

#### MISTAKE.

MR. J. WILSON CROKER used to say that he had heard of a lady who “wept all through ‘As you Like it,’ when Mrs. Siddons played *Rosalind*, under the idea that she was witnessing ‘*Jane Shore*.’”

#### CHERRY.

ANDREW CHERRY, the comedian (the same who concluded a letter, “you cannot make two bites of A Cherry”) was a singular character.

During his early days, says Mr. Matthews, in one of the provinces, he was performing *Autolycus*, in “*The Winter’s Tale*,” in which character he had to remark—with an expressive action of his finger upon his forehead—

“The king is a very good man, but he wants it *here!*”

The unlettered part of the audience, who knew no distinction of date or place, but viewed the whole world as *England*, and knew nothing of *time* but *time present*, construed the above speech into rank treason, and the demi-gods, brim-full of British loyalty, hurled upon the devoted head of the actor their loudest thunder, precluding the

continuation of the play, until the better portion of the auditors exerted their influence over “the poorer born,” and succeeded in producing a temporary calm.

The offender, who was, like Grumio,

“A little pot, and soon hot,”

could not control his irritation, at the gross stupidity of those on high, and bounced forward, and with an emphasis of anger and contempt, exclaimed—

“It’s the King of *Sardinia*—*ye Pumps!*”

#### “NO RELIGION.”

THE father of Grimaldi, the famous clown, who was living near Red Lion Square, was visited, during the famous Gordon riots, by an uproarious mob, who assumed that as a foreigner he belonged to the obnoxious Faith, his hall door not being chalked with the words, “No Popery!” The shout, “No Popery!” was raised, and they were preparing to sack the house, when Grimaldi suddenly threw up the second-floor window, and making comic grimaces, addressed them, “Gentlemen, in dis hose dere be no relegion *at all!*” This happy speech produced roars of laughter, and the mob passed on, giving him three cheers.

#### A GOOD BENEFIT.

CHARLES KEMBLE used to tell a story of some poor foreigner, French pantomimist or dancer, who used to appeal to

the public with regular annual benefits, but always with the most disastrous results. At last he came forward one night with a face beaming with pleasure, and said, "Dear public! moche oblige—ver good benifice—only lose half-a-crown — *I come again!*"

### ACTORS' FESTS.

THE last time Charles Young called on Mr. Planché he left his card, on which was inscribed,—  
" 'Tis I, my lord—the early village cock!"

He was a great *farçeur*, and delighted in the most elaborate practical jokes. "Munden," adds Mr. Planché, "never saw me in the street that he did not get astride on his great cotton umbrella, and ride up to me. . . . Wallack and Tom Cooke would gravely meet, remove with stolid countenances each other's hat, bow ceremoniously, replace it, and pass on, without exchanging a word, to the astonishment of the beholders. Meadows would continually seat himself on the kerb-stone opposite my house at Brompton, with his hat in his hand, like a beggar, utterly regardless of strangers, and refuse to move on until he had been thrown a penny."

### LISTON.

AN oddity of Liston is told by Mr. Planché in his most agreeable book of Recollections.

"Walking one day through Leicester Square with Mr. Mil-

ler, the theatrical bookseller of Bow Street, Liston happened to mention casually that he was going to have tripe for dinner, a dish of which he was particularly fond. Miller, who hated it, said, 'Tripe! Beastly stuff! How can you eat it?' That was enough for Liston. He stopped suddenly in the crowded thoroughfare in front of Leicester House, and holding Miller by the arm, exclaimed, in a loud voice, "What, sir! So you mean to assert that you don't like tripe?" 'Hush!' muttered Miller, 'don't talk so loud; people are staring at us.' 'I ask you, sir,' continued Liston, in still louder tones, 'do you not like tripe?' 'For Heaven's sake, hold your tongue!' cried Miller; 'you'll have a crowd round us.' And naturally people began to stop and wonder what was the matter. This was exactly what Liston wanted, and again he shouted, 'Do you mean to say you don't like tripe?' Miller, making a desperate effort, broke from him, and hurried in consternation through Cranbourne Alley, followed by Liston, bawling after him, 'There he goes! —that's the man who doesn't like tripe!' to the immense amusement of the numerous passengers, many of whom recognised the popular comedian, till the horrified bookseller took to his heels and ran, as if for his life, up Long Acre into Bow Street, pursued to his very doorstep by a pack of young ragamuffins, who took up the cry, 'There goes the man that don't like tripe!'"

UNSUITABLE GHARAC-  
TERS.

NEARLY all the great players have longed to figure in parts that were not suitable to their talents. The "comic country man" of the provincial theatres often envies his brother professional in the part of Hamlet or Macbeth, and sincerely believes that he could do it more justice. Mrs. Siddons believed that she had great talents for comedy, acted the "Widow Brady," and once made a piteous exhibition of herself in Nell in "The Devil to Pay." She considered, too, that she could give a comic song called "Billy Taylor," with particular humour; and those who have heard her perform in this line declared that the grim and laborious solemnity was infinitely diverting. Her brother fancied that he shone in lively Charles Surface, which must have suggested something almost elephantine. King, the beau-ideal of high comedy, insisted on appearing as Richard the Third. The most outrageous exhibition of the kind was that of Mrs. Abington, the original, and said to have been the finest, Lady Teazle. At her benefit, to attract the town by the novelty of a new character, she performed the part of Scrub, in "The Beaux Stratagem." "At a very early hour," says Angelo, "the house was quite full. That night I accompanied my mother to Mrs. Garrick's box, when a general disappointment ensued. With all her endeavours to give new points to the character, she

entirely failed. Her appearance *en culottes*, so preposterously padded, exceeded nature. Her gestures to look comical could not get the least hold of the audience, though they had seen her before in men's clothes, when playing Portia, in "The Merchant of Venice," where her figure, dressed as a lawyer in his *gown*, gave effect to her excellent delivery on mercy, and the audience had been always delighted. But this *jeu de bénéfice*, comparatively speaking, was disgusting and absurd as she dressed the character.

EDMUND KEAN.

DURING fourteen years Edmund Kean received from Drury Lane over two hundred thousand pounds, of which sum he had not in the fourteenth year a hundred pounds left. Yet his splendid *début* at that house had rescued him from a state of the most abject misery and starvation. Such a being could learn nothing from either prosperity or adversity.

UNINTENTIONAL TRA-  
GEDY.

THE Kembles, who were stately *au bout des ongles*, often found even their common remarks falling into the shape of blank verse.

"Beef cannot be too salt for me, my lord!"

was Mrs. Siddon's remark, delivered in rather tragic tones to

a Provost who sat beside her at dinner. It may have been on the same occasion that she addressed an astonished page—

“I asked for porter, boy :  
You’ve brought me beer !”

Her great brother was not behind hand. When about to cross some swollen stream at Abbotsford, he said to Sir Walter,—

“The flood looks angry, sheriff :  
Methinks I’ll get me up into a tree !”

His great sister once scared a linendraper by the tragic intensity with which she put the question, “Will it *wash* ?”

#### AUDIENCES AT THE CHIEF LONDON THEATRES.

AN inquiry was lately made by Mr. Harry Boleno as to the average numbers that attend the twelve principal theatres within a quarter of a mile of the Strand. The result was as follows :—

Theatre Royal, Drury lane—  
Average audience, 4,000 ; *employés* (before and behind the curtain), 1,100.

Covent Garden — Audience, 4,000 ; *employés*, 600.

Queen’s — Audience, 2,500 ; *employés*, 154.

Lyceum — Audience, 2,500 ; *employés*, 130.

Vaudeville—Audience, 1,800 ; *employés*, 120.

Adélphi — Audience, 1,800 ; *employés*, 136.

Charing Cross — Audience, 800 ; *employés*, 55.

Opéra Comique — Audience, 1,080 ; *employés*, 60.

Globe—Audience, 1,000 ; *employés*, 60.

Strand—Audience, 1,200 ; *employés*, 100.

Olympic—Audience, 900 ; *employés*, 60.

Gaiety—Audience, 1,500 ; *employés*, 150.

With this list may be compared some Paris figures. At the present time, the largest theatre in Paris is the Châtelet, which will seat 3,500 persons. Then follows the Ambigu, 1,900 seats ; the Opéra, Gaieté, and Opéra Comique, 1,800 ; the Italiens and Odéon, 1,700 ; the Variétés and Palais Royal, 1,400 ; the Français, Vaudeville, and Châtelet, 1,300 ; and the Athénée Gymnase, Folies Dramatiques, and Bouffes, 1,200 seats. The Châtelet looks larger than Drury Lane, because built on better principles, but Drury Lane will “seat” 4,000 people. The Châtelet is lit in a very original fashion. The entire vast ceiling is formed of yellow glass, through which the light comes. Behind the scenes the space is so vast that it was jocularly said that the stage-manager had to ride about mounted to give his directions.

One of the most elegant, sumptuously finished, and most spacious theatres of Europe is that of La Monnaie, at Brussels. Covent Garden offers a noble interior, but there is a strange stiffness in the line of the boxes, which does not harmonize with that of the walls that contain them. The Lyceum and Drury Lane are the only two in London whose approaches are constructed with a view to architectural effect. The grand hall

and rotunda staircase of the latter are really impressive, while the former has a certain pretention to grace. But these houses were built in days when THE SALOON was an important and lucrative element in the arrangements.

### CORRECT ELOCUTION.

THE elder Sheridan was a good elocutionist, and, when declaiming, particularly scrupulous as to the rhythm of his lines. In his later days he was obliged to be constantly clearing his throat and spitting—"hawking," as it used to be called, but would not allow this process to interrupt the measure of his verses. An odd effect was therefore produced, and it was declared that his declamation of some lines in "Cato" was as follows :

"My bane and (*hawk*)tidote are both before me,  
This is a moment brings me to my (*hawk*),  
And this informs me I can never (*spit*)." *spit*.

### TRUE PATHOS.

CHARLES KEMBLE told Mr. Adolphus that whenever he acted Cassio, on his brother John's pronouncing the words, "I do believe it, and I ask your pardon," he made the tears gush from his eyes.

### A MANAGER AND HIS ACTRESS.

THE airs and caprices of "Kitty Clive" were often not a little amusing. When Garrick

heard of her proposed retirement, he sent his prompter to ask if she were really in earnest. To such a messenger she disdain'd to give any reply. The manager then deputed his brother, who received for reply, that if the manager desired to know her intentions, he might come himself. The good-humoured Garrick waited on her, paid her many compliments, and begged her to stay with him. She answered by a look of contempt. He then asked "how much she considered herself worth." She replied briskly, "As much as yourself." Upon his smiling, she added tartly that "*she* always knew when she had enough, though he never did." On leaving, he again repeated that he was sorry she was leaving him. She told him that "*she* hated hypocrisy, and was sure that he would light up candles for joy at her departure—only that such a thing would be attended with expense."

### HAMLET WITH ALTERATIONS.

IT is well known that the best known and most popular of Shakspeare's plays have been "prepared" for the stage by Cibber and other workmen. No tragedian would resign the familiar line,—

"Off with his head!—so much for Buckingham!"

or,—

"Richard's himself again!"

Yet these are only imitation jewellery. So with the entire

pathetic scene at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was supplied by Garrick. These instances, however, are pretty familiar. Not so well known is the profanity with which Hamlet has been occasionally treated. Previous to taking the piece in hand Garrick consulted friends of taste, such as Steevens and Hoadley. The former jocularly suggested throwing the last portion into the shape of a farce, to be called "The Gravediggers." Hoadley suggested that Ophelia should produce a letter of Hamlet's, with lines like the following:—

"*Oph.* There's his last letter to me :  
This packet, when the next occasion suits,  
I shall return.

"*Pol.* Go we with this to the king.  
This must be known,"

with a good deal more of the same mock Shakspearean.

Garrick, however, went more boldly to work, left out what he called "the rubbish of the fifth act," including the grave-diggers, and made the king fight a grand battle for his life. But this is nothing to Alexander Dumas' "alterations." He makes the play close in this novel fashion. Laertes begs for mercy. The ghost sternly bids him go down to judgment, where he may not hope for indulgence.

Laertes, pray and die !" (*LAERTES dies.*) The queen exclaims, "Pity, pity !" The ghost says that it was her love that led her into crime : "Poor woman, the Lord loves those who love. Go ; tears have washed away the shame. Woman below, queen above. Gertrude, hope and die !" (*GERTRUDE dies.*) The king begs

for "Pardon !" The ghost consigns *him* to Satan : "Go, traitor, go ; despair and die !" (*The king dies.*) Hamlet complains piteously of being the only one left, after he himself had been the cause of the death of four persons. What was in store for him ? The ghost : "*Thou shalt LIVE !*" (Curtain falls.) This *dénouement* won the praise of *Théophile Gautier*, as being "grand and poetic. The action begins and concludes logically, and the punishment allotted is *sublime.*" With some grace, however, he allows that perhaps, on the whole, Shakspeare's finale is not less grand nor less philosophic.

#### A MODEST ALLOWANCE.

MRS. SIDDONS' salary on her successful appearance at Drury Lane was not higher than ten guineas a week. A couple of years later it was raised to twenty-four pounds ten shillings.

#### A DEVICE.

SHUTER was a genuine humorist, and his company was much sought by people of high rank, perhaps on the ground of his independence. One night, when he had an arduous part to perform, and was anxious to be left alone, two royal dukes came behind the scenes, and kept following him about, even into his dressing-room. "By Jove," he said at last, "the prompter has got my book. Will your royal highness kindly hold my skull-

cap to the fire? and you, your royal highness, would *you* air my breeches?" They good humouredly agreed to do so, and he thus got away. Several of the performers came and peeped through the keyhole, and saw the royal brothers conscientiously performing the duty they had undertaken.

### THE FATE OF BEN NAZIR.

AUDIENCES have not been the only "executioners" of plays. There are several instances on record where the leading performer has taken that office on himself. Kemble thus sacrificed Colman's play of the "Iron Chest," destroying it slowly by a solemn impassiveness. He also contributed his aid to the failure of Ireland's "Vortigern," rolling out with lugubrious and malicious emphasis some lines that began—

"And when this solemn mockery is o'er,"

which proved to be the signal for the final despatch of the piece. His more merciful but not less effectual treatment of "Antonio" has been shown.

Edmund Kean had such an opportunity in the case of a tragedy called "Ben Nazir," whose very title might be considered an invitation to a speedy damning. The unhappy author tells the story himself.

"Kean arrived in London enthusiastic, and, as he said *perfect* in his part. He repeatedly said that he hoped to reap as much fame from it as from Maturin's 'Bertram,' and that he reckoned

on playing it a hundred nights. His portrait in the part was to be immediately engraved. A new wherry, which Kean was then getting built for his annual prize race on the Thames, was to be called the 'Ben Nazir.' The dress in which he was to appear was to be the most splendid possible; and a notion may be formed on that head from the fact that Kean was to pay fifty guineas for it, over and above the allowance from the theatre. I might cite many other proofs of his enthusiasm.

"In the meantime the rehearsals were going on admirably. Every one was already perfect in their parts with one exception, but the one was unfortunately out of control, and consequently beyond discovery. Kean attended but two rehearsals, and both of these with the written part in his hand. On one occasion he read his part with great energy and effect. It was everything I could wish; no one had a shadow of doubt as to the impression it would produce on an audience. Congratulations were poured on me on all sides with premature profusion.

"Kean now claimed the privilege of absenting himself from the subsequent rehearsals, alleging his unwillingness to lose time from the close study he wished to give to the minutest details of the part. It was thought better to let him have everything his own way in a matter into which he had so evidently put his heart and soul, and which was of infinitely more

importance to him than any one else. I was quite satisfied, for I saw him almost daily, and witnessed the unceasing industry with which he laboured at the part. He used regularly to order his carriage after breakfast and set out for Kensington Gardens, where he studied a couple of hours. Frequently he sailed in his boat on the river, and there spouted away to the free benefit of the watermen and the Naiades. I often called on him at night, knowing that my presence would keep away others, and about ten or eleven o'clock he invariably went to bed, and went to bed sober.

“The night at length arrived. Everything was ready; I saw Kean in the morning; he expressed himself with the utmost confidence; strutted about his drawing-room in his lodgings, Duke Street, Adelphi, decked out in his magnificent dress; and declaimed with great spirit some of his favourite passages—*the book in his hand*. Notwithstanding all this, I had serious doubts of the night's result. I was certain he would be imperfect; but I reckoned fully on him giving the principal passages with ample effect; and I calculated on subsequent representations repairing any defects which might appear on the first night.

“In this mood I took leave of Kean, resolved not to interfere with him further; and I prepared to go to the theatre, in a state of some anxiety certainly, but one more pleasurable than the contrary. Mr. Wallack had

secured me a private box behind the dress circle, to which I repaired about half-an-hour before the play began. The house was crowded in all parts. A fair share of applause was given to some of the early passages; and the audience seemed well prepared for Kean's appearance, with which the third scene was to open.

“He did at length appear. The intention of the author and the keeping of the character required him to rush rapidly on the stage, giving utterance to a burst of joyous soliloquy. What was my astonishment to see him, as the scene opened, standing in the centre of the stage, his arms crossed, and his whole attitude of thoughtful solemnity. His dress was splendid; and thunders of applause greeted him from all parts of the house. To display the one and give time for the other were the objects for which he stood fixed for several minutes, and sacrificed the sense of the situation. He spoke; but what a speech! The one I wrote consisted of eight or nine lines; *his* was of two or three sentences, but not six consecutive words of the text. His look, his manner, his tone, were to me quite appalling; to any other observer they must have been incomprehensible. He stood fixed, drawled out his incoherent words, and gave the notion of a man who had been half hanged and then dragged through a horse-pond. My heart, I confess it, sank deep in my breast. I was utterly shocked. And as the business of the play went on,

and as *he* stood by with moveless muscle and glazed eye, through the scene which should have been one of violent, perhaps too violent, exertion, a cold shower of perspiration poured from my forehead, and I endured a revulsion of feeling which I cannot describe, and which I would not for worlds one eye had witnessed. I had all along felt that this scene would be the touchstone of the play. —Keen went through it like a man in the last stage of exhaustion and decay. The act closed—a dead silence followed the fall of the curtain, and I felt, though I could not hear, the voiceless verdict of ‘damnation.’ When the curtain fell, Mr. Wallack came forward and made an apology for Kean’s imperfection in his part and an appeal on behalf of the play. Neither excited much sympathy; the audience were quite disgusted. I now, for the first time during the night, went behind the scenes. On crossing the stage towards the green-room I met Kean, supported by his servant and another person, going in the direction of his dressing-room. When he saw me, he hung down his head and waved his hand, and uttered some expressions of deep sorrow and even remorse. ‘I have ruined a fine play and myself; I cannot look you in the face!’ were the first words I caught. I said something in return, as cheering and consolatory as I could; I may say that all sense of my own disappointment was forgotten in the compassion I felt for him.”

### DROP SCENES.

A FRAMED picture is a common pattern of drop scene in our London theatres. On artistic grounds, at least, this has been considered incorrect, as there is an æsthetic impropriety in seeing the Bay of Naples, with a handsome frame, mouldings, &c., all rolled up. Genuine curtains of silk or velvet soon grow dirty and creased. M. Garnier, the architect of the new French Opera House, thinks that a painted curtain, with its folds, cords, tassels, &c., is the most correct; and this is adopted at some London theatres, notably at the Princess’s, which is a very graceful piece of workmanship. Opera-goers will recall the rich amber folds of Covent Garden Theatre, which, however, goes up in a very ungraceful fashion, as though, during its ascent, some hands caught it on each side so as to raise it faster. The old green curtain was invaluable for its dramatic impressions,—the great lugubrious folds descending slowly, and shutting out the prostrate bodies: now it is considered vulgar or old-fashioned. One theatre has a mauve-coloured curtain, another a crimson one; the generality none at all. The playbills, too, have been reformed: the old “silver paper” glove-smirching bills, half a yard long, have all but gone out.

### STAGE EFFECT.

AUDIENCES in the present day are accustomed to theatres

brilliant with floods of light ; and, indeed, every year, what with the "lime light," and newer fashions of illumination, the glare seems to increase in intensity. Before gas was introduced theatres must have been gloomy enough, being lit with oil, save on certain gala nights, when it was announced that "the house would be lit with wax." One of the Dublin managers always paid Shakspeare this compliment. The stage, too, in the last century was lit by four large chandeliers, so that the light fell downwards on the faces of the actors. As the audience were leaving the house they always saw these huge lamps being let down, just as now we see the housekeeper and the holland covers appear. Garrick, it is said, introduced footlights on his return from one of his visits to France ; but there are some prints of Drury Lane, done many years later, in which this improvement is not shown.

With all the advance that is supposed to have been made in stage arrangements, there can be no question but that scenic effects have not improved. The fierce glare and gaudy colours on which the lights play make up an unnatural order of things, which represents nothing on earth. In this fiery light, figures, features, and even voice become distorted ; the mellow harmonies of real life are absent. There can be little doubt that the only way in which objects such as houses, &c., should be presented on the stage is by painting, not by imitation or,

worse, by their own actual presence.

Many interesting questions have arisen as to the arrangement of the scene. The French enclose it altogether, giving the whole the effect of a real room—an arrangement we have copied from them. By this, however, a contracted look is given to the stage, though the voice is improved. The "sky borders" are being gradually abolished, except in landscapes and great set-scenes, a regular painted ceiling being let down and laid flat on the side scenes. Various devices have been suggested for readily changing this roof : one, which was proposed for the new Opera House at Paris, was to be in the shape of a lady's fan, which unclosed from a centre, and could be shut up to give place to another.

#### THE INTELLIGENT BRITISH PUBLIC.

"SIR," would say the late Mr. Bartley to Mr. Planché, when explaining how an English audience was to be affected, "you must first tell them you are going to do so and so, you must then tell them you are doing it, then that you have done it ; and then, by G——," with a slap on his thigh, "*perhaps* they will understand you !" Every good dramatist has to concede a trifle to the principle involved in this comic explanation. Experienced barristers have often given the same advice as the result of their experience with another kind of audience.

## TRUE BOMBAST.

IF we were looking for a perfect specimen of bombast, the following would answer to perfection:—"Thou on Panama's brow didst make alliance with the raving elements, that tore the silence of that horrid night;—when thou didst follow, as thy pioneer, the crashing thunder's drift, and, stalking o'er the trembling earth, didst plant thy banner by the red volcano's mouth. Thou who, when battling on the sea, and thy brave ship was blown to splinters, wast seen, as thou didst bestride a fragment of the smoking wreck, to wave thy glittering sword above thy head, as thou wouldst defy the world in that extremity. Come, fearless man, meet and survive an injured woman's fury, if thou canst." Yet this stuff, which would now hardly be accepted at a transpontine theatre, was written by the author of the "School for Scandal," and declaimed by the incomparable Queen of tragedy, Mrs. Siddons.

## "BRING IN THE BISHOP."

MRS. SIDDONS once played in a new tragedy by Miss Burney. Much might be expected from the lively author of "Evelina," but this was a tragedy. It was called "Elvira," and furnished an evening of harmless mirth to the audience. This was owing to the presence of no less than *three* bishops in the piece. "At that time, it seems, there was a liquor much in popular use, called Bishop, and when jolly fellows met at a tavern the first

order to the waiter was, *to bring in the Bishop*. Unacquainted with the language of taverns, Miss Burney made her king exclaim, in an early scene, '*Bring in the Bishop!*' and the summons filled the audience with as much hilarity as if they had drunk of the exhilarating liquor. They continued in the best possible humour throughout the piece. The dying scene made them still more jocose, when a passing stranger proposed, in a tragic tone, to carry the expiring heroine to the other side of a hedge. This hedge, though supposed to be situated remotely from any dwelling, nevertheless proved to be a very accommodating retreat; for in a few minutes afterwards, the wounded lady was brought from behind it on an elegant couch, and, after dying, in the presence of her husband, was removed once more to the back of the hedge. The solemn accents of the Siddons herself were not a match for this ludicrous circumstance, and she was carried off amidst roars of mirth."

## THE PENALTY OF GREATNESS.

NEARLY every celebrity who has made his or her fame by entertaining the public can tell some startling histories of the irrepressible forwardness of their admirers. Siddons relates her experience of this description of persecution.

"My door," she says, "was soon beset by various persons quite unknown to me, whose

curiosity was on the alert to see the new actress, some of whom actually forced their way into my drawing-room, in spite of remonstrance or opposition. This was as inconvenient as it was offensive; for, as I usually acted three times a week, and had, besides, to attend the rehearsals, I had but little time to spend unnecessarily. One morning, though I had previously given orders not to be interrupted, my servant entered the room in a great hurry, saying, 'Ma'am, I am very sorry to tell you there are some ladies below, who say they must see you, and it is impossible for me to prevent it. I have told them over and over again that you are particularly engaged, but all in vain; and now, ma'am, you may actually hear them on the stairs.' I felt extremely indignant at such unparalleled impertinence; and before the servant had done speaking to me, a tall, elegant, invalid-looking person presented herself (whom, I am afraid, I did not receive very graciously), and, after her, four more, in slow succession. A very awkward silence took place, when presently the first lady began to accost me with a most inveterate Scotch twang, and in a dialect which was scarcely intelligible to me in those days. She was a person of very high rank; her curiosity, however, had been too powerful for her good breeding. 'You must think it strange,' said she, 'to see a person entirely unknown to you intrude in this manner upon your privacy; but, you must know, I am in a very

delicate state of health, and my physician won't let me go to the theatre to see you, so I am to look at you here.' She accordingly sat down to look, and I to be looked at for a few painful moments, when she arose and apologised; but I was in no humour to overlook such insolence, and so let her depart in silence."

#### STAGE SLANG.

THE stage, like many other professions, has its argot. This, however, is a little coarse, though expressive enough. A play that is hissed is always "goosed;" an actor looks that his part should have plenty of "fat," and if it be deficient in this essential point he supplies the loss with "gags." The "ghost walks" on Saturday, when salaries are paid. A "quick study" is a rapid learner; a "cue-hunter" is one who requires the exact words to be given him, while the part he studies has so many "lengths."

#### A RUDE INTERRUPTION.

ONE night at a country theatre Mrs. Siddons was "taking the poison" in the last act of some gloomy tragedy, when a boor in the gallery called out, "That's right, Molly; soop it oop, ma lass."

#### A GOOD OMEN.

ON the very morning of Mrs. Siddon's triumphant first appearance, the *Morning Post* had the following note:—

"Mrs. Siddons, of Drury Lane Theatre, has a lovely little boy, about eight years old. Yesterday, in the rehearsal of the 'Fatal Marriage,' the boy, observing his mother in the agonies of the dying scene, took the fiction for reality, and burst into a flood of tears, a circumstance which struck the feelings of the company in a singular manner."

It is amusing to read the business-like description of the obscure postulant, "Mrs. Siddons, of Drury Lane Theatre." By the next morning she was famous, and every one knew who "Siddons" was.

#### MRS. PRITCHARD.

CAMPBELL thus oddly writes on Johnson's well-known critique of this actress:—

"Mrs. Pritchard, I dare say, was a *vulgar woman*; but, when I read the accounts of her acting worthily with Garrick, I cannot consent to Dr. Johnson calling her a *vulgar idiot*, even though she did pin an unnecessary *d* to her gown. *Encrusted with indolence as she was, she was still a diamond.* At the same time, being palpably devoid of devotion to her profession, she must *have been unequal in her appearances.* Accordingly, we find that her popularity in London fell; and, when she went over to Dublin, *that she electrified the Irish with disappointment.*"

#### KEMBLE AT THE "FINISH" CLUB.

BUT the highest and the low-

est, the most whimsical and the most extraordinary, of all these places of resort was the "Finish," in Covent Garden Market. Its original institution seems to have been as a house where the gardeners and early frequenters of the market might obtain necessary refreshments; but what is early to one man is late to another. The child of laborious industry prepares to begin his day's work at the very time when the frolicksome son of dissipation thinks of retiring to his night's rest. To both these parties "Carpenter's Coffee House" (as it was properly called), or the "Finish," as it was conventionally denominated, afforded an agreeable recess. While the market people were regaling on tea, coffee, purl, or such other refreshments as their necessities or their habits demanded, another set of persons enjoyed, in a separate coffee-room, such regales as suited their fancy. This party was made up of everything strange and eccentric that the town could afford. In the room might be found men who, from hard drinking at other taverns, came to cool their palates in the morning with a "doctor," or some milder beverage. But concerning these young men there was one standing rule, that if any one of them appeared in a cocked hat some regular customer of the house would force him into a quarrel.

I shall commemorate one scene as peculiarly striking and characteristic. It was about five in the morning, when the party had a good deal thinned, but

Jack Tetherington, Le Gai (commonly called "Sparring Le Gai"), and eight or ten more in full spirits, were surprised in their carousal by the entrance of John Philip Kemble, dressed with his usual gentlemanly propriety, very much the worse for a late dinner party. He was known to many of the party, and joined in conversation without form or ceremony. I do not remember the exact course of the conversation, but some of the passages were comic and singular. Mr. Kemble talked unsuccessfully, perhaps, to such an audience, but not with more than a becoming confidence of being now at the head of his profession, and referred to Tetherington's memory for the prophecy of a common friend that he would speedily become so. He said he had a great wish to form a play out of Shakspeare's Henry VI., and sitting in his chair gave a specimen of the manner in which, as Duke of Gloucester, he would address the House of Lords.

"Brave Peers of England, pillars of the State,  
To you Duke Humphrey must unfold his grief."

He was frequently interrupted by individuals of the party breaking in upon him with all manner of buffooneries. At last Le Gai said, "Well, Mr. Kemble, we'll give you leave to go on."

"Give me leave, sir?" said Kemble, in the most exaggerated extravagance of his own manner. "Give me leave to go on? As well might a barber in Rome

have said to Caius Marcus Coriolanus, I give you leave to do something."

"What do you mean by a barber?" said the Gai, in an insolent tone. "Do you mean any reflection upon barbers?"

"No, sir," said Kemble, "God forbid that I should, for a relation of my own" (and he named him) "was once a barber."

Jack Tetherington, foreseeing, perhaps, that this style of conversation might lead to unpleasant consequences, here broke in in this manner, "Now, my dear Mr. Kemble, my good friend, John Philip Kemble, I wish to ask you a question. I wish to be particular myself, and I have some daughters (God bless them) that I wish to grow up as perfect as women can be. Do tell me, then, why you say *Coriolanus*, when all other men that ever I heard have called it *Coriolanus*?"

Kemble, whose spirits began rather to subside (for this is part of a scene of some hours' duration), was feebly producing something about classic authority, and the rhythm of current lines in the play, when Jack interrupted him with, "Why, my dear sir, we know all that '*Coriolanus in Corioli*,' but what I want is—" Here the rest of the company began a tremendous row, and Jack concluded his discussion by singing—

"Ligga digga, digga di, digga de, digga di,  
Ligga, digga, digga di, digga dee."

The noise and racket went on, but Kemble's ill-humour seemed to increase; at last the landlady

came in, a little round woman, whom, colour excepted, we might term a snowball. She brought a tray filled with glasses of liquor, which had been called for. In passing she gave some offence to Mr. Kemble, who immediately, with one tragic sweep of his arm, dashed all the glasses against the opposite wall. "There, Mr. Kemble," said the little woman, "that's the second time you've served me so, and now you owe eight shillings for broken glass." Kemble made no reply, for in his performance of this exploit he had cut his hand, and the blood was streaming down. I was sitting next him, and seeing the end of a cambric handkerchief appear from his pocket, I took it, and bound up his wound as well as I could. When I had done, the hero said, "Sir, I am much obliged to you, but I am afraid I shall deprive you of your handkerchief." "Sir," said I, "you will not deprive me of my handkerchief; it is your own. I took it out of your pocket." I shall never forget the manner in which this great player coursed his commanding eye over my whole person, from top to bottom, and back again, expressing as clearly as if he had uttered the words, "Is it possible my handkerchief was in my pocket, and afterwards in your possession, and now is in my own hands again? Can these things be?" I was so struck with the obvious meaning of the look that I turned from him in a fit of uncontrollable laughter. At this moment a

hackney-coach came to the door, and some, who really were his friends, put him into it and sent him home.

#### SCENES IN THE CIRCLE.

AN unvarying and time-honoured entertainment at the Circus is the occasional dialogue between the ring-master and Mr. Merryman, the "Shakspearean" or "Chaucerian" (as the case may be) clown, who enlivens the entertainment, and gives time to the female rider and her highly trained steed to recover breath. The interchange of repartee and "chaste quips and jests" never fails to evoke a hearty and genuine enjoyment, which might fairly be envied by the comedian of a professed theatre. Nearly a hundred years ago, a dialogue of this kind between Astley and his Merryman was taken down; and it will be seen how stern and unchangeable are the traditions of the circus.

"One evening I was very much entertained at Astley's Theatre, at the time he amused the public with his dialogue with Master Merryman. Having a pencil in my pocket, I could not refrain from writing it down. He seemed so confident and pleased with every word he uttered, bawled so loud, smiling at his own wit, and the superiority which he *must* convince the audience his eloquence displayed over the clown's. He excited my curiosity to retain it in my memory. Those that have seen him, cannot forget what Astley's erudition was.

"*Astley*.—*Alto*.—Mister Merryman, Mister Merryman, where are you, Mister Merryman?

"*M*. I be coming directly, master.

"*A*. Coming directly, Mister Merryman, so is Christmas.

"*M*. I am glad to hear that, master.

"*A*. Why, Mister Merryman?

"*M*. Because I likes plum-pudding and roast beef, dearly.

"*A*. Plum-pudding and roast beef, dearly! that's very good stuff, Mister Merryman; but come, sir, get up upon the top of that there horse, and let the ladies see as how you used to ride before the Emperor of Tuscany and the Grand Duke of Switzerland. Mister Merryman, ladies and gentlemen, has had the honour to attend me in my different excursions out of the kingdom, and has been much admired for his wit and activity. Come, sir, mind as how you sit upright on that there horse, sir. What are you about?

"*M*. Why, master, I am only combing his wig.

"*A*. Combing his wig, sir; did you ever hear of a horse wearing a wig?

"*M*. Yes, master; and an ass, too.

"*A*. Vastly well, indeed, Mister Merryman. Ladies and gentlemen, Mister Merryman has a great deal of wit.

"*M*. Yes, master; I should like to be poet-laureate.

"*A*. Poet-laureate, Mister Merryman? what! I suppose, as how you would write manuscript on horseback, like the Roman Arabs in the time of

Pontius *Pirate*—you would never want a bridle or saddle.

"*M*. No, master; I would write a book about the French war.

"*A*. About the French war, Mister Merryman? why you know nothing about it. You must leave it to Mr. Parnassus, and people of high breeding and learning; but come, sir, let us see you off.

"*M*. I go, sir.

"*A*. I go, sir! but you have got your face the wrong way.

"*M*. Never mind, master; it will be right if I go to fight the French.

"*A*. How so, Mister Merryman?

"*M*. Why, master, if my horse was to take fright and run away, I should not like to have it said I turned my back on Mounseer.

"*A*. Vastly well, indeed, Mister Merryman; but as our brave countrymen will prevent the French from coming to eat up all our roast beef and pudding, you had better turn about; so off you go."

#### ELLISTON AND THE AUDIENCE.

"ALL stories of Elliston are characteristic and entertaining. On one night when a popular actor, named Carles, had been arrested on his way to the theatre and another substituted, the audience began to show its disapprobation in a noisy way; the question of "Where's Carles?" became the (dis)order of the time, and "Carles! Carles!" was the

popular demand—a demand which Mr. Elliston was not backward to answer in his own way, and coming promptly forward with his most profound bow, respectfully, though haughtily, inquired of the “*Ladies and Gentlemen*” what was “*their pleasure.*”

Several voices vociferated, “*Carles!*” Elliston knitted his brows with excessive earnestness, affecting to be confounded by the noise, and, with increasing gravity, again desired to be acquainted with the occasion of the extraordinary tumult, adding, with something like command in his tone, “*One at a time, if you please.*” Again the popular cry was audible to those who “*had ears to hear.*” But Mr. Elliston’s tympanum was strangely insensible and dull. One malcontent, raising his voice, however, louder than the rest, enforced Mr. Elliston’s attention, and, fixing his eyes suddenly upon the man, the manager then turned his face from him for a moment, and haughtily *begging pardon* of the rest of the pit, added, “*Let me hear what this gentleman has to say;*” and pointing to the turbulent individual in question, observed sternly, “*Now, sir, I’ll attend to you—first, if the rest of the gentlemen will allow me;*” and here he made a stiff bow to the *gentlemen* in question. All now became suddenly silent, and the selected person sat down, looking rather sheepish at the distinction shown him above “*his fellows,*” and Mr. Elliston, stooping over the orchestra, and fixing his eyes like

a browbeating barrister, on his victim, thus emphatically addressed his chosen man:—

“*Now, sir, be so good as to inform me what it is you require?*”

The man, still abashed at being thus singled out for particular notice, in rather a subdued tone, but affecting his former valour, answered—“*Carles! Carles!*”

“*Oh! Carles!!!*” exclaimed Elliston, in a tone of surprise, as if only at that moment aware of the cause of dissatisfaction. “*Oh! ah! you want Mr. Carles? Is that what you say, sir?*”

“*Yes,*” responded the Pit-ite, with renewed confidence; “*his name’s in the bill!*”

“*Very good, sir!*” said the manager, who, throughout, carried himself with the air of one who felt *himself* the *injured party*, “*I understand you now!—you are right, so far, sir,—Mr. Carles’s name is in the bill.*”

Here Mr. Elliston was interrupted by others who repeated—

“*Yes! yes!—his name’s in the bill!—his name’s in the bill!*”

“*Gentlemen! with your leave, I will say a few words—*” (all was again silent, and the manager’s earnestness and dignity increased as he proceeded)—“*I admit that Mr. Carles’s name is in the bill—I don’t wish to deny it, but—*” (and here he assumed a solemnity of face and voice, and with his deepest tragedymanner, impressively observed)—“*But are you to be reminded of the many accidents that may*

intervene between the morning's issuing of *that bill* and the evening's fulfilment of its promise? Is it requisite to remind the enlightened and thinking portion of the public here assembled (and he took a sweeping glance round the house), that the chances and changes of human life are dependent on *circumstances* and not upon *ourselves*?"

Here the "enlightened" exclaimed, "Aye, aye; bravo;" and Mr. Elliston, gaining courage from this slight manifestation of sympathy, turned himself once more to *his man* with renewed *hauteur*, crying sharply, "And *you*, sir, you who are so *loud* in your demand for Mr. Carles, cannot *you* also imagine that his absence may be occasioned by some dire distress, some occurrence not within human foresight to anticipate or divert? Can you not picture to yourself the possibility of Mr. Carles at this moment lying upon a sick—nay, perhaps, a *dying* bed—surrounded by his weeping children and his agonized wife!" —(Mr. Carles was a bachelor)—"whose very bread depends upon the existence of an affectionate, devoted husband and father—and who *may* be deprived of his exertions and support for ever? Is it so *very* difficult to imagine a scene like this taking place at the very moment you are calling for him so imperiously to appear before you—selfishly desirous of your present amusement, and unmindful of his probable danger!" —(great and general applause).

"And *you*, sir, will, perhaps, *repeat* your demand to have Mr. Carles brought before you! Are you a husband? are you a father?"

"Oh, shame! shame!" resounded now from every part of the pit.

"You are *right*, sirs," resumed the manager; "you are *quite* right. It *is* a shame; I blush at such inhumanity!"

"Turn him out! turn him out!" was now generally vociferated, even by those who had originally joined in the objectionable demand; and Elliston, choosing to receive this suggestion as a *question* addressed to himself, promptly replied with the most dignified assent—

"If you *please*!"

"*Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait!*"

In the next moment the offending individual was lifted above the heads of his brother malcontents, and, in spite of his vehement remonstrances and struggles, hoisted across the pit, actually ejected, and the door closed upon him by his removers. Mr. Elliston, who had waited the result with great composure, now bowed *very low*, while he received the general applause of the house, and retired in grave triumph, laughing heartily (in his sleeve) at the gullibility of Olympian intellect.

This scene is really dramatic.

#### L I S T O N .

It is curious, too, that some of the most celebrated comic actors actually began their career, from

their own choice, as tragedians. Among these were Munden, Lewis, Bannister, Elliston, Dawson, Wrench, and Liston. The latter's early attempts in the tragic direction were attended with grotesque discomfiture, his singular face inviting hilarity, and rather suggesting—and his earnestness contributing—that he intended burlesque. He felt this acutely.

Mrs. Siddons had been engaged as a star; and the first character in which he was appointed to perform with the illustrious actress was that of the venerable but somewhat tedious Jarvis in the "Gamester."

At the morning's rehearsal of the "Gamester," Mrs. Siddons was obviously struck with a sense of the ludicrous, when the appointed representative of the good *old* Jarvis appeared upon the stage before her. His *amour propre* was, however, more positively touched when Mrs. Siddons afterwards addressed him in the language of undisguised correction; there was something in her tone and manner of doing this which greatly offended him, and he felt inclined to resent what he could not help thinking carried with it an unfeeling air of ridicule, ill concealed during the greater part of the remarks directed to him, so that by the time that the last scene came on, the amiable and devoted Jarvis was found sullen and impracticable.

Amongst other things required, the great actress laid serious stress upon the manner in which

she desired the co-operation of her aged friend in the concluding scene of the tragedy; in the course of which, he would have to place his arms around her waist, in order to restrain the effort she was accustomed to make to reach the dead body of her suicidal husband—explaining at the same time how great her own personal strength really was, and that in the energy of her feelings it would be strenuously exerted to release herself from his grasp—giving at the same time a practical lesson to the young actor by placing his hands as she wished him to place them at the appointed time, and enjoining him to hold her firmly and determinately, otherwise she should break from him and the effect of the scene would be lost, &c., &c.

The young gentleman was silently and sullenly attentive to these instructions—in his heart still resentful of the great actress's suspected unkindness, and he appeared listless and languid in his obedience, apparently incompetent to so great a demand upon his strength,—so that, at length, after several trials, Mrs. Siddons gave up the point, doubting the result of her great scene.

Night came, and the venerable Jarvis passed on from scene to scene with due propriety, his merit shadowed by the resplendent lustre of the evening-star upon which all eyes were turned.

The closing scene arrived, and the *old* Jarvis entered into his share of it with a determination to show no favour to her whom he

fancied had rendered no justice to *him*. "What was the fame of Mrs. Siddons to *him*? had she considered *his* when she threw ridicule over *his* tragic efforts? He had not, in fact," he persuaded himself, "personal strength sufficient to hold back this powerful woman as she required, and if he *had*, he was engaged for the powers of his mind, and not hired for the muscular force of his body; why, then, should he strain a point, to hold up one who seemed willing to keep him down?" In short, the no longer friendly and faithful Jarvis resolved "to do his spiriting so gently," that though he would not let Mrs. Beverly *fall*, yet would he not assist her effectively. But lo! before the injured youth could perpetrate his deliberate malice, all-conquering genius asserted its power; the great actress took him so by surprise, and worked so entirely upon his more natural and generous feelings by her harrowing representation, that the astonished novice was so wholly engrossed by her sorrow, and absorbed by the truthfulness of her despair and agony, that his best sympathies were involuntarily enlisted in her cause, and when she attempted to propel herself upon the breathless body of her husband, Liston seized her with such reality of terror, and zeal of purpose—so forcibly struggled against the efforts of the distracted wife, and so feelingly did his eyes overflow with sympathy in her misery, that never had co-operation been more effi-

cient. A tumult of applause followed, and the accomplished actress was borne off the stage by her now devoted and sobbing Jarvis in a triumph of feeling and admiration.

#### THE RULING INSTINCT.

A MANAGER of a small Welsh theatre had lost his wife, and showed much grief on the occasion. With a view to pay her all respect at the dismal procession to the grave, he requested that the members of the company would all attend in proper mourning. They repaired to the house on the morning of the funeral, and found him struggling with his tears, but still with the instinct of his office, giving suitable directions,—appointing to each his partner in the mournful procession, and, as it occurred to some present, with the same intelligence and prevision that he brought to more cheerful arrangements upon his stage. When all was ready to start, a question suddenly arose. Who was to follow immediately after the chief mourner? No one was eager to take this place, and it was at last, to prevent confusion, hurriedly submitted to him. He gazed distressfully at his interrogator, his eyes streaming with tears, for he had really thought that having done with business he might now indulge his grief; but in a moment the manager asserted himself, and he answered with professional decision,—"*O, the tragedy people first, by all means!*"

*PLAYERS INTERRUPTED.*

MR. CALCRAFT was for many years manager of the Dublin Theatre, and was well known in the profession. He used to tell many good stories of the behaviour of his patrons in the galleries, who are notorious in that city for their lively and even humorous comments. "What is your pleasure?" said the stage-manager, who had been brought out by the roars of the overcrowded gallery. "None at all," was the answer, "but a d—d sight of pain, for we're smothering up here." There is a delightful tradition of Mrs. Siddons, who was interrupted in one of her grand scenes by vociferous yells for "Garry Owen!" She was bewildered, but earnestly anxious to conciliate, she came forward and solemnly asked, "*What is Garryowen? Is it anything I can do for you?*" This is a picture. Her brother was also interrupted with cries to "Speak up!" during some of the most interesting soliloquies of Hamlet. He always suffered from an asthmatic complaint, but he answered promptly, "Gentlemen of the gallery, I can't speak up, but if *you* don't speak at all, you'll hear every word I say!"

*AT THE VICTORIA.*

A MOST characteristic dramatic scene once took place at the Victoria Theatre, where Edmund Kean had been engaged

at an enormous expense. On the second night he appeared as Othello, on which occasion Iago was personated by Cobham, a prodigious local favourite. The house was crowded, but was noisy and inattentive. There were nearly twelve hundred persons in a gallery measured for about half the number. The best speeches in the most striking scenes were marred by such interruptions as a Coburg audience were given to dispense, in those days with more freedom than politeness—by the incessant popping of ginger-beer bottles, but, above all, by yells of "Bravo, Cobham!" whenever Kean elicited his most brilliant points. The great tragedian felt disconcerted, and by the time the curtain fell, he overflowed with indignation, a little heightened by copious draughts of brandy and water. He was then loudly called for, and after a considerable delay came forward, enveloped in his cloak, his face still smirched, not more than half cleansed from the dingy complexion of the Moor, and his eyes emitting flashes as bright and deadly as forked lightning. He planted himself in the centre of the stage, near the footlights, and demanded, with laconic abruptness, "What do you want?" There was a moment's interval of surprise, when, "You! you!" was reiterated from many voices. "Well, then, I am here." Another short pause, and he then proceeded to make this characteristic speech: "I have acted in every theatre in the United

Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, I have acted in all the principal theatres throughout the United States of America, *but in my life I never acted to such a set of ignorant unmitigated brutes as I now see before me.*" So saying, he folded his mantle majestically, made a slight, contemptuous obeisance, and stalked off, with the dignity of an offended lion. The actors, carpenters, and property men, who listened to this harangue, stood aghast, evidently expecting that the house would be torn down. An awful silence ensued for a moment or two, like the gathering storm before the tempest, when suddenly a thought of deadly retaliation suggested itself, and pent-up vengeance burst out in one simultaneous shout of "Cobham! Cobham!" Cobham, who was evidently in waiting, at the wing, rushed forth at once, bowed reverentially, placed his hand on his heart again and again, and pantomimed emotion and gratitude after the prescribed rules. When the thunders of applause subsided, he delivered himself as follows:—"Ladies and gentlemen, this is unquestionably the proudest moment of my life. I cannot give utterance to my feelings; but to the latest hour of my existence I shall cherish the remembrance of the honour conferred upon me by one of the most distinguished, liberal, and enlightened audiences I ever had the pleasure of addressing." On another occasion Mrs. Siddons took leave of a barbarian audi-

ence with a "Farewell, ye brutes!"

#### MATHEWS AND THE DUBLIN GODS.

MATHEWS was once interrupted at Dublin in pretty much the same way, though not with such brutality. In the farce of "Monsieur Tonson" the part of Morbleu had been originally personated with great success by Montague Talbot, a favourite of long standing in the Dublin company, and still remembered by the patriarchs of the expiring generation. During the first scene, when Mathews was beginning already to make a favourable impression, some half-dozen malcontents in the gallery raised a cry of "Talbot! Talbot!" which operated like an epidemic, and was speedily caught up by a few more. Mathews paused, appeared astonished, and at length said, "I hear a cry of 'Talbot! Talbot!' but I am unable to follow the meaning." "We want Talbot," was the reply. "You may have him," muttered the indignant actor *sotto voce*, bowed, and walked off the stage, under considerable excitement. The interruption then increased to an uproar. The manager came forward, and stated that his friend Mr. Mathews was merely there for a short engagement, to serve and oblige him; that he performed, as a matter of course, his usual round of characters; and that he was not come to displace Mr. Talbot, or succeed to his position. This

address was received with universal acclamations, which redoubled when Mathews entered, immediately afterwards, and resumed his character. But, in a few moments, the mischievous spirits again shouted "Talbot ! Talbot !" Mathews, never the most patient of men, now lost his temper entirely. He came forward and said, with brusque irritation, "Either you want to see this farce, or you do not ; so make up your minds at once. If I am interrupted again by this cry of 'Talbot ! Talbot !' I shall relieve you from my performance ; but it is rather too good, after having acted this part with universal applause in London and all the principal theatres in England, to come here and be annoyed by you and your Talbot." It was thought he had now committed himself beyond recovery, and would be pelted off ; but the audience suddenly veered round to the humorous point, took it all in good part, and there was no more "Talbot !" during the remainder of the engagement. A theatre has been sacked upon less provocation. But Mathews visited Dublin no more, and never forgot the affront. To all subsequent applications he replied laconically, "Talbot ! Talbot !"

#### ROMANTIC STAGE MARRIAGES.

A PRETTY romance attended the marriage of Garrick with La Violette, a German dancer. She was the *protégée* of Lady

Burlington, who guarded her jealously, and disapproved of Garrick's advances. He, however, contrived to see her in disguise as she came away from fashionable routs, and get into her carriage. A picture of her by Zoffany in a hat now grown fashionable again under the title of "Dolly Varden," which is in the possession of Mr. Hill, of Richmond, offers one of the most graceful and delicate faces conceivable. She must have been a most attractive woman. No player was ever married so fashionably as the young and successful Mr. Garrick. It turned out one of the happiest marriages in the world, and Garrick used to say that from the date of their wedding they had never been separated a day.

MRS. SIDDONS had her little glimpse of romance in early life. A young member of her father's corps, who was good-looking but no actor, became attached to her. The parents vehemently opposed the match after, it would seem, not interfering at the proper time, and dismissed the offender from the company. The young man brought the matter before the audience in a long doggerel ballad, composed for the occasion, in which he very ungallantly accused his "flame" of having joined her parents in treating him so badly.

"Ye ladies of Brecon, whose hearts ever  
feel,  
For wrongs like to this I'm about to  
reveal,

Excuse the first product, nor pass dis-  
regarded,  
The complaints of poor Colin, a lover dis-  
carded.

Derry down.

\* \* \*

"Dear ladies, avoid one indelible stain,  
Excuse me, I beg, if my verse is too  
plain,  
*But a jilt is the devil* as has now been  
confessed,  
Which a heart like poor Colin's must ever  
detest.

Derry down."

This was unjust, for the young lady was faithful, forgave this attack, went into service as a ladies' maid, and at last obtained a slow consent from her parents. The swain proved, as might be imagined, an unsuitable husband, cold and selfish, and, indeed, seemed to have effectually extinguished all romance for the future.

JOHN KEMBLE appears to have been attached to Mrs. Inchbald, but was too prudent to burden his promising talents with the responsibility of marriage. It was thought the beautiful Miss Philips, afterwards Mrs. Crouch, was also favoured with his attentions. His marriage, which did not take place until he was somewhat mature, was arranged in rather a grotesque way. He one day passed a pretty actress belonging to the Drury Lane company, the widow of Breton, and chucking her under the chin, said, "Pop, you will hear of something presently that will surprise you." "Pop," which was a familiar abbreviation for Priscilla, consulted her mother, who knew enough of the tragedian's manner to translate this oracular signification into a kind of proposal, and so it proved.

MR. CHARLES KEAN and Miss Ellen Tree, after a long engagement or attachment, were married in Dublin, and performed on the same evening in "The Honey Moon." The choice of this play, the manager tells us, was purely accidental, but the coincidence was curious.

#### DEMANDS ON THE ACTOR.

NO one can tell better than the successful actor of the surprising and unconscionable claims for aid made by the needy, or the patrons of charities. In the first three months of his early success, Mr. Charles Kean had received applications for assistance to the modest amount of 6,000*l.*

#### OLD ACTORS.

MACKLIN and Dowton (who retired in 1840) were perhaps the only two English actors who remained on the stage till close upon eighty.

#### A PRACTICAL MIND.

MRS. SIDDONS seemed to agree with Johnson's notion that the actor should not be so far carried away in his part as to identify himself with the character he is acting. She had an eminently practical turn of mind. Some one was speaking in her presence of the effect of applause. "It must give one heart," they said. "Aye," she added, "and, better still, *breath.*" A very intimate friend of hers was jocularly asked why he had never made love to such a beautiful

woman, and made the well-known answer, "that he should as soon have thought of making love to the Archbishop of Canterbury."

### THE JUSTE MILIEU.

WHEN Mr. Glover married Miss Betterton "off the stage," he would not allow her to bear her new name, which he thought would affect his dignity, while she did not like continuing to bear her old one, as it would impair her dignity. As a sort of compromise, she was for a time named in the bills as "*the late Miss Betterton.*"

### THE LONDON THEATRES.

LONDON is perhaps better furnished with theatres than any city in the world. The list in Paris may seem longer, but many of the houses do not deserve the title, no more than a music hall does. To the first class in London belong Covent Garden and Drury Lane, the Haymarket, Prince of Wales, Lyceum, Vaudeville, Globe, Adelphi, Olympic, Court, Strand, Princess's and St. James', Royalty, Charing Cross, Gaiety, Opéra Comique and Philharmonic. The two last are devoted to Opéra Bouffe, while the Gaiety holds quite a special position of its own, depending on splendid scenery, handsome dresses, good music, burlesque of more solid kind than usual, and, it must be added, the humours of a well-known comedian, who is the mainstay of the house. Covent

Garden and Drury Lane, when not engaged with the Italian opera, are given over to the spectacular drama, the vast size of the houses requiring that the eye should be entertained more than the ear. This leaves about twelve theatres of the first class for the drama proper. At only one of these is tragedy given—viz., the Lyceum. There are besides the Holborn and New Royalty,—theatres that seem to be opened only occasionally. In addition, there are what may be called the People's theatres: the Standard, Surrey, Alfred, Victoria, Britannia, Grecian, New East London, New Pavilion, Oriental, Elephant and Castle. There is also a small theatre at King's Cross, and the Gallery of Illustration, where operettas and comediettas are given. At the Alhambra there is perhaps the most sumptuous display of all in the matter of dresses, decorations, music, and auxiliaries, and its performances are of the same class as those at the Gaiété at Paris. This makes a total of about thirty-three theatres. A new one at the Regent's Park is just completed. On an average, however, not more than twenty are open all the year round. Twenty theatres is not a very large proportion for such a vast population as that of London.

MOST of the great actors and actresses seem to have taken their position in London by a surprise. One brilliant night of tumultuous delight and wonder,

and they awoke the next morning famous. Perhaps there is no such awakening to be compared with the histrionic one, for there is the change from obscurity, and the straits of poverty, to fame, wealth, and rank, all effected within a few hours. Garrick, Mrs. Siddons,

and Edmund Kean, all enjoyed this delicious sensation. Kemble's was only a "success of esteem," and, like many other good actors, he had to gain his way to position rather slowly.

Here is a copy of the play-bill announcing Garrick's appearance:—

*October 19th, 1741.*

### GOODMAN'S FIELDS.

At the late Theatre, in Goodman's-fields, this day, will be performed a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music, divided into Two Parts.

Tickets at three, two, and one Shilling.

Places for the Boxes to be taken at the Fleece Tavern, next the Theatre.

N. B. Between the two parts of the Concert, will be presented, an Historical Play, called

#### THE LIFE AND DEATH OF

#### KING RICHARD THE THIRD.

Containing the distress of K. Henry VI.

The artful acquisition of the Crown  
by King Richard.

The murder of young King Edward V.  
and his brother in the Tower.

The landing of the Earl of Richmond; and the death of King Richard in the memorable battle of Bosworth-field, being the last that was fought between the houses of York and Lancaster.

With many other true Historical passages.

The part of King Richard by a Gentleman (who never appeared on any Stage).

King Henry by Mr. Giffard; Richmond, Mr. Marshall; Prince Edward by Miss Hippisley; Duke of York, Miss Naylor; Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Patterson; Duke of Norfolk, Mr. Blakes; Lord Stanley, Mr. Pagett; Oxford, Mr. Vaughan; Tressel, Mr. W. Giffard; Catesby, Mr. Marr; Ratcliff, Mr. Crofts; Blunt, Mr. Naylor; Tyrrel, Mr. Puttenham; Lord Mayor, Mr. Dunstall; The Queen, Mrs. Steel; Duchess of York, Mrs. Yates;

And the part of Lady Anne

By Mrs. GIFFARD.

With Entertainments of Dancing,  
By Mons. Fromet, Madam Duvalt,  
And the two Masters and  
Miss Granier.

To which will be added,  
A Ballad Opera of One Act, called  
THE VIRGIN UNMASK'D.

The part of Lucy by Miss Hippisley,  
Both of which will be performed gratis, by persons for their  
diversion.

The Concert will begin exactly at Six o'Clock.

Mrs. Siddons was on the stage | appearance is the following,  
before she was twelve years | which suggests Mr. Crummle's  
old. The earliest record of her | family arrangements :—

*Worcester, April 16th, 1767.*

Mr. KEMBLE'S Company of Comedians.

At the THEATRE at the KING'S HEAD, on Monday evening next,  
being the 20th of April instant, will be performed a CONCERT of  
MUSICK, to begin at exactly half-an-hour after six o'clock.  
Tickets to be had at the usual places. Between the parts of the  
Concert will be presented, *gratis*, a celebrated COMEDY, call'd

THE TEMPEST : OR THE INCHANTED ISLAND.

(*As altered from Shakspeare by Mr. Dryden and  
Sir W. D'Avenant.*)

With all the Scenery, Machinery, Musick, Monsters,  
and other

Decorations proper to the piece, entirely new.

*Alonzo* (Duke of Mantua) *Mr. Kemble.*

*Hyppolito* (a Youth who never saw a Woman) *Mr. Siddons.*

*Stephano* (Master of the Duke's Ship) *Mr. Kemble.*

*Amphitrite* by *Mrs. Kemble.*

*Ariel* (the Chief Spirit) by *Miss Kemble.*

And *Milcha* by *Miss F. Kemble.*

The performances will open with a Representation of a Tem-  
pestuous Sea (in perpetual agitation) and Storm, in which the  
Usurper's Ship is Wrecked : the Wreck ends with a Beautiful  
Shower of Fire.—And the whole to conclude with a CALM  
SEA, on which appears Neptune, Poetick God of the Ocean,  
and his Royal Consort Amphitrite, in a Chariot drawn by Sea-  
horses, accompanied with Mermaids, Tritons, &c.

In both these bills it will be seen that the pieces are announced to be given gratis, which was a ruse to escape the penalties of the law.

The following is the announcement of Mrs. Siddons' first appearance at Drury Lane :—

### DRURY LANE.

(Not acted these Two Years.)

By his Majesty's Company, at the Theatre Royal, in Drury Lane, this day will be performed,

### THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shylock, Mr. King ; Antonio, Mr. Reddish ; Gratiano, Mr. Dodd.

Lorenzo (with songs) Mr. Vernon ; Duke, Mr. Branby.

Launcelot (first time) Mr. Parsons. Gobbo, Mr. Waldron.

Salanio, Mr. Fawcett. Salarino, Mr. FARREN.

Tubal, Mr. Messink. Bassanio, Mr. Bensley.

Jessica (with a song) Miss Tarratt. Nerissa, Mrs. Davies.

Portia by a YOUNG LADY (being her first appearance).

It will be seen that, as in Garrick's case, the name of the *débutante* was not given.

### KEAN'S END.

MR. PROCTER'S account of Kean's last appearance is truly dramatic :—

“There was no rehearsal, nor any arrangement as to the mode of play ; but when the son arrived at the theatre in the evening, he was told that his father desired to see him. He went accordingly to his dressing-room, and found him shivering and exceedingly weak. ‘I am very ill,’ he said ; ‘I am afraid I shall not be able to act.’ The actors who were present cheered him up ; but to provide against the worst a servant was desired to air a dress (such as *Othello* wears), in order that Mr. Warde

might take up the part, in case Kean should actually break down before the conclusion. The play commenced. After the first scene, Kean observed, ‘Charles is getting on to-night ; he's acting very well ; I suppose that's because he is acting with me.’ He himself was very feeble. He was, however, persuaded to proceed, and brandy and water was administered to him as usual. By this help he went on pretty well until the commencement of the third act ; but before the drop-curtain rose, he said to his son, ‘Mind, Charles, that you keep before me ; don't get behind me in this act. I don't know that I shall be able to kneel ; but if I do, be sure that you lift me up.’ Still, he pursued his way without faltering. He went off with *Desdemona*, and no one observed any change. But, on

entering again, when he says, 'What, false to *me*, &c.' he was scarcely able to walk across the stage. He held up, however, until the celebrated 'Farewell,' which he uttered with all his former pathos; but on concluding it, after making one or two steps towards his son (who took care to be near him), and attempting the speech, 'Villain, be sure, &c.' his head sank on his son's shoulder, and the tragedian's acting was at an end. He was able to groan out a few words in Charles's ear, 'I am dying—speak to them for me;' after which (the audience refusing in kindness to hear any apology) he was borne from the stage. His son, assisted by other persons, carried him to his dressing-room, and laid him on the sofa. He was as cold as ice; his pulse was scarcely perceptible, and he was unconscious of all that was going on around him. In this state he remained some time, when the remedies which were applied having restored him to his senses, he was taken to the Wrekin tavern, near the theatre, and the surgeons were sent for."

After a week's stay he was removed to Richmond, when he rallied a little, and was soon enabled to go out in a carriage. But the weather was cold, and he fancied that this airing gave him his death-blow. On the 15th of May he died. A short time before his death, during an interval of serious reflection, he wrote a penitential and affectionate letter to his wife, entreating her forgiveness and oblite-

ration of the past. "If I have erred," he said, "it was my head and not my heart, and most severely have I suffered for it. Come home, *forget and forgive.*" The letter produced the desired effect. Mrs. Kean answered this appeal by proceeding at once to Richmond. She saw her husband once more after seven years of estrangement, and the most perfect reconciliation followed.

### GARRICK'S PRACTICAL JOKING.

"DR. MONSEY once had occasion to accompany him and Mr. Windham of Norfolk, father of the late Mr. Windham the statesman, into the city. On their return, Garrick suddenly left them at the top of Ludgate Hill, and walking into the middle of the street, looked upwards, and repeated several times to himself, "I never saw two before." The strange appearance of a man in this situation talking to himself, naturally attracted some persons towards him, more followed, and at length a great crowd was collected round him. Several persons asked him what he saw. He made no answer, but repeated the same words. A man then observed that the gentleman must see two storks, as they are rarely if ever seen in pairs. This observation contented the multitude, till another said, "Well, but who sees one besides the gentleman?" Monsey, for fear of getting into a scrape, moved off, lest he should be taken for a

confederate to make people fools; but Mr. Windham, who like his son, was a good boxer, determined to witness the end of this whimsical freak. Garrick affected an insane stare, cast his eyes around the multitude, and afterwards declared that from the various expressions in the faces of the people, and their gestures, he had derived hints that served him in his profession.

Another time, when Garrick was with Monsey, at the joyful sound of twelve at noon, a great many boys poured out of school. Garrick selected one whom he accused of having treated another cruelly who stood near him. The boy declared that he had not been ill-treated; and Garrick then scolded the other still more, affecting to think how little he deserved the generosity of the boy who sought to excuse him by a falsehood. The boys were left in a state of consternation by Garrick's terrific demeanour and piercing eye; and he told Monsey that he derived much advantage from observing their various emotions.

While he was walking with Monsey on another occasion, he saw a ticket-porter going before them at a brisk pace, and humming a tune. They were then at old Somerset House. "I'll get a crowd around that man," said Garrick, "before he reaches Temple Bar." He then advanced before the man, turned his head, and gave him a piercing look. The man's gaiety was checked in a moment, he kept his eye on Garrick, who stopped at an apple-stall till the man came

near, then gave him another penetrating glance, and went immediately on. The man began to look if there were anything strange about him that attracted the gentleman's notice, and, as Garrick repeated the same expedient, turned himself in all directions, and pulled off his wig, to see if anything ridiculous was attached to him. By this time, the restless anxiety of the man excited the notice of the passengers, and Garrick effected his purpose of gathering a crowd round the porter before he reached Temple Bar.

Dr. Monsey said that he once was in danger of receiving a severe blow in consequence of one of Garrick's vagaries of a similar kind. They had dined at Garrick's house in Southampton Street, Covent Garden, and had taken a boat in order to go in the evening to Vauxhall. A smart-looking young waterman stood on the strand at Hungerford Stairs. As soon as they were seated in their boat, Garrick addressed the young waterman in the following manner: "Are you not ashamed to dress so smart, and appear so gay, when you know that your poor mother is in great distress, and you have not the heart to allow her more than three-pence a week?" The young man turned his head to see if anybody was near to whom the words might apply, and, seeing none, he took up a brickbat and threw it very near Garrick's boat, and continued to aim stones at him. Garrick's boatman pulled hard to get out of the way of this

missile hostility, or, Monseysaid, they might have otherwise suffered a serious injury.

Garrick peculiarly excelled in relating a humorous story. To one in particular, though of a trifling nature, I am told he gave irresistible effect. A man named Jones had undertaken to eat a bushel of beans, with a proportionable quantity of bacon. A vast crowd assembled before the front of a public house at Kensington Gravel-pits, and Garrick happened to be present. The crowd were there a long time before the man appeared, and he came forward without his coat, and his shirt sleeves tied with red ribbons. He was well received, and a large dish of boiled beans with a huge lump of bacon was placed before him; he began to eat with vigour, but at length was so slow in his progress that the people became impatient. He suddenly arose, ran into the house, and escaped through a back door. The mob then broke every window in the house, tore up all the benches, and severely ill-treated the landlord and his wife. Garrick's imitation of the cries of the mob before the man appeared; the continual noise of "Jones," and "Beans," to bring him forward; his imitation of the man, and description of the whole event, were exquisitely diverting."

#### FREE ADMISSION.

AN elephant was brought to Dublin, and as it was the only one that had ever been seen in

Ireland, the proprietor charged a crown for the sight. Tetherington, a well-known joker, who wanted to see, but was not inclined to pay, hastily entered the place, exclaiming in a hurry, "Where's your elephant? What! is that him? Turn him about: Lord, what a smell! —I can't stay any longer?" and, holding his nose while he uttered this complaint, he as hastily left the place as he had entered, and the keeper was afraid to stop him and demand payment, lest he should bring a disgrace upon the animal, and lessen its attraction. If this story had reached London before Tetherington, he might have been deemed, in the words of Pope upon Gay, "in wit a man," rather than "in simplicity a child."

#### DOGS ON THE STAGE.

A CHARACTERISTIC story is told of Cumberland, who, a veteran dramatist, was reading one of his comedies in the green-room at Covent Garden. He had arrived at an interesting passage, when suddenly a din of scampering and yelpings was heard, and a number of animals came rushing past the door in great confusion. The indignant dramatist asked what all this meant, and was told that a pack of hounds were kept under the stage for some spectacular hunting piece then in preparation, and that, scenting the workmen's dinners which had been carried by, they had all broken out in full cry and

full pursuit ! The veteran flung down his play in disgust at the desecration.

#### SUBJECT FOR A PICTURE.

THERE is a little scene described by Boswell, which would make an excellent subject for Mr. Frith or Mr. Ward.

“ I met him (Johnson) at Drury Lane play-house in the evening. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at Mrs. Abington’s request, had promised to bring a body of wits to her benefit, and having secured forty places in the front boxes, had done me the honour to put me in the group. Johnson sat on the seat directly behind me, and as he could neither see nor hear at such a distance from the stage, he was wrapped up in grave abstraction, and seemed quite in a cloud amidst all the sunshine of glitter and gaiety. I wondered at his patience in sitting out a play of five acts, and a farce of two.”

Such a picture would be highly dramatic—the gaiety of the scene—the laughing, intelligent faces of the wits—the rich dresses under the lights—all contrasted with the face of the fine old man lost in abstraction, and bereft of the two senses necessary to the enjoyments of a theatre.

#### DRAMATIC PARALYSIS.

WHEN news of Mrs. Pritchard’s death was brought to Garrick, he exclaimed, “ Barry and I still remain, but tragedy is dead on one side.”

#### LARGE RECEIPTS.

DURING eleven years from 1809 to 1821, it was calculated that a sum of a million sterling was taken at the doors of Covent Garden Theatre ! During the season 1810-11 one hundred thousand pounds were received, supposed to be the largest sum ever taken at any theatre during a similar time. The expenses averaged £300 a night.

#### SPEECHES FROM THE STAGE.

MANY theatrical *émeutes* have been caused by the clumsiness of the speaker sent out to announce some disappointment to the audience. There is a great art in communicating such intelligence. It should not be blurted out, and the proposed compensation should be skilfully compounded with the bad news, so that the disaster and the remedy should be communicated almost together. The editor was present one night in a large theatre in the provinces, when an Italian Opera was being played to a vast audience. The stage-manager came out and with much dismay announced that “ he regretted to say that Signor Mario, the leading tenor, was so hoarse that he—” He was not allowed to proceed further ; a storm of disappointment and fury broke out which raged for nearly an hour. A hearing was attempted to be gained, but in vain. The manager—the “ farmer ” of the voices

—all made their appearance, but would not be listened to. They had come to hear Mario, and would hear no one else. At last the great tenor himself appeared. There came a lull, and it then turned out that he had intended singing all through, but that all that had been sought was a little indulgence, as he had a cold. Kemble was notoriously awkward on such occasions, and, it was said, inflamed the O. P. riots by his ill-chosen phrases. One night he secured a hearing after enormous patience, and wishing to prove that the prices had been always high from time immemorial, began with an unlucky allusion :

“Ladies and Gentlemen,—Queen Anne—” A roar came from the galleries, “Queen Anne’s dead,” and not another word was listened to for the evening.

A night or two later he was eager to submit a proposal of appointing a committee formed of the most distinguished persons, and again led off with an unlucky allusion to “the Attorney-General,” then a most unpopular official associated with prosecutions. This stopped further speech for the night.

#### AMATEURS v. PROFESSIONALS.

THERE is an immeasurable distance in every calling between the amateur and the regular enrolled professional. The former

has often resented this distinction, and objects that it cannot hold where equal genius and equally long practice with the professional are forthcoming on his side. A clever amateur may have actually seen greater service than a regular, and yet is inferior. The truth is, it is enrolment in the ranks and sacrifice of self, and subjection to the inconveniences of discipline that makes the difference ; just as in the case of volunteers, who, for this reason, can never be put on a level with the line.

The difference in the case of actors has been often illustrated by some rather candid critics. One great actor declared that the best amateur actor he had seen, and he had seen many good ones, was not worth more than eighteen shillings a week ; *i.e.*, as a good serviceable player who would be useful, and bring money to the house. Another great actor was at some private theatricals where every one was exerting himself to win praise from such a judge. He, however, remained silent, and showed no emotion until a stage servant entered to announce that a carriage was at the door. The judge was at last pleased. “Ah,” he said, “that gentleman knows how to act?” It proved that it was a “super” hired from one of the theatres. This unconscious sarcasm was more cutting than the severest condemnation. Macklin always declared that the best private actor was not “half so good as Dibble Davies,” a third-rate actor of his time.

## MAL APROPOS.

GARRICK used to tell a good story of the days of his early triumphs. He had been brought by a friend to the house of Speaker Onslow, before whom it was desired that he should exhibit his powers. The Speaker did not care much for plays; and when he was told that the famous new actor had been induced "to stand up and favour the company with his great dagger scene in Macbeth," he merely bowed assent. Suddenly, during one of the grand pauses, the old man's voice was heard, "Pray, sir, was you at the turnpike meeting at Epsom on Thursday?"

## BUSINESS.

DOWTON was so persuaded of the strength of his tragic powers that he never rested until he had given a performance of "Shylock." His grand point was the having a number of *Few friends* to attend on Shylock in the Court scene, into whose arms he fell, when he was told that he must become a Christian. This produced universal merriment.

APROPOS  
SHAKESPEREAN.

AN ingenious writer in the *London Figaro* has thought of describing the various managers, actors, and theatres by quotations

from Shakespeare. Some of these are very happy. Thus:—

"F. B. CHATTERTON (Drury Lane). 'Give me a box.' Second Part of King Henry VI., act 4, sc. 7."

"H. L. BATEMAN (Lyceum). 'I have heard, sir, of such a man, who hath a daughter of most rare note.' Winter's Tale, act 4, sc. 2."

"B. WEBSTER (Princess's). 'A broken voice, and his whole function suiting—' Hamlet, act 2, sc. 2."

"THE ALHAMBRA. 'It is legs and thighs.' Twelfth Night, act 1, sc. 3."

"A. HARRIS (Covent Garden). [*Sometimes in Britain, sometimes in Italy.*] *Cymbeline* (Scene)."

"MISS ADA SWANBOROUGH (Strand). 'Her mother is the lady of the house.' Romeo and Juliet, act 1, sc. 5."

"LEVYING BOX-KEEPER'S FEES. 'Be clamorous and leap all civil bounds, Rather than make unprofitable returns.'"

These trifles are a fresh testimony to the depth of Shakespeare's gifts. No two lines could better describe that short-sighted rapaciousness of which the box-keeper nuisance is a specimen.

## GARRICK'S END.

GARRICK, a few hours before his death, became a little clouded in his faculties. He noticed that the room was full of strange figures gliding about, and in this half-waking state asked who these were. He was told they

were physicians, and, indeed, the first doctors in London had crowded to his bedside. The dying actor raised his head, and was heard to mutter—

“Another and another still succeeds,  
And the last fool is welcome as the  
former.”

### A COMPLAISANT MANAGER.

THE crowds of young ladies who figure in opera bouffe, as well as in what Dickens's old bard happily called “leg pieces,” has developed, especially in Paris, a new use for the stage, viz., the exhibition of personal charms. These being gifts of nature, and requiring neither “training” nor histrionic gifts of any kind, it was soon discovered that the advantages offered by the stage for the exhibition of such attractions was singularly valuable, and, by an odd inversion, the exhibitors, instead of receiving salaries, soon came to paying the manager substantial suns for the privilege of a place on his stage. A rather innocent patron of one of these damsels, ignorant of this custom, promised to use his influence with a manager to secure an engagement, and was surprised at the cordial and gracious way in which his proposals were accepted. “What salary?” he asked.—“Oh, that I would leave to you,” said the other.—“Let us say ten pounds a week,” said the manager. Delighted at this liberality, the patron was departing, when he was reminded that he had better

pay the first week's amount *in advance!*

### IRVING.

IT is not, perhaps, well known that Irving, the celebrated preacher, had at one time been a member of Ryder's Company at Kirkcaldy, and was passionately devoted to the stage. His strange gait, grotesque delivery, and general oddity caused so much derision that he abandoned the profession in disgust. These disadvantages were found to be great helps to his success in another profession.

### MILITARY “EPILOGUES.”

MILES ANDREWS, a well-known prologue and epilogue writer, had been appointed to a command in some Militia regiment, and was reviewing his corps. Some one asked a wit who was standing next him, which was the person in command—“That officer there,” was the reply, “with the *epilogues* on his shoulders.”

### DOCTORS DISAGREEING.

A PIECE, by a well-known popular author, was not long ago brought out at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, and it is amusing to read the contradictory opinions of the professed critics on its merits. Of the play itself, apart from the characters, one said, “that it was quite masterly in its construction, and a brilliant example of dramatic workmanship;” another, that it was merely “a clever piece of the ordinary sort.” Of the catastrophe

one considered it "a masterly finish;" while another looked on it as "a commonplace conclusion." But about a certain comic character and its interpretation there was a most amusing discrepancy. One held it to be "an excrescence," which the skill of the acting could not render amusing; another held that the actor "wanted geniality and colour;" another that, "as a piece of acting, it was altogether unsurpassed in its way." One declared that the player's "mastery of the dialect" was perfect; another, that the whole part was spoiled by the actor's ignorance of the local dialect. One said his playing was poor and weak; another, that it was marked with truth and vigour; a third, that it was amusing, though "too prolix."

Of a sharp old gentleman acted by a player of great reputation, it was pronounced that "it did not stand out" like the other elaborate personations by which the actor had made his name at that house. A second critic declared this performance to be "the main feature," full of "a consummate art," and "than which nothing more careful and finished has ever been seen *even* at this house!" While a third declared that "it left his reputation pretty much where it was." Finally, the dénouement being made to turn on the finding of a letter, it was remarked of this incident by one critic, that it was a device that "displayed a sort of peddling ingenuity;" while another declared, "the letter is the foundation and prop of

the story; and mark how craftily the author uses it!"

These contradictory opinions are taken from the leading authorities of the day.

"SHE STOOPS TO CON-  
QUER."

PERHAPS the best modern comedy of the English stage is Goldsmith's "She stoops to Conquer." This may be thought a sweeping assertion, for the names of other celebrated pieces, notably that of the "School for Scandal," will recur as more witty and brilliant. But most of these will be found to be imperfect in certain directions. Thus the wit in the early part of the "School for Scandal" is undramatic, and more adapted to the closet than the stage. In Goldsmith's comedy there is an atmosphere of pure natural humour; there are no good things introduced by "head and shoulders,"—everything is spontaneous. And this test may be applied, that we return from a well-acted representation in a vein of good humour and placid enjoyment. Young Marlow is one of the most original characters in the whole round of the stage, and will hold his own with any of Congreve's. It has been delicately discriminated by Mr. Forster. "In the transition from stammering modesty with Miss Hardcastle to easy familiarity with the supposed barmaid, the character does not lose its identity; for the over-assumption of

ease, and the ridiculous want of it, are perceived to have exactly the same origin. The nervousness is the same in the excess of bashfulness, as when it tries to rattle itself off by an excess of impudence." This analysis not only furnishes the actor with the true key of the character, but need not be disdained by our modern critics as a specimen of theatrical criticism.

#### A STIMULANT.

IN his latter days, Macklin, from the languor of age, found that he could not call up the violence of passion necessary to give Shylock with due impetuosity; and it is said, that when on the point of rushing on the stage, he used to call to the prompter, "Kick my shins! kick my shins!" hoping that the physical pain would supply what was wanting. This is quite characteristic of Macklin.

#### DISCREET IN HIS CUPS.

COOKE'S feeling towards Kemble was not so much professional jealousy as rage at the advantage which deliberate coolness and self-restraint gave his rival. Both drank deeply; but Cooke could not carry his liquor so discreetly, and was betrayed into those discreditable exhibitions to which the same quantity of liquor never provoked Kemble. Wewitzer, coming out of a public-house quite drunk, was met by Kemble, who was at that time his manager, and who was quite as far

gone. The latter did not lose his composure, and, with a tipsy air of reproof, raised his hand and shook his head solemnly, "Wewitzer, *this will never do.*"

This explains the feeling of the profession against the respectable and decorous Kembles.

#### GENIUS IN OBSCURITY.

A FRIEND of Munden's recollected seeing an actress walking up and down both sides of the street of a provincial town, and knocking at every door to deliver play-bills for her benefit. She was dressed in a red woollen cloak, such as used to be worn by servants. This was Mrs. Siddons, then a member of her father's strolling company.

#### ACTING OFF THE STAGE.

SOME of the methods by which great actors exhibited their talents in private society have been curious. Garrick, as is well known, was fond of giving his "rounds," as he called it, and would stand up in a mixed company with a chair, to simulate a father who had just dropped his child from a window. In Paris, he and Clairon, the actress, delighted a large party of wits and *beaux esprits* with alternate exhibitions of this kind. He was, however, seriously decomposed on one occasion, when a youth gravely rose and laid two lighted candles on the floor by way of foot-lights. Bannister would imitate water falling

gradually from a height until it splashed into the river. He would transform himself into a father on his death-bed about to disinherit his son. A napkin was put round his chin to give the idea of bed-clothes; his eyes became glazed, his lips clammy, and his cheeks ghastly pale. There were all the signs of approaching dissolution. He was raised up, a pen placed in his trembling fingers; he signed with a convulsive resolution, and fell back lifeless. This disagreeable exhibition once recalled too vividly to a Mr. Lovegrave, who was present, the recent death of his wife, and sent him off into a faint.

#### HOMAGE TO GENIUS.

MRS. SIDDONS had many compliments paid to her talents, and some of an unusual kind. The Bar of England, as well as that of Scotland, presented her with a testimonial. But it is probable that she was most pleased with the flattering homage paid to her by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, who directed that the plan of the Regent's Park should be altered, so that the view from her windows in Baker Street should not be interfered with. In these days it is difficult to conceive so graceful an act being done by any of the local authorities.

#### FAMILIAR!

A POPULAR dramatist, long

since dead, was taken, when a boy, to see Mr. and Mrs. Barry in *Othello*. At the close of the tragedy he was astonished to see a comic-looking personage put his head through a hole in the green curtain, and say facetiously to the audience, "Remember me to-morrow!" on which there followed a loud laugh. It turned out that this was Shuter, whose benefit was to take place on the following night.

#### HISTRIONIC DOGS.

THERE are some rather humiliating pages in the history of the London theatres, notably those associated with the triumphs of popular dogs, horses, &c.

"A subordinate but enterprising actor, of the name of Costello, collected, at the great fairs of Frankfort and Leipsic, a complete company of canine performers, and arriving with them in England, Wroughton, then manager of Sadler's Wells, engaged him and his wonderful troupe. They were fourteen in all, and, unlike those straggling dancing dogs still occasionally seen in the streets, they all acted, responsdently and conjointly, with a truth that appeared almost the effect of reason. The *star*, the real star of the company, was an actor named Moustache, and the piece produced, as a vehicle for their first appearance, was called *The Deserter*.

"As formerly all London flocked to Goodman's Fields to

see Garrick, so now the rage was to visit Spa Fields, to see Moustache and his coadjutors. The night I was first present at this performance, Sadler's Wells, in point of fashion, resembled the Opera House on a Saturday night, during the height of the season; princes, peers, puppies, and pickpockets, all crowding to see what Jack Churchill, with his accustomed propensity to punning, used to term the illustrious dog-stars.

"The curtain shortly afterwards rose. I will pass over the performance till the last scene, merely remarking that the actors of *Simpkin*, *Skirmish* and *Louisa* were so well dressed, and so much in earnest, that, in a slight degree, they actually preserved the interest of the story and the illusion of the scene. But Moustache, as the *Deserter*! I see him now, in his little uniform, military boots, with smart musket and helmet, cheering and inspiring his fellow-soldiers to follow him up scaling-ladders and storm the fort. The roars, barking, and confusion which resulted from this attack may be better imagined than described.

"At the moment, when the gallant assailants seemed secure of victory, a retreat was sounded, and Moustache and his adherents were seen receding from the repulse, rushing down the ladders, and then staggering towards the lamps in a state of panic and dismay.

"How was this grand military manœuvre so well managed? probably asks the reader. I will

tell him. These great performers having had no food since breakfast, and knowing that a fine, *hot supper*, unseen by the audience, was placed for them at the top of the fort, they naturally speeded towards it, all hope and exultation; when, just as they were about to commence operations, Costello and his assistants commenced theirs, and, by the smacking of whips and other threats, drove the terrified combatants back in disgrace.

"Wroughton frequently told me that he cleared upwards of seven thousand pounds by these four-legged Roscii.

"There was another dog performer that made even a greater reputation. Reynolds had written a spectacular piece for Drury Lane, entitled *The Caravan*.

"The introduction of real water on the stage, and of a dog to jump into it from a high rock, for the purpose of saving a child, were both incidents, at that time, so entirely unknown in theatrical exhibitions, that their very novelty rendered everybody, during the production of the piece, most sanguine as to its success; provided (for there is always one or more provisos on these occasions) that the two principal performers, the animal and the element, could be brought into action. Accordingly proposals and inquiries were soon set on foot; and being prosecuted 'with a little *industry*' (as one of the principal agents on this occasion invariably expressed himself), the objects of

their search were at length found,—the water was hired from old father Thames, and the dog of the proprietor of an *à la mode* beef shop.

“The water we found tractable and accommodating; but, during the first and second rehearsals, *Carlo* (for such was the name of our hero) sulked, and seemed, according to the technical phrase, inclined to ‘*play booty*.’ After several other successive trials, he would not jump; but at last, owing to the platform on which he stood being enclosed by two projecting scenes, and his attention being thus removed from the distractions of stage-lights, boards, *et cetera*, he immediately made the desired leap, and repeated it at least a dozen times, as much to his own as to our satisfaction. On the first representation of *The Caravan*, after his performance of this extraordinary feat, and after his triumphant *exit* with the supposed drowning child, the effect far exceeded our most sanguine expectations.

“After witnessing the first representation, I had not quitted the theatre above ten minutes, when Sheridan suddenly came into the green room, on purpose, as it was imagined, to wish the author joy.

“‘Where is he?’ was the first question, ‘where is my guardian angel?’

“‘The author has just retired,’ answered the prompter.

“‘Pooh,’ replied Sheridan, ‘I mean the dog; actor, author, and preserver of Drury Lane Theatre.’”

### GOSSIP ABOUT THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

A VOLUME might be filled with details concerning this famous comedy, which seems destined to enjoy a never-failing youth. It has been called the best comedy in the language; but what perhaps is the most remarkable fact connected with it is, that it should have been the work of a young man of six-and-twenty.

In his note-books were found many experiments, scraps of the dialogue pursued carelessly, in the hopes of some lively points or epigrams turning up. From these it is plain that he had two successive plans for the piece—one based on the machinery of the “Scandalous College,” another on the conjugal differences of ‘The Teazles.’ It, no doubt, occurred to him that the first was too weak, and the second too heavy a motive to supply interest for a comedy; later, he fused the two together, which has given a disjointed and artificial air to the piece.

He was long before he could satisfy himself with the names of the characters. His first list ran—

Sir Roland Harpur.

— Plausible.

Capt. Harry Plausible.

Freeman.

Old Teazole. (*Left off trade.*)

Mrs. Teazole.

Maria.

His intention was, as appears from his introductory speech, to

give Old Teazle the Christian name of Solomon. Sheridan was, indeed, most fastidiously changeful in his names. The present Charles Surface was at first Clerimont, then Florival, then Captain Harry Plausible, then Harry Pliant or Pliable, then Young Harrier, and then Frank; while his elder brother was successively Plausible, Pliable, Young Pliant, Tom, and, lastly, Joseph Surface. Trip was originally called Spunge; the name of Snake was, in the earlier sketch, Spatter; and, even after the union of the two plots into one, all the business of the opening scene with Lady Sneerwell, at present transacted by Snake, was given to a character afterwards wholly omitted, Miss Verjuice.

Here are some notes for the Scandal scenes:—

“THE SLANDERERS.

“*A Pump-Room Scene.*

“Friendly caution to the newspapers.

“It is whispered—

“She is a constant attendant at church, and very frequently takes Dr. M'Brawn home with her.

“Mr. Worthy is very good to the girl; for my part, I dare swear he has no ill intention.

“What! Major Wesley's Miss Montague?

“Lud, ma'am, the match is certainly broke—no creature knows the cause;—some say a flaw in the lady's character, and others in the gentleman's fortune.

“To be sure they do say—

“I hate to repeat what I hear,

“She was inclined to be a little too plump before she went.

“The most intrepid blush;—I've known her complexion stand fire for an hour together.

“‘She had twins,—how ill-natured! As I hoped to be saved, ma'am, she had but one! and that a little starved brat not worth mentioning.

“*Spat.* O Lud, ma'am, I'll undertake to ruin the character of the primmest prude in London with half as much. Ha! ha! Did your ladyship never hear how poor Miss Shepherd lost her lover and her character last summer at Scarborough? This was the whole of it. One evening at Lady ——'s the conversation happened to turn on the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in England. ‘I have known instances,’ says Miss ——, ‘for last spring a friend of mine, Miss Shepherd of Ramsgate, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins.’ ‘What!’ cries the old deaf-dwager, Lady Bowlwell, ‘has Miss Shepherd of Ramsgate been brought to-bed of twins?’ This mistake, as you may suppose, set the company a-laughing. However, the next day, Miss Verjuice Amarilla Lonely, who had been of the party, talking of Lady Bowlwell's deafness, began to tell what had happened; but, unluckily, forgetting to say a word of the sheep, it was understood by the company, and, in every circle, many believed, that Miss Shepherd of Ramsgate had actually been brought to-bed of a fine boy and girl; and, in less than a fortnight, there were

people who could name the father, and the farm-house where the babes were put out to nurse.

“*Lady S.* Ha! ha! well, for a stroke of luck, it was a very good one. I suppose you find no difficulty in spreading the report on the censorious Miss ——?”

“*Spat.* None in the world,— she has always been so prudent and reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at the bottom.

“*Lady S.* Yes, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prude as a fever to those of the strongest constitutions; but there is a sort of sickly reputation that outlives hundreds of the robuster character of a prude.”

Another fault that has been found with this great piece is, that every character, with the exception of Old Rowley, talks wit. Even Trip, the servant, is full of sparkling conceits; but it may be remarked that these rarely tell with an audience who seems to feel the incongruity, being, as it were, surprised to hear such language coming from the lips of a servant. But this may be the fault of the modern acting of comedy, which gives too much intention and emphasis to such good things.

Many of these bits of wit, being found unsuited for the position where they first occurred to the author, are noted in the margin to be carried forward, and fitted in at some more appropriate place.

The fashion in which he po-

lished and trimmed some of his happy thoughts is well known, but no better specimen could be given than the following. The idea occurred to him of likening the responsibility of the circulators of scandal to that of the indorsers of forged bills. He began with this attempt:—

“People who utter a tale of scandal, knowing it to be forged, deserve the pillory more than for a forged bank-note. They can’t pass the lie without putting their names on the back of it. You say no person has a right to come on you, because you did not invent it; but you should know that, if the drawer of the lie is out of the way, the injured party has a right to come on any of the indorsers.”

By the time we get to the close of this rather roundabout explanation the liveliness of the comparison has evaporated. How superior its present shape.

“Yes, madam, I would have law-merchant for them too, and in all cases of slander currency, wherever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.”

Even in this shape the two technical words “law-merchant” and “slander currency” seem a little superfluous, and take off from the effect.

On the first night of performance, Merry, the well-known Della Cruscan, was listening rather impatiently to the interchange of wit between the characters in the first scene, and was heard to exclaim, “I wish the characters would *leave*

off talking, and let the play begin."

"Of theatrical occurrences in this year," says Reynolds, "I can only recollect that I saw Barry and Foote buried in the cloisters; and that on the first night of the 'School for Scandal,' returning from Lincoln's Inn about nine o'clock, and passing through the pit passage from Vinegar Yard to Brydges Street, I heard such a tremendous noise over my head, that, fearing the theatre was proceeding to fall about it, I ran for my life; but found the next morning that the noise did not arise from the falling of the house, but from the falling of the screen in the fourth act, so violent and so tumultuous were the applause and laughter.

#### EXAGGERATED PRAISE.

IN 1777 Lord Villiers opened a new theatre near Henley-on-Thames, and gave "The Provoked Husband," with a little French after-piece. Lord Malden was *Count Basset*, the host himself *Lord Townly*, and the other characters were filled by Mr. Miles, Mr. Turge, the Hon. Mr. Onslow, and many more. A prologue was spoken by Lord Villiers, and it is characteristic to find how at all times these introductions have been couched in the same strain of affected humility and pretended trepidation:—

Garrick himself in such a situation,  
Though sure to please, might feel some  
palpitation.  
Our anxious breasts no such presumption  
cheers,—  
Light are our hopes, but weighty are  
our fears."

Who has not heard these well-meant platitudes, even to "the case is altered quite"? and we almost expect that the appeal to "kind friends" will follow, with an entreaty to "give but your applause." The reporters were admitted, and dealt not merely indulgently, but even rapturously, with these noble efforts. The Court newsman then dared not be free or irreverent with the distinguished. *Lord Townly* was "admirable both as to voice, figure, action, and elocution,—easy, animated, and graceful; and perhaps the character never appeared to more advantage in the hands of any performer, except Mr. Barry." One fault, indeed, might be found: "he was not enough displeased at his lady's conduct." But this is explained by an elegant compliment to the noble hostess, "who never gives him reason to practise it; and without practice it was impossible to be feigned, when the enchanting Miss Hodges was smiling before his eyes." Mr. Turge was far superior to either Yates or Macklin, and "it would be for the advantage of the London managers if they engaged him at once." It was a pity that Lord Malden, who played *Count Basset*, was not "less delicate in his principles," as it required a more unprincipled person to do justice to

"But now, alas! the case is altered quite,  
When such an audience opens on the  
sight;

the character. *Squire Richard* was so good, that it almost seemed as though Lord Villiers had engaged one of his own rustics to do the part. Miss Hodges was "incomparable . . . ; it is but common justice to say that she performed her part in a style far superior to anything we have ever seen in the theatres. The beauty of her face, the melody of her voice, the elegance of her person, her eyes amazingly expressive, her easy yet graceful deportment, were such as have never been united in any female who was an actress by profession." Miss Harvey seemed to show her stage children "such truly maternal affection, as makes one regret she had none of her own."

The secret of all this contentment is presently disclosed. "After the play Lord Villiers entertained the company *with a most elegant and sumptuous supper* and a ball. There was a profusion of the choicest wines and most exquisite viands; and the most polite attention was paid *to every person present*." This last sentence explains the generous enthusiasm of the reporters.

#### IGNORING THE AUTHOR.

WHEN a comedy of Reynolds, called "The Will," was in rehearsal at Drury Lane, an amusing illustration of professional character was exhibited. A discussion arose as to the meaning of "School's up!" a phrase in the part of the heroine. Mrs. Jordan; King, Pal-

mer, Wroughton, Suett, and others joined, one contending that it was meant as a comic, another as a serious phrase. It was warmly debated; and yet the author of the piece was standing by, and no one condescended to ask *him!*

#### GEORGE THE SECOND AT THE PLAY.

"His Majesty once arriving at the theatre some minutes after his time, the arbitrary audience (who will rarely allow even a regal actor to keep the stage business waiting) received him with some very hasty rude marks of their disapprobation. The King, taken by surprise for a moment, expressed both chagrin and embarrassment; but, with a prompt recollection, he skilfully converted all their anger into applause. He drew forth his watch, and having pointed to the hand, and shown it to the lord-in-waiting, he advanced to the front of the box, and directing the attention of the audience to his proceedings, he deliberately beat the misleading time-keeper against the box—thus proving he was a great actor, and deserving of the full houses he always brought.

"The play commenced and concluded with its usual success; and no other unusual circumstance occurred until the middle of the after-piece, where a *Centaaur* was introduced; who having to draw a bow, and therewith shoot a formidable adversary, through some confusion, erring in his aim, the arrow entered

the royal box, and grazed the person of the King. The audience rose in indignation against the perpetrator of this atrocious attempt, and seemed preparing to revenge the outrage; when, at that moment, the whole *fore-part* of the *Centaur* fell on its face among the lamps, in consequence of the carpenter, who played the *posterior*, rushing from his concealment with the most trembling humility, in order to assure his Majesty, and all present, that he was no party in this *treasonable* transaction.

"At these words arose and advanced 'the *very head and front* of the offence,' who, likewise endeavouring to exculpate himself, energetically addressed the audience. The noisy discussion, and the ridiculous criminations and vindications which ensued between these two grotesque, half-dressed, *half-human* beings, so amply rewarded George the Second and the spectators for the previous alarm, that loud and involuntary shouts of laughter from every part of the house acknowledged that the *Centaur's head and tail* were incomparably the most amusing performers of the evening."

### HUMBUG.

REYNOLDS, the lively dramatist, once wrote a prologue on the subject of "humbug." The few following lines will display the character:—

"Yet coffins will *take in* the coffin-maker,  
And death, at last, *humbugs* the undertaker."

Then, after other instances of the supremacy of humbug, it proceeded thus:—

"Who can alone great *humbug's* power  
defy,  
You, who are born to conquer, or to die?  
'Twas English liberty made despots  
feel!  
'Twas English valour crushed the proud  
Bastile!"

This, naturally, was expected to have produced the loud applause which regularly accompanies these trumpery trap-claps, and then it was intended the speaker of the prologue should have advanced to the lamps, and added—

"Ha, ha!—you're caught, and not by  
something new!  
Go!—*humbug* others, as I've *humbugg'd*  
you!"

### THE ELDER MATHEWS.

"THE first time I ever saw Mathews," says Mr. Raikes, "was at my own house at dinner. Pope, the actor, had been drawing my poor wife's picture in crayons, for which he had a peculiar talent. He brought him to dine with me; and his imitations of Kemble, Munden, Bannister, Quick, &c., were *inimitable*. Pope, in the course of conversation, alluded to some old gentleman in the country, who was so madly attached to the society of Mathews that, whenever he came to town, he went straight to his house, and if he did not find him at home, would trace him, and follow him wherever he might happen to be. This did not excite much attention; but at about nine

o'clock we all heard a tremendous rap at the street door, and my servant came in to say that a gentleman was in the hall, who insisted on speaking with Mr. Mathews. The latter appeared very much disconcerted, made many apologies for the intrusion, and said that he would get rid of him instantly, as he doubtless must be the individual who so frequently annoyed him.

"As soon as he had retired, we heard a very noisy dialogue in the hall, between Mathews and his friend, who insisted on coming in and joining the party, while the other as urgently insisted on his retreat. At length the door opened, and in walked a most extraordinary figure, who sat down in Mathews's place, filled himself a tumbler of claret, which he pronounced to be execrable, and began in the most impudent manner to claim acquaintance with all the party, and say the most ridiculous things to every one. We were all, for the moment, thrown off our guard; but we soon detected our versatile companion, who had really not taken three minutes to tie up his nose with a string, put on a wig, and otherwise so metamorphose himself that it was almost impossible to recognise him. Of that party were also Tom Sheridan, C. Calvert, and R. Calvert, all of whom, alas! are now numbered with the dead.

"Mathews had one peculiarly good quality, which may rather be called good sense, and formed a contrast to many of his contemporaries. He was always

amiable and obliging in company, and ready to enliven a party with his talents; whereas I have seen many others who refuse every proposal to assist hilarity, lest it should be supposed they were asked merely for that purpose."

#### LITERAL.

ONCE, when John Kemble played *Hamlet* in the country, the gentleman who enacted *Guildestern* was, or imagined himself to be, a capital musician. *Hamlet* asks him, "Will you play upon this pipe?"—"My lord, I cannot."—"I pray you."—"Believe me, I cannot."—"I do beseech you."—"Well, if your lordship insists on it, I shall do as well as I can;" and, to the confusion of *Hamlet*, and the great amusement of the audience, he played "God save the King."

#### A RUSE.

THE excitement and crush during Garrick's last performances are now matters of theatrical history. That most entertaining of memoir-writers, Reynolds, who was present on the last night, relates an amusing incident:—

"Though a side box, close to where we sat, was completely filled, we beheld the door burst open, and an Irish gentleman attempt to make entry, *vi et armis*. 'Shut the door, box-keeper!' loudly cried some of the party. 'There's room, by the pow'rs!' cried the Irishman, and

persisted in advancing. On this, a gentleman on the second row rose, and exclaimed, 'Turn out that blackguard!' 'Oh, and is that your mode, honey?' coolly retorted the Irishman; 'come, come out, my dear, and give me satisfaction, or I'll pull your nose, faith, you coward, and *skillaly* you through the lobby!'

"This public insult left the tenant in possession no alternative; so he rushed out to accept the challenge; when, to the pit's general amusement, the Irishman jumped into his place, and having deliberately seated and adjusted himself, he turned round, and cried, '*I'll talk to you after the play is over.*'"

#### THEATRICAL CRITICISM.

"A NEW COMEDY, written by one of my particular friends," says Reynolds, "was put into rehearsal. On the very evening that it was to be produced, meeting great a journalist, as he was going out of town, and asking him to speak good-naturedly of my friend's play, he kindly told me that I might myself write the theatrical criticism for the following morning's newspaper, but to be sure to confine my praise within rational bounds.

"Speeding post haste, with this good news, to my friend, the author, he quietly heard my communication, and then replied, 'Pooh!—*you* write the account of my piece? I shall write it myself!'

"He was as good as his word; and sending his precious *mor-*

*ceau* to the printer in my name, it was, according to the previous directions of the great critic and editor, inserted verbatim. The following morning, I was not a little astonished when I read, 'That the four first acts of the comedy of the previous evening were not inferior, in point of plot, incident, language, and character, to the greatest efforts of Beaumont and Fletcher, and other old dramatists;' and 'that the *last act* might probably be considered one of the *finest* on the stage.'

"Meeting the friendly editor, on his return to town, he exclaimed, 'You *pitched it too strong*—I shall never trust you again!'"

#### SCENE AT THE THEATRICAL FUND DINNER.

"AT the anniversary of the Theatrical Fund, we passed a most agreeable day," says Mr. Reynolds. "The singing of Johnstone and Incedon, the vivacious anecdotes related by Lewis and Quick, and the strong interest excited by the presence of the venerable founder, Mr. Hull, rendered the whole scene peculiarly amusing and gratifying.

"But the principal comedian on the occasion (though perfectly unconscious of the fact) was one of the visitors, an elderly gentleman, to whom everybody present bore great goodwill; not only on account of his private worth and urbane manners, but for the rich entertainment he afforded to them all, by the extreme ingenuousness

and simplicity he so humorously manifested, in allowing himself to be persuaded into a *tenfold* repetition of the same story.

“The mode by which these theatrical *hoaxers* (on this day) effected their purpose was most ingenious. At the end of narrative the first, they all roared and *encored* it; then, when the repetition was terminated, some member would affect not to understand the leading circumstance, and therefore humbly begged to hear it again. This request being immediately granted by this gentleman of the true old school, the story was repeated for the *third* time with particular precision; but, at the close, the member with the *affectedly* defective understanding would continue to stare with much stupidity, and at last impatiently confess that he could not comprehend the joke.

“Then, Lewis and other wags would privately inform our amusing visitor that he had marred his effects the last time by not pressing a material point; on which, dwelling on every word with a clearness and slowness of utterance, as if he had intended to make each word a resting-place for life, he proceeded to gratify their love of fun and laugh for the *fourth* time.

“But still the dull *defective* member being unable to take the joke, he was called a thick, *potato-headed* Irishman; when, manifesting much indignation at this formidable epithet, a violent discussion ensued relative to the story's *real* meaning, when evi-

dent signs of a violent contest rapidly arising, in the hope of restoring peace, the kind, well-meaning old gentleman would advance and again repeat his enigmatical tale.

“During the three years that I attended this anniversary, the above-mentioned circumstance regularly proved the grand star of the evening's amusement. On one of these occasions, after another angry altercation relative to the ‘real meaning’ of the story, Munden and Simmons fought on the table, with such admirable assumption of the appearance of reality, that when, with the aid of a little paint, the latter, seemingly covered with blood and bruises, and more than half in the arms of death, was laid prostrate among the plates and decanters, the afflicted innocent cause of the whole confusion, once more deceived, was induced to approach Simmons, and impressively whisper into his ear the miraculous story, as the only resuscitating remedy.

“Another time, when there appeared to be not the smallest hope of an additional repetition, the master of the coffee-house, entering, informed us that the Persian Ambassador was below; and, desirous to see one of the choicest specimens of English theatrical society, he would condescend to honour us with his presence. This request receiving the unanimous consent of the room, the Ambassador, in full costume, was immediately introduced, followed by his secretary and interpreter; and

though the old gentleman had sat opposite to his *Excellency*, (Liston) during the whole of dinner, he never recognized him in his disguise, but was among the foremost in expressing the gratification he received from the honour of his presence.

"We all remained standing and bowing; the hero of the day mixing sherbet, calling for cigars, and proving he well understood the etiquette of eastern courts. His *Excellency* noticing this attention in a marked manner, all was very satisfactory; but when the *grand desired* moment arrived—when the interpreter signified that it was his *Excellency's* pleasure to be gratified by hearing the *far-famed humorous story*—what person that was present can forget the glee, the ecstasy, with which our accommodating visitor fired off his *tenth evening* gun? The roar was tremendous, and the Ambassador and train left the room apparently breathless with delight. Lewis proposed our comic hero's health, with three times three; and, during the clamour, *his disrobed Excellency* returned, and imperceptibly taking his seat, the scene concluded with all of us congratulating the delighted visitor on his having rendered the story thus effective; 'and to a person so particularly ignorant of our language,' added Liston.

"'Ay, Mr. Liston,' was the reply, 'and to a person so particularly ugly!'

"As a proof of the paramount power of actors in the art of hoaxing, allow me to add, that

this amiable old gentleman on general topics of conversation always displayed great good sense; certainly his extreme good nature, and willingness to oblige, might have aided the manœuvres of his persevering assailants, but I doubt whether even the oldest and most experienced member of the cricket club could singly have stood against such a skilful combination of waggery."

### TRUE REALISM!

THERE is an old theatre in Dublin—perhaps the oldest in the kingdom—which has lately been converted into a sort of factory. Up to a recent period it exhibited some tawdry but faded remains of the decorations of the last century. Its convenient proximity to the river Liffey suggested to its late manager a novel attraction, namely, the representation of the "Colleen Bawn," then in the height of its popularity, with "real water effects." The editor of this little collection happened to be present, and a more entertaining evening could not be conceived. Some one, whom we shall call Mr. J. W. Hartigan, was the hero of the night, which in some sense he deserved to be, as it was the depth of winter—frost and snow being abroad. He was vastly popular, and through the night received much personal encouragement in the way of familiar exhortations. It must be said he deserved his popularity by his untiring ex-

ertions in the way of dancing, flourishing sticks, love-making, &c., and in this way seemed to prepare himself for the great performance of the night.

The scene disclosed was the "Water Cave,"—one not made up with any such shifts as lengths of transparent, blue gauze, but disposed on true principles of realism. From a high Box it could be seen that a deep tank or cistern had been let into the stage, but imperfectly concealed by a couple of canvas banks. The tank was certainly not more than six or seven feet long, and thus presented great difficulties in the way of manœuvring a boat. When the villainous Danny was preparing for his deed of blood, it was pleasant to see him appear in a vessel scarcely bigger than a washing-tub, but of greater depth, into which he succeeded in decoying the fair Eily, red cloak and all, whose trepidation at embarking seemed more than justifiable. For, to add to the insecurity of the navigation, the intended murderer was perfectly drunk, as was conspicuous to the audience, who, with loud voices, warned the maid not to trust herself to such a companion—an interference which he much resented. The result anticipated came about, and the next moment the boat turned over completely, giving Eily and her companion a complete ducking; but happily the river at this part was not more than four or five feet deep. They got to land with teeth chattering. But the absurdity was to come. For in

the full view of the audience they had been seen to scramble out of the tank; yet here was Myles coming to rescue her! It must be said that he redeemed the failure by a gallant and satisfactory plunge that sent the water splashing to the roof, and when actually submerged, performed feats of natation, rollings, &c., his skill being only bounded by the limited capacity of the tank. The dramatic proprieties of course required that he should *rescue* something, and the still-dripping Eily was drawn up from somewhere behind the tank. It was not surprising to learn later that this heroic performer was laid up, it was said, "with the rheumatics."

#### A HAUGHTY HOST.

AT some private theatricals given at Blenheim by the Duke of Marlborough, everything was arranged in the most sumptuous style. At the end of the second act, refreshments were served; but the Duke noticed with some annoyance that the third act had commenced before all the guests had been attended to. An obsequious relative of his noticed this distress, and, when Sir Harry Newburgh and Miss Rivers were in the midst of a most interesting love-passage, hastily rose, and, advancing to the stage, said authoritatively, "*Stop! some of the company want more tea;*" then turned to the company with "Ladies and gentlemen, you shall be attended to in a moment."

## COOKE'S THREAT.

WHEN performing at a theatre in Ireland, Cooke had some quarrel with an actor of the company. Before going on as *Hamlet*, he was seen sharpening his sword in the green room, and was heard to say, "I and Mr. Laertes will settle our little dispute to-night." As he was known to be violent and unscrupulous, this news alarmed the intended victim, who, at the very commencement of the fencing-match, flung himself on *Hamlet*, and, seizing him by the collar, threw him down on his back, and kept him there until he had given a solemn but *sotto voce* assurance that he would do no mischief.

## AMATEURS AT DRURY LANE.

THE Delaval family—men about town, bitten with a craze for acting—had performed *Othello* at Lord Mexborough's, and were fired with a desire for a larger field of action. In those days even a small theatre would have been sufficient publicity, but to venture on the large expanse of the Drury Lane stage seemed almost too daring. Garrick, one of whose little weaknesses was an inclination to favour anything associated with persons of quality, interrupted his regular performances and allowed his theatre to be used for the night. Such interest and curiosity were

excited by this performance, that the House of Commons adjourned at three o'clock to attend early. Never was there such magnificence. No expense was spared. The distinctions of pit and gallery were abolished, and all parts of the house shone indifferently with laces and jewels and costly dresses. Even in the footmen's gallery it was noticed that half-a-dozen stars were glittering; every part of the house overflowed with the best "quality" in London; the royal princes and some German ones—rarely absent from any Court show in England—were in the side boxes. All these glories were lit up by the soft effulgence of waxlights. On the stage there were fresh scenes and new and gorgeous dresses. The music was excellent. The scene outside the playhouse is described to have been almost ludicrous from the confusion and block of chairs and coaches, which impeded each other from getting near the door; and the mob were delighted at seeing the fine ladies and gentlemen picking their steps through the mud and filth. Even at the mean public-houses close by, lords, in stars and garters and silk stockings, were seen waiting until the street should clear a little. It was a perfect success, and threw the critics into obsequious raptures.

Garrick himself was often invited to take part in private performances; but there was only one house which he seems to have thus favoured—that of Sir Watkyn Wynne. The

theatricals at Wynnestay were a regular series, and held for many years. There was a great festival, and the Welsh inns for thirty miles around were filled to overflowing. They lasted for six weeks; and the house was filled with the best English company, with sometimes thirty people staying there. It was a place that Garrick always turned to with affection. Just before his death he seems to have meditated a visit, and there is preserved among his papers a draft of a prologue which he meant to have himself spoken. The theatre was always fitted up in the kitchen, which was a spacious hall; and it had this excellent feature, which might well be considered in modern theatres—that there were no “floats,” as they used to be called, or footlights, as they are now known to us; but the scenery and performers were lit up by a row of lights behind an arch, which ran across the stage high over their heads. The rehearsals were conducted on diligent principles of sound hard work, the morning being devoted to good practice and drilling, while the performers had the advantage of the assistance of the two Colmans, father and son—the elder being stage manager. The servants of the house were pressed into the service, to fill parts like the ones they played in real life. The butler was a little awkward, and could not be got to present a sword with freedom or naturally—a more difficult thing, perhaps, than might be supposed.

It was said that Colman lost patience, and when the man asked “how he *was* to do it,” answered, “*Why, just as you gave a gravy spoon to Sir Watkyn at dinner yesterday. I noticed you!*”

#### AUTHORS ON THEIR PROPERTY.

MR. HOLLINGSHEAD, the spirited and successful manager of the Gaiety Theatre, has lately been exerting himself to obtain some change in the laws by which novelists may obtain protection from predatory dramatists. He invited the opinions of some leading writers, from which the following is a selection:—

GEORGE ELIOT. — “I thoroughly concur in the opinion that the Law of Copyright in relation to the dramatisation of novels ought to be changed, and I shall willingly give my adhesion to any energetic effort towards attaining that end.”

WILKIE COLLINS. — “My ‘Poor Miss Finch’ has been dramatised (without asking my permission) by some obscure idiot in the country. I have been asked to dramatise it, and I have refused, because my experience tells me that the book is eminently *unfit* for stage purposes. What I refuse to do with my own work, another man (unknown in literature) is perfectly free to do against my will, and (if he can get his rubbish played) to the prejudice of my novel and my reputation.”

TOM TAYLOR. — “I quite agree with you that prior dramatisation by an author ought to secure his property in a story from infringement by another dramatist without his permission.”

SHIRLEY BROOKS. — “That dramatisation question on which you write is one that ought to be taken up by all of us.”

M. E. BRADDON. — “I have written twenty-four novels; many of these have been dramatised, and a few of the dramatic versions still hold the stage. I have never received the smallest pecuniary advantage from any of these adaptations, nor does the law of copyright in any way assist me to protect what appears to be a valuable portion of my copyright, namely, the exclusive right to dramatise my own creation.”

WATTS PHILLIPS. — “‘Amos Clark’ was founded on a novel of mine. A thief the other day informed me he had as much right to give *his* version of *my* story as I had, *by the law*. Nearly every one of my stories has been dramatised, captured, and conveyed to the Cave of Adullam and elsewhere. Not a farthing given to me; only, when I took up some of my situations (situations created by me), and worked them into a piece, I was told, ‘They have been done before.’”

WESTLAND MARSTON, LL.D. — “I am warm in the conviction that where a writer creates a property for himself in one branch of fiction, he should

not lose it because some one else may be inclined to present its substance with a mere modification of form.”

W. S. GILBERT. — “‘The Wicked World,’ ‘Creatures of Impulse,’ ‘On Guard,’ ‘Randall’s Thumb,’ are all dramatic versions of stories I have published.”

PALGRAVE SIMPSON, Secretary of the Dramatic Authors’ Society. — “You will benefit all authors if you can bring about a change in the Copyright Law as regards novels, tales, and dramas.”

AN ingenious calculator in the *Era* has tried to estimate Mr. Sothorn’s profits on the basis of certain calculations, and with the following rather startling result:—

“It would be interesting to know how much the single creation of *Dundreary* has produced to its talented delineator. It was not at all supposed to be the gold mine it has turned out, and will yet prove, supposing Mr. Sothorn preserves all his energy and health. It is known that Mr. Sothorn played this character for 1,100 nights in America, between 1856 and 1863, and for these nights we may put the profits at 55,000*l.* From his arrival in this country in 1863, it had an uninterrupted run of 496 nights, the profits of which could not be less than 40,000*l.* This is the longest run upon record, and it can hardly be said to have been the least profitable. From 1864 to his

departure last year for America, it is stated that he played *Dundreary* not less than 700 times, which would make another 56,000*l.* During the same period he has appeared at least 700 times in his other characters, *David Garrick, &c.*, and putting these upon a lower scale of profit than *Dundreary*, we have, say, another 42,000*l.* of earnings, the summary of which is as follows:—

American representations of <i>Dundreary</i> .....	£55,000
English representations...	96,000
<i>Dundreary</i> .....	£151,000
Other characters in England .....	42,000
	<hr/>
	£193,000

Thus, during the sixteen years, down to the time of his leaving England, Mr. Sothern has averaged an income of 12,000*l.* a year. This, of course takes no account of outgoings.

“Mr. Sothern is now on a tour in the United States, and has been since the early part of last year. As he plays every evening without intermission, his profits, down to the time of his leaving for Melbourne, cannot amount to much less than 20,000*l.* As his stay in Melbourne is fixed for two months, and as he will derive nearly as much gold from the diggers of Australia as from the Yankees, his profits may be set down at 5,000*l.* He is then to stay another thirteen

months in the United States, for which say 32,000*l.* The addition of these figures show, therefore (approximately), that, from the time Mr. Sothern's talents developed themselves in *Dundreary* in 1856 until he sets foot again in England, he will have earned in receipts from his talents a sum not far short of 250,000*l.*

### STAGE ADVERTISEMENTS

CERTAINLY there are incidents connected with the stage which prove that, instead of being a purely artistic matter, it has become a mere affair of shopkeeping. Imagine the Royal Academy struggling with a number of rival exhibitions, and our morning papers choked with advertisements like these: “Splendid picture by Millais; crowds turned away from before it. One of the greatest triumphs ever produced on canvas.”—*Telegraph*. “Splendid colouring.”—*Daily News*. “No one should be an hour without seeing it.”—*Times*. And that then it was added in the programmes: “The rich gilt frame by Messrs. Fogotti, of Oxford-street; the reclining chairs by Messrs. Farmer, of Pall-mall; and the new and brilliant reflecting burners by Messrs. Rufus.” Finally, let us imagine that a curtain was hung in front of Mr. Millais' work, covered over with invitations to “Try Kitto's Starch,” or to “Use the Grasshopper Sewing-machine.” I say, in this state of things a foreigner

might reasonably assume the pictorial art to be in a state of decay. And why? Because, in its flourishing condition, the painter's performance ought to be sufficiently powerful to attract of itself; and such offensive additions ought to repel—and would repel—all persons of true taste and judgment. I protest anything more offensive than the fashion in which theatres are worked, the low shopman-like principle on which the helpless crowd that comes for amusement is manipulated, cannot be conceived. To find a drop-scene let down slowly, as it was one Christmas, all over lines of staring advertisements, the more audacious in gigantic characters, all to be studied and read between the acts, seemed to me an affront of the grossest and most discreditable kind. I felt the colour rising to my cheeks as I thought how our unwilling eyes and enforced attention were, in truth, the treasury out of which the cool manager was paid by his tradesman. So with the sewing-machines dragged on by the clowns, and the crackers and bonbons exhibited to advertise perfumers. To think that we should pay our money at the doors to be told of tradesmen who, should we be weak enough to go and purchase on the next day, will actually put on the article the veils they have paid to the manager for the privilege! At one house that I could name, a few baskets of artificial flowers were hung about—poor dusty imitations—and the name of the tradesman

who made them was thrust in our faces.

#### AN AUTHOR'S REPLY.

MR. BYRON'S name is associated with a witty story. When one of his plays was brought out at Liverpool, an awful "wait" occurred after the second act. The orchestra played, and played again. Presently a harsh grating sound was heard behind—something like sawing. Some one asked the author what it meant. "I can't say," he answered sadly. "I suppose they are cutting out *the third act*."

#### DISCOURAGING.

MACKLIN'S rude humour at rehearsals has been already alluded to. When his "True-Born Irishman" was being rehearsed, he was dissatisfied with the style of a particular actor, and stepping up to him asked in an angry tone, "What trade are you, sir?" The other answered, "I am a gentleman, sir!" "Then," said the other, "Stick to that, sir, *for you will never be an actor!*"

#### AN ASIDE.

MUNDEN'S avarice was notorious. On his last appearance, as he was bowing his farewell and retreating backwards up the stage, he said in a whisper to those at the wings, "Am I near; am I near?" "Very," said Liston, who was close by; "no one more so!"

## A DILEMMA.

COOKE, describing his failings, said, "On Monday I was drunk and appeared; but they didn't like that, and hissed me. On Wednesday I was drunk, so I didn't appear; and they didn't like that. What the devil would they have?"

## A LIST OF PROPERTIES.

WHEN Barry disposed of his theatre in Dublin, the inventory of the properties excited much amusement. Their condition was thus candidly described:—"Chambers, with holes in them;" "house, very bad;" "one stile, broken;" "*battlements, torn,*" "waterfall in the Dargle, very bad;" "woods, greatly damaged;" "clouds, little worth;" "mill, torn;" and "elephant, *very bad.*" The only good article appeared to be "eighty-three thunderbolts."

## FOR SALE.—TO MANAGERS AND OTHERS.

**THE KING'S BANNER,** an Original Romantic Serio-Historical Drama, in Four Acts and several Tableaux, by Mrs. ——. Period, the Civil War (from 1648) and the escape of Charles the First from Carisbrooke Castle (to 1660), ending with the Restoration. Finished complete, July 1869; Copyright secured, March 1870. It contains a Hop-garden Ballet, the Authoress's Sole Invention and Property; also many New Sensational Effects, especially a Will-o'-the-Wisp Scene, ending in a Bog Adventure during the search for Fugitive Cavaliers through the Forest. An Admirable Ghost Scene in an Abbey Ruin, with an Original Ghost Medley by the Authoress; also two other Songs, composed expressly for it by G. M. Sutherland, Esq. One of these, 'The Glorious Cause' (a loyal Cavalier drinking song, occurring in last tableau of First Act), was recently sung with great success at a Charity Concert in —, second time. Part of the Play performed by Mr. and Mrs. Bandmann last 5th December, at the Theatre Royal.—It has been read and highly recommended by many leaders in the profession.

Part of the MSS. of this great Drama having been lost in London since November 1871, consisting of five full Illustrations, two Songs, full Scenario, Pattern of Ballet, and several Letters, to avoid any mistakes on the part of the public, it is the Authoress's intention to print and publish her work with as little delay as possible, and a duplicate set of Illustrations to those which have disappeared (in defence of her entire originality).

Further particulars will be duly announced.  
For terms apply to the Author; or her Solicitor.

## QUIN AND WARBURTON.

BISHOP WARBURTON and Quin were debating the execution of Charles I. "By what laws did those regicides justify it?" said the bishop. "By all the laws he left them," was the reply. Quin's humour was of a very high order. He, and Foote, and Macklin amply sustain the credit of their profession in this department.

## APPROPRIATE FOOD.

MOSSOP was said to have always ordered his dinner to suit the character he was about to play. For Zanga in the "Revenge," sausages; for Barbarossa, veal cutlets; for Richard, *pork.*

## A NEW PLAY.

THE following appears in the theatrical newspapers:—

*AN ACTOR AT THE GRAVE.*

MACKLIN, grown old and tottering, attended Barry's funeral in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. As he was looking into the grave and murmuring "Poor Spranger!" some one attempted to lead him away, when he said, "Sir, I am at my rehearsal; do not disturb me!"

*STAGE DRESS.*

HENDERSON was so indifferent as to stage costume that he boasted of having played ten distinct characters during one season in the same dress. "The beautiful Mrs. Crouch," says Dr. Doran, "acted one of the witches in 'Macbeth' in a killing hat, her hair superbly powdered, rouge laid on with delicate effect, and her whole exquisite person enveloped in a cloud of point lace and fine linen." Lewis acted a Pagan hero in knee-breeches and a silk jacket!

*ALAS POOR YORICK!*

THE wild George Frederick Cooke was not allowed to rest in his American grave. "A theatrical benefit," says Dr. Francis, "had been announced at the Park Theatre, and 'Hamlet' the play. A subordinate of the theatre at a late hour hurried to my office for a skull. *I was compelled to loan the head of my old friend, George Frederick Cooke.* It was returned in the morning; but on the ensuing

evening, at the meeting of the Cooper Club, the circumstance becoming known to several of the members, and a general desire being expressed to investigate phrenologically the head of the great tragedian, the article was again released from its privacy, when Daniel Webster, Henry Wheaton, and many others who enriched the meeting of that night applied the principles of craniological science to the interesting specimen before them." It would be interesting to enumerate the numbers of celebrated persons whose remains have been subjected to this sort of desecration. Sterne's body was carried off by resurrection-men, and sent to Oxford for dissection, where one of his friends happened to come in, and was so shocked at the recognition that he fainted away. Swift's skull was dug up a few years ago at St. Patrick's, and handed round, like Cooke's, at a party of scientific gentlemen. It was said that at the close of the proceedings the larynx was missing!

*AN UNREHEARSED PROLOGUE.*

JACK PALMER on one occasion delivered a prologue without having learned a line of it. The feat was contrived thus:—The prompter was placed underneath a table covered with a cloth, and repeated every line, which Palmer, with many ingenious smiles and gestures, to

cover the intervals of waiting,  
repeated after him.

### ELABORATE EMPHASIS.

No revelation of the prose of  
stage life equals the following.

On the death of Mossop, a  
powerful but turgid actor whom  
Churchill satirised, a copy of  
Wolsey's well-known speech was  
found among his papers, with  
elocutionary directions written  
over each line.

Eyes upwards. Surprise and peevish.

"What should this mean? What sudden anger's this?"

Sudden turn of voice—quick.

*He parted frowning from me, as if ruin*

Smart Wild.

*Leap'd from his eye. . . . .*

Voice quick and loud.

I must read this paper ;

Transition. Much breath. Opens paper very hastily.

I fear the story of his anger.—'Tis so—

Strikes it quickly.

Vast throbs of feeling.

*This paper* has undone me. 'Tis the account

Of all that world of *wealth* I've DRAWN together

Cunning and head nod. Dislike, teeth quite close. Lips partly pressed ;

To gain the Popedom. O negligence !

Quick and high.

Wild, sudden, spitefully and peevishly.

Fit for a fool to fall by. What cross *devil*

Hurried spirit, and all in a breath.

Made me put this MAIN SECRET in the packet

Pause.

I sent the king?—Is there no way to cure this?

Face full to audience,

Side look. Cunning, fretful and musing—swelling inward.

*No new device* to beat THIS from his brains?

Force.

Loud. Pause. Then sudden turn.

I know 'twill stir him strongly.

Opens letter.

*What's this?*—To the *Pope*.

Still look to the letter. Rest. Breathe out, slow step, and head declined.

The *letter*, as I live, with all the business

Quite calm and resigned.

I writ to's Holiness. Nay, then, farewell !

G tone, with feeling, but low.

I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness ;

No jerk.

And, from that full *meridian* of my glory,

Finger G tone.

Under feeling. pointed down. Sudden pause.

I haste now to my setting ; I shall fall

Solemn.

Mournful.

Like a bright *exhalation* in the evening,

Weak manner. Feeling restrained. Wildness of old man.

And no man see me more."

## A FAIR RETORT.

WHEN Foote was beaten in a lawsuit about a theatre, a Scotch lawyer called on him to receive the amount of his bill of costs. The actor while paying him indulged in a sneer at Scotch economy, saying that the agent, like all his countrymen, would travel back in the cheapest manner possible. "Ay, ay," said the agent drily, and tapping his pocket, "I shall travel—*on Foot.*"

## AN ODD BENEFIT.

ACTORS have often advertised their benefits for odd purposes. But few announcements have been more singular than that of Lillo, whose bill was headed, "For the benefit of *my poor relations.*"

## A SITUATION.

ONE night in the year 1784, Miss Farren and a leading actor were taken ill, and it was announced that their parts (in "Love in a Village") would be read. The following absurd scene took place:—The manuscript copy had to be used, as the piece was not published; so Mr. Palmer and Miss Collett, each with a candle in hand, read alternately, passing the piece from one to the other, as their turn came. At last Palmer came to a passage so blotted and interlined that he could not make it out. The audience hissed, when he came forward and offered to show the passage to any gentleman in

the pit who would say if he were to blame. The book was examined and the passage, amid loud applause, declared to be unreadable. The play then proceeded, permission being given to pass over *the illegible passages.*

## SHAKESPERE IMPROVED.

IN 1805, when a piece called "The Village," was uproariously damned, Elliston came forward and rebuked the audience, adding in his own unique style, "It is *my* opinion that the piece has great merit." When he took the Surrey Theatre he produced "'Macbeth' altered from *Shakespeare by Mr. Lawler!*" in which one of the passages ran:

"Is this a dagger which I see before me?  
*My brains are scattered in a whirlwind stormy.*"

## INTERPOLATED MUSIC.

AT a performance of "The Rivals," in 1825, at Hastings, a Mr. White, who had a good voice, played the part of the lover Falkland, and introduced *The Bay of Biscay*, "by particular desire!" Something of the same kind of inappropriate introduction is recorded of Miss Poole in "The Iron Chest," who, when playing Barbara, wished to introduce a popular Swiss air. At a pathetic situation she proceeded thus:—"Poor Wilford has been dragged to prison: but still never, never can forget the old strain, '*Merrily oh.*'"

(*Cue for the orchestra.*)

'Merrily every bosom boundeth;  
Merrily oh! merrily oh!'"

## A SUITABLE ANSWER.

AN amateur wrote to Harry Johnson, desiring an engagement, expatiating on his own suitable gifts and qualifications, and received the following reply:—  
 “I agree to engage you at once, provided you are only *half* as good as you describe yourself.”

## APPEAL BY PLACARD.

AN absurd scene took place during the stormy Booth riots in 1817. The actor, who had offended the audience, would not be allowed a hearing, when a gentleman came forward on the stage bearing a pole and placard, on which was inscribed the words,

“GRANT SILENCE TO EXPLAIN.”

This was greeted with “a whirlwind of orange peel,” and the actor again presented himself, but would not be listened to. The placard-bearer now appeared with another device—

“MR. BOOTH IS WILLING TO APOLOGISE.”

But this produced no change. The actor appeared again, and was again hooted back. The indefatigable placard-bearer braved the storm once more, and hid his head behind a board bearing this appeal:—

“CAN ENGLISHMEN CONDEMN UNHEARD?”

This, of course, produced cheers in compliment to the audience, but did not advance the actor's cause.

## COOKE AT LIMERICK.

THE following adventure is related of George Frederick Cooke, when fulfilling an engagement. It exactly fits with the known recklessness of his character.

“He had been performing at the old theatre, Limerick. The last night of his appearance he acted *Petruchio*, and, before the fall of the curtain, had paid such constant attention to a little keg of whisky, that the fumes overpowered his faculties, and in bestowing the whip upon the unfortunate *Grumio*, he belaboured him so severely, that the miserable actor roared in downright earnest, every now and then threatening Cooke with a retaliation. But the latter, doubly inspired on the occasion, both by the beverage he had drunk and the protection of the audience, persevered till he had made a clear stage for himself. The actor who had been thus treated vowed vengeance on Cooke, which he was determined to inflict the moment he had undressed himself. Somewhat sobered by these threats, *Petruchio* bethought himself of the advice of Hudibras—

‘He who fights, and runs away,  
 May live to fight another day.’

“Heedless of the strangeness of his dress, he instantly slipped down the back stairs, and sought refuge in one of the obscure alleys behind the theatre. It was then just twelve o'clock, and as he had rambled out of the High Street, he did not even

encounter a watchman asleep on his post. The sounds of woe, issuing with strange solemnity from an humble hut, presently attracted his attention; they proceeded from an assemblage of persons, who (according to a custom still continued in the southern parts of Ireland, on the death of a relation, or even acquaintance) were assembled round a dead body, chanting a dismal song, or howl, in full chorus. The reader must bear in mind the broad-brimmed hat and whimsical dress of *Petruccio*, and that, most likely, not one individual assembled in that place had ever seen a play; he may imagine, then, if possible, the wonder and horror of the simple souls when George Frederick applied his shoulder to the slender wicket of the cabin, plunged into the midst of the group, sword in hand, oversetting those he first encountered, and advancing up to the foot of the bed, on which the body of an old woman was placed, exclaiming, in his own rough way, with his eyes distended to the utmost extent by intoxication—

'How now, ye secret black and midnight hags,  
What is't ye do?'

"Thunderstruck by the figure of the apparition, and the tones which proceeded from it, some of the mourners sought shelter under the bed, others crept half way up the chimney, while the remainder sallied out into the lane, praying most fervently to be released from the visitation of the devil, for a human being

none could suppose George, who, left alone with the shrivelled remains of the old peasant, taking her parchment-coloured hand, pathetically exclaimed—

'O, my love! my wife!  
Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.  
Thou art not conquered—beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson on thy lips.'—

'Beauty!—no, hang me, if it is though;  
Avaunt, thou horrid spectre!'

"'But stop,' said George, for his eye at that instant rested on a jug of whisky punch, smoking in the chimney corner;—he eagerly grasped the handle and cried,

'Here's to my love.

"The affrighted company taking by degrees a little courage, ventured, one by one, to peep through the key-hole, and then observing George had thrown away his sword, returned into the apartment, when he, in order to encourage them, exclaimed—'Don't fear me; 'tis only George Frederick Cooke; come, sit down, I'll smoke with you, and drink with you, aye, and pray with you, my jolly lads and lasses.' Thus reassured, George became gradually a great favourite with them, and revelled in the delights of tobacco and whisky, 'until his eyelids could no longer wag.' He was then placed quietly on a bed until next morning."

#### BADDELEY'S WILL.

BADDELEY, an indifferent performer during the days of Gar-

rick, has acquired a certain reputation, though not from his histrionic powers. He was the husband of the notorious and beautiful Mrs. Baddeley, whose frailties were the talk of the town; and he was the author of an eccentric will, the actual language of which is worth reproducing here.

It bears date April 23, 1793, and proves his benevolent attention to the infirmities and distresses of his brother performers:—

“To his faithful friend and companion, Mrs. Catherine Strickland, generally called and known by the name of Mrs. Baddeley, he bequeaths his life's interest in his house in New Store-street; and in his freehold messuages, garden, &c. After her decease, the above estates, with certain monies to arise from the insurance of an annuity, to go to the society established for the relief of indigent persons belonging to Drury-lane Theatre. The house and premises at Moulsey to be used as an asylum for decayed actors and actresses; and when the net produce of the property amounts to 360*l.* per annum, pensions are to be allowed. Especial care to be taken to have the words, ‘Baddeley's Asylum,’ in the front of the house. His executors to publish, every year, his letter, as it appeared in *The General Advertiser*, April 20, 1790, respecting the disagreement with his unhappy wife, to prevent the world looking upon his memory in the villainous point of view, as set

forth in certain books, pamphlets, &c. One hundred pounds, three per cent. consolidated bank annuities, which produce three pounds per annum, is left to purchase a twelfth-cake, with wine and punch; which the ladies and gentlemen of Drury-lane Theatre are requested to partake of, every Twelfth Night, in the great Green-Room.”

#### ACTORS' EPITAPHIS.

THE simple epitaph on Burbage is well known—

“EXIT BURBAGE!”

and this idea of adapting professional allusions to “Lapidary inscriptions” has been rather a favourite one with players. Thus, the merits of Jackson, a favourite provincial actor, are thus recorded in a Norfolk churchyard:—

“Sacred to the memory of Thomas Jackson, comedian, who was engaged December 21, 1741, to play a comic cast of characters in this great Theatre, the World, for many of which he was prompted by nature to excel. The season being ended, his benefit over, the charges all paid, and his account closed, he made his exit in the Tragedy of ‘Death,’ on the 17th of March, 1798, in full assurance of being called once more to rehearsal; when he hopes to find his forfeits all cleared, his cast of parts bettered, and his situation made agreeable by Him who paid the great stock-debt for the love he bore to performers in general.”

## GREEN-ROOM JOKES.

THERE are many collections of good stories connected with actors and the stage, and it is amazing of what "poor stuff" such miscellanies are composed. The following is a common type of the Green-room jests, and it is surprising how such should have been thought worthy of preservation:—

"When Lee Lewis was out shooting, the proprietor attacked him violently. 'I allow no one to shoot here but myself. I'll shoot you if you come here again.' 'What!' said Lewis, 'I suppose you mean to make game of me.'"

"Munden, when confined to his bed by illness, was much rallied by his friends, it being supposed that he was shamming. He was told that they were all laughing at him. 'I assured them,' he answered, 'I had much rather they had made me a *standing* joke.'"

It is incredible what a number of Green-room jokes are based on some such indifferent quips. This little weakness is admirably touched in "Nicholas Nickleby"—

"Except when Old Bricks and Mortar takes it into his head to do it himself, you should add, Tommy," remarked Mr. Lenville: "You know who Old Bricks and Mortar is, I suppose, sir?" "I do not, indeed," said Nicholas. "We call Crumles that, because his style of acting is rather in the heavy

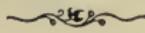
and ponderous way," said Mr. Lenville. *I mustn't be cracking jokes, though*, for I've got a part of twelve lengths here," &c.

Indeed the whole of this portion of the story relating to the country theatre is unrivalled for its humour and vivacity, and is evidently drawn from the life.

## AN UNLUCKY COMPANY.

IN the year 1733, a company of indifferent players was formed to go abroad and act, which found its way even to the island of Jamaica. They made a good deal of money, and on the first night of the "Beggar's Opera" "took" 370 pistoles. But the *corps* was not exempt from the disagreeable casualties of the place, and within two months they had buried their *Polly*, Mrs. Slammakin, Filch, and two more members of the "gang." In this state of things some gentlemen of the island, of a histrionic turn, took parts, and contrived to keep the enterprise alive for a time; but this did not last long, for in a short time some other members dropped off, and there was only an old man, a boy, and a woman of the original *corps* left surviving. They had all died of the Jamaica fever, or of the more fatal rum-punch, the national beverage. The shattered remnant embarked with upwards of two thousand pistoles, the earnings of the *troupe*, to join another company that was playing at Charleston, but they also perished, being cast away on the voyage.

# INDEX.



## A.

- Absent Critics, 58
- Acting, Genuine, 25
  - Literal, 107
  - off the Stage, 98
- Actor, Demands on the, 85
  - turned Wine Merchant, 6
- Actors, Old, 85
- Actors' Epitaphs, 123
  - Jests, 63
  - Salaries, 28
- Advertisement, Stage, 36, 115
- Advertisements, Payment for, 60
- Alhambra, The, 95
- Amateurs at Drury Lane, 112
  - v. Professionals, 94
- Appeal by Placard, 121
  - of Kemble, 16
  - to Rhyno, 24
- Aside, An, 116
- Astley's Eccentricities, 41
- At the Victoria, 82
- Audiences, London, 65
  - Paris, 65
- Author, A Bold, 47
  - Ignoring the, 105
- Author's Reply, An, 116
- Awkward Enthusiasm, 6

## B.

- Baddeley's Will, 122
- Bateman, H. L., 95
- Barry and the Barber, 14
- Barry's Pathos, 12
- Bathos, 18
- Belfast, Sovereign of, 38
- Bereaved Pair, A, 7
- Betrayed, The Player, 33
- Betterton and Archbishop Sancroft, 19
- Bibb, The Original of Jeremy Diddler, 54
- Blunt Speech, A, 33
- Bombast, True, 72
- Booth's, Mr., Appeal by Placard, 121
- Box-Keeper's Fees, Levying, 95
- Braddon, Miss, on Copyright, 112
- “Bring in the Bishop,” 72
- British Public, The Intelligent, 71
- Brooks, Shirley, on Copyright, 112
- Burney's, Miss, Tragedy of “Elvira,” 72
- Business, 26, 95

## C.

- Cautious Criticism, 27
- Centaur, The, at fault, 105
- Characters, Unsuitable, 64
- Chatterton, F. B., 95
- Cherry, Andrew, as Autolycus, 62
- Circle, Scenes in the, 76
- Clive, Mrs., and Garrick, 10
- Clown's, A, Letter to his Wife, 23
- Collins, Wilkie, on Copyright, 112
- Colman and Harris at Covent Garden, 49
- Company, An Unlucky, 124
- Compliment, A, 29
  - False, 44
  - Flattering, 60
- Contradiction, A Walking, 24
- Cooke, George Frederick, at Limerick, 121
  - and Kemble, 98
  - and the Theatrical Tailor, 11
- Cooke's Dilemma, 117
  - Threat, 112
- “Cooke, Tom,” in the Dying Scene in  
“George Barnwell,” 17
- Correct Elocution, 66
- Criticism, Friendly, 48
- Critics, Absent, 58
- Cue-Hunter, The Unlucky, 60

## D.

- Dead Alive, 36
- Defaulter Acquitted, A, 29
- Demands on the Actor, 85
- Device, A, 49, 67
- Diddler, Jeremy, Original of, 54
- Difference, A Slight, 26
- Dignity, True, 10
- Dilemma, A, 117
- Disagreeing, Doctors, 96
- Discouraging, 116
- Discreet in his Cups, 98
- Doctor, The, Hoaxed, 9
- Dogs on the Stage, 92, 99
- “Done to Order,” 6
- Douglas, Isle of Man, The H. B. of, 38
- Downton on Large Type, 35
- Drama, A Strange, 24
- Drama for Sale, 117
- Dramatic Paralysis, 93
- Dramatist's Note-Book, A, 53
- Dress, Stage, 50, 118

Droll Transpositions, 43  
 Drop Scenes, 71  
 Drury Lane, Amateurs at, 112  
 ——— Mrs. Siddons at, 89  
 Dulness of Retirement, The, 5  
*Dundreary*, Mr. Sothern's Profits on, 114

## E.

Early Days of Mr. Webster, 41  
 Eccentric Manager, An, 43  
 Effect of a Look, 11  
 Effect, Stage, 71  
 Efficacious Hint, An, 36  
 Elaborate Emphasis, 119  
 Electioneering on the Stage, 25  
 Eliot, George, on Copyright, 112  
 Elliston and his Audience, 77  
 Emery and Kemble, 29  
 Enthusiast, A Shakespearian, 53  
 Epilogues, Military, 96  
 Epitaphs, Actors', 123  
 Exaggerated Praise, 104

## F.

Faces or Fasces, 8  
 Fair Retort, A, 119  
 Familiar, 99  
 Father, A Second, 36  
 Feasts, Stage, 36  
 Feelings of Actors in playing their Parts, 27  
 "Finish" Club, Kemble at the, 74  
 Flight from the Altar, 13  
 Food, Appropriate, 117  
 Forrest "playing with" Selwyn, 15  
 Fortitude, Spartan, 7  
 Free Admission, 92  
 Free and Easy, 27  
 Friendly Criticism, 48

## G.

Gags, 25, 51  
 Garrick and Barry, 8; "Kitty Clive," 66;  
 Foote, 30; Lord Mansfield, 28; Dr.  
 Monsey, 9; Speaker Onslow, 95; The  
 Quack Doctor, 8  
 Garrick, Arthur Murphy's Recollection of, 9  
 ——— as "Abel Druggier," 25  
 ——— at Goodman's Fields, 87  
 ——— Mrs. Clive's Criticism on, 10  
 Garrick's End, 95  
 ——— Expressive Look, 11  
 ——— last Performance, 107  
 ——— Practical Joking, 90  
 ——— Sensitiveness as to praise of other  
 Actors, 48  
 Garrick, Mrs., and Edmund King, 35  
 Genius, Homage to, 99  
 ——— in Obscurity, 98  
 Genuine Acting, 25  
 George the Second at the Play, 105  
 Gilbert, W.S., on Copyright, 114  
 Glass "Carved from the Tree," 37  
 Glover, Dr., Physician and Actor, 36  
 Godwin's Tragedy, Representation of, 56

Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," 7  
 97  
 Good Benefit, A, 62  
 ——— Device, A, 49  
 ——— Omen, A, 73  
 Grave, Macklin at Barry's, 118  
 Green-room Jokes, 124  
 Grimaldi's House, "No Religion" in, 62  
 Guard of Soldiers at Drury Lane and  
 Covent Garden, 28

## H.

"Hamlet," with Alterations, 66  
 Harris, A., 95  
 Harris, Mr., and C. J. Mathews, 31  
 Haughty Host, A, 111  
 Histrionic Dogs, 99  
 ——— Spit, A, 33  
 Hoaxed, The Doctor, 9  
 "Hobby, A," 51  
 Holman at Cheltenham, 6  
 Homage, Inconvenient, 26  
 Humbug, 106

## I.

Ignoring the Author, 105  
 Impromptu, 7  
 "In and Out, and Out and In again," 19  
 Instinct, The Ruling, 81  
 Interpolated Music, 120  
 Interruptions to Players, 82  
 Irving, Rev. Edward, 96  
 "I will return anon," 15

## J.

Jerrold's (Douglas) Stage Jests, 6, 51  
 Jests, Actors', 63  
 Jocoseness in Tragedy, 11  
 Jokes, Green-room, 124  
 Juste Milieu, The, 86

## K.

Kean and Cobham, 82; Talma, 54; The  
 Cue-hunter at Edinburgh, 60  
 Kean's Last Appearance and Death, 89  
 Kean, Edmund, and his Eight "best"  
 Jagos, 44; Young Phelps, 52  
 Kean's, Edmund, Failure in "Ben Nazir,"  
 68; his Income and Expenditure, 64  
 Kelly, Teddy, *alias* Zuchelli, 26  
 Kemble, Actor and Architect, 29  
 Kemble and Emery, 29; Lewis, 17; Mr.  
 St. John, 10  
 Kemble's Appeal, 16  
 ——— Discretion in his Cups, 98  
 ——— School of Acting Described, 24

## L.

"Lakers," 37  
 Lamb, Charles, on the Representation of  
 Godwin's Tragedy, 56  
 Large Receipts, 93  
 Lawler's Improvements on "Macbeth,"  
 120

Letter-Box, A Manager's, 19  
 Letter from a Clown to his Wife, 23  
 Lewis, Lee, 124  
 Linsey Woolsey, 6  
 List of Properties, 117  
 Liston at Dinner in the City, 17  
 ——— on Munden's Avarice, 116  
 Liston's First Success, 79  
 Literary Acting, 107  
 Liverpool Audience, Cooke and the, 16  
 London Theatres, The, 86; Number of  
 Persons attending, 65  
 Longevity of Actors, 31

## M.

Macklin and Sheridan, 47  
 ——— at Barry's Grave, 118  
 ——— at Rehearsal, 51  
 ——— instructing a Pupil, 46  
 ———, Quin's Opinion of, 9  
 Macklin's Discouraging Remark to an  
 Actor, 116  
 ——— Polite Request, 17  
 ——— Stimulant in acting Shylock, 98  
 Macready, as *Othello*, at Paris, 26  
 Macready, Criticism of, by Richardson,  
 the Showman, 41  
 Mal Apropos, 95  
 Management of the Voice, Macklin's  
 Method, 46  
 Manager, A, and his Actress, 66  
 Manager, A Complaisant, 96; Eccentric,  
 43; Pious, 25  
 Manager's Explanation, A, 32  
 ——— Letter-Box, A, 19  
 Mansfield, Lord, and Garrick, 28  
 Marston, Westland, on Copyright, 112  
 Marriages, Romantic Stage, 84  
 Mathews and Dublin Gods, 83  
 Mathews, The Elder, 106  
 Military "Epilogues," 96  
 Miller, the Theatrical Bookseller, and Lis-  
 ton, 63  
 Mind, A Practical, 85  
 Miser, A, 43  
 Mistake, 49, 62  
 Modern Play, A, Damned, 44  
 Modest Allowance, A, 67  
 Mossop's Elocutionary Directions for Wol-  
 sey's Speech, 118  
 Motto for French Adapters, Jerrold's, 6  
 Munden's Avarice, 116  
 Murphy's, Arthur, Recollection of Gar-  
 rick, 9

## N.

"Nail, The," 27  
 New Play, A, 117  
 "No Religion" in Grimaldi's House, 62  
 Note-Book of a Dramatist, 53

## O.

Obscurity, Genius in, 98  
 Odd Advertisement, 17; Benefit, 119;  
 Phrases, 30

*Off and On the Stage*, 26  
*Off the Stage, Acting*, 98  
 Old Actors, 85  
 Omen, A Good, 73  
 Onslow, Speaker, and Garrick, 95

## P.

Paralysis, Dramatic, 93  
 Paris Theatres, Number of Persons attend-  
 ing, 65  
 Pathos, Barry's, 12  
 ———, True, 66  
 Penalty of Greatness, The, 72  
 Phillips, Watts, on Copyright, 112  
 Picture, Subject for a, 93  
 Pit, A Tar in the, 10  
 Pit Refreshments, 37  
 Placard, Appeal by, 121  
 Play, A New, 117  
 Play Bills, 33  
 Play, Rustics at the, 19  
 Player, The, Betrayed, 33  
 Players Interrupted, 82  
 Polite Request, A, 17  
 Practical Mind, A, 85  
 Praise and No Praise, 48  
 Praise, Chary, 27; Exaggerated, 104  
 ———, Forcible, 10  
 Preachers and Actors, 19  
 Predicament, Unpleasant, 32  
 Pritchard, Mrs., 7, 74  
 Prologue, An Unrehearsed, 118  
 Properties, List of, 117  
 Prophetic, 52  
 Prose and Poetry, 11  
 Puffs, 6

## Q.

Quack Doctor, The, and Garrick, 8  
 Quick and the Furniture Broker, 5  
 Quin and Mrs. Pritchard, 7; Rich, 35;  
 Warburton, 117  
 Quin's Humour, 8  
 ——— Tricks of Pronunciation, 8

## R.

Realism, True, 110  
 Rebuke to Liverpool Slaveowners and  
 Merchants by Cooke, 16  
 Receipts, Large, 93  
 Recognition, A, 26  
 Refreshments Sold in Theatres, 37  
 "Remember Me To-morrow!" 99  
 Reply of an Author, 116  
 Retirement, The Dulness of, 5  
 Retort, A Fair, 119  
 Reynolds' Prologue on "Humbug," 106  
 Rhyno, Appeal to, 24  
 Richardson, the Showman, on Macready, 41  
 Romantic Stage Marriages, 84  
 Rough Treatment, 15  
 Rude Interruption, A, 73  
 Ruling Instinct, The, 81  
 Ruling Passion Strong in Life, 10  
 Ruse, A, 107

## S.

Salaries of Actors, 28  
 Sancroft, Archbishop, and Betterton, 19  
 Scene at the Theatrical Fund Dinner, 108  
 Scenes, Drop, 71  
 School, A, of Acting described, 24  
 "School for Scandal," Gossip about the, 101  
 "School's Up!" 105  
 Serve them Right, 18  
 Severe, 8, 51  
 Shakespeare Improved, 120  
 Shakespearean Apropos, 95  
 ———— Enthusiast, A, 53  
 Sheridan and Boaden, 30; Monk Lewis, 30; Sparks, a Dublin Actor, 52  
 Sheridan and the Dog Actor at Drury Lane, 101  
 "She-r-i-dan for ever!" 25  
 "She Stoops to Conquer," 97  
 Short and Blunt, 35  
 Should an Actor Feel? 27  
 Shuter and the Two Royal Dukes, 67  
 Siddons, Mrs., and Liston, 79  
 ———— and the Country Pot-boy, 5  
 ———— at Bath, 17; at Drury Lane, 89; at Worcester, 88  
 Siddons', Mrs., First Appearance at Edinburgh, 27  
 Siddons' Mrs., Salary at Drury Lane, 67  
 Simpson, Palgrave, on Copyright, 114  
 Situation, A, 120; Absurd, 47; Spoiled, 5  
 Skating on the Stage, 49  
 Slang, Stage, 73  
 Soldiers at Theatres, 28  
 Sothern's, Mr., Profits on *Dundreary*, 114  
 ———— Rebuke to an Officers' Mess, 18  
 Sovereign and "H. B.," 38  
 Spartan Fortitude, 7  
 Speeches from the Stage, 93  
 "Spelling" of Kitty Clive, 54  
 Spit, A Histrionic, 33  
 "Sport to you, Death to me," 46  
 Stage Advertisement, 36, 115; Directions, 6; Dogs on the, 92; Dress, 50, 118; Effect, 71; Electioneering on the, 25; Feasts, 36  
 Stage, *Off* and *On* the, 26  
 ———— Thunder, 30  
 ———— Trick, A, 47  
 "Stick to the Coo!" 18  
 Stimulant, A, 98  
 Story ten times told, 108  
 Struggles of an Actor (Mr. Webster), 41

Stuart, Beatfy, a Dublin Actor, 46  
 Swanborough, Miss Ada, 95  
 Sympathy, Well-paid, 8

## T.

Tar, A, in the Pit, 10  
 Taylor, Tom, on Copyright, 112  
 Theatres, The London, 86  
 Theatrical Criticism, 108  
 ———— Fund Dinner, Scene at, 108  
 ———— Law-suits, 51  
 ———— Puffs, 6  
 Thunder, 30  
 Topsy Actor in a Tank, 110  
 Tit for Tat, 29  
 Tout Punished, A, 5  
 Tragedy, Unintentional, 64  
 Transpositions, Droll, 43  
 True Bombast, 72; Dignity, 10; Pathos, 66; Realism, 110

## U.

Unanswerable, 35  
 Unlucky Company, An, 124; Cue-Hunter, 60; Dresser, 12  
 Unpleasant Predicament, 32  
 Unrehearsed Prologue, An, 118  
 Unsuitable Characters, 64

## V.

Vanity, 49; Youthful, 31  
 Veteran, A, 61  
 Villiers, Lord, and his Performances at Henley-on-Thames, 104

## W.

Walking Contradiction, A, 24  
 Warburton and Quin, 117  
 Webster, B., 95  
 Well Deserved, 17  
 Well-paid Sympathy, 8  
 "Which be Joey?" 26  
 Wignell's Apology for a Prologue, 11  
 Will, Baddeley's, 122  
 Wolsey's Speech emphasised by Mossop, 118  
 Wood v. Glass, 37

## Y.

Yorick! Alas Poor, 118

## Z.

Zuchelli and Michael Kelly, 26

THE END.

9







